# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

SIXTH SERIES—VOLUME 109

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 1986-87

COMPRISING PERIOD
26 JANUARY—6 FEBRUARY 1987

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## OFFICIAL REPORT

IN THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE FORTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SIXTH SERIES VOLUME 109

FIFTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1986-87

# House of Commons

*Monday 26 January 1987*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

### PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

### PRIVATE BUSINESS

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords]*
*Considered; to be read the Third time.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## ENERGY

### Tidal Power

1. **Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what major projects his Department is sponsoring on tidal power as an energy source; and if he will make a statement.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. David Hunt):** My Department is sponsoring a £5·5 million research programme into United Kingdom tidal resources. It includes £4·2 million of advanced investigations and site explorations on the Severn, jointly funded by the Central Electricity Generating Board and the Severn Tidal Power Group; a £400,000 contribution towards studies of a Mersey barrage; and a programme of supporting studies on environmental issues, construction techniques and the resource available from small sites.

**Mr. Speller:** I welcome my hon. Friend's comments about what is being done. Is he aware that when I visited Norway last month with a number of colleagues we observed the Norwegians using British inventions—in this case the oscillating water tower system, which produces extremely economic electricity—which we have rejected? Will the Minister assure the House that if a scheme that was initially overlooked or passed over appeared to be efficient and suitable for our waters he would reconsider it?

**Mr. Hunt:** I welcome this opportunity to clarify the position. The Department of Energy's wave energy programme was closed because the unanimous advice of the Department's scientists was that that energy source was unlikely to make a large-scale economic contribution to the United Kingdom electricity supply. The Norwegian experiments do not affect that decision as they are aimed at small-scale supply to remote or isolated communities with favourable coastal conditions. Studies of a similar system have been carried out at Queen's university, Belfast, and further work may be carried out there if it appears to be technically and economically promising.

**Mr. Hayward:** My hon. Friend referred to the Severn barrage project, which is currently under consideration, but he did not refer to the time scale. Can he tell us what the time scale is and whether he has had any initial information about the success of those studies?

**Mr. Hunt:** There is no doubt that the Severn estuary is one of the largest and most favourable tidal energy sites in the world. Details of the Severn work programme, related studies and procedures for consultation are presently being discussed by the Central Electricity Generating Board, the Severn Tidal Power Group and my Department. I hope that details of those studies will be announced shortly. I have already made it clear that as soon as the programme of works has been clarified I shall place copies in the Library.

### Electricity Supplies (France)

3. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what arrangements have been made for electricity supplies to be provided from France over the next 10 years; and if he will make a statement.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy (Mr. Alastair Goodlad):** The Central Electricity Generating Board has negotiated arrangements with Electricité de France to provide for bulk imports of electricity from France until 26 March 1988. Arrangements beyond that will be subject to commercial negotiation by the two utilities.

**Mr. Holt:** I thank my hon. Friend for that answer. Will he bear in mind the recent strikes in France and what contingency plans Her Majesty's Government might have if we relied upon the French for electricity supplies which were then cut off as a result of strikes? Is not the time now right to provide for another coal-fired power unit so that workers in this country will not be denied an electricity supply? Although we should in no way move away from nuclear power as the ultimate source of energy, perhaps in the short term the Government should give serious consideration to the placing of a new order for a coal-fired electricity unit.

**Mr. Goodlad:** It is important that the generating board should be able to take advantage of economical methods of electricity generation. Imports through the link will help to keep down electricity supply costs and therefore electricity prices. The link with France is designed for flows in either direction. The generating board stated that its present arrangements provide for a two-year supply up to 25 per cent. cheaper than can be generated, on average, in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, the generating board does not regard the link as firm capacity in planning for its long-term requirements. I know that my hon. Friend has taken a close constituency interest in the possibility of new coal-fired capacity. Proposals for new power stations must come from the electricity supply industry. I understand that the board is considering the possibility of building new coal-fired power stations, but no applications to construct stations have been received, apart from that for Sizewell B.

**Mr. Redmond:** Has the Minister considered the impact on the balance of payments deficit?

**Mr. Goodlad:** The impact on the balance of payments deficit will obviously depend on how much we buy and how much we sell.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** As my hon. Friend has said that the costs are substantially in favour of France, will he consider laying a third cable across the Channel so that the consumer in the United Kingdom can receive that considerable benefit?

**Mr. Goodlad:** I note what my hon. Friend says. Before any further links are considered, the utilities will wish to have further operating experience of the present link.

**Mr. O'Brien:** Will the Minister comment upon the assistance given to maintain the supply link to the United Kingdom by the French Government? Will he assure the House that Her Majesty's Government will give the same assistance to protect jobs in the electricity supply industry in this country as well as the coal mining industry? Can we have the same protection here as the French workers?

**Mr. Goodlad:** Obviously, the Government are deeply concerned to take every account of employment in both the coal and electricity supply industries.

**Dr. Michael Clark:** Bearing in mind that this country was in the forefront of nuclear power development in the late 1950s, will my hon. Friend comment on or perhaps even express disappointment at the fact that this country now produces less than 20 per cent. of its electricity from nuclear sources while France produces more than 60 per cent.? Is that not the reason why, with our more expensive and less plentiful electricity, we are having to import from France?

**Mr. Goodlad:** I note my hon. Friend's view.

**Mr. Orme:** Will the Minister tell the House what the foreign exchange costs of this venture have been to date? Is he aware that we totally oppose any extension of the Channel link because we believe that we should be able to produce our own generating capacity in Britain?

**Mr. Goodlad:** I note the right hon. Gentleman's latter view and its likely impact on electricity consumers, both domestic and industrial, in this country. I shall let him know the exact foreign exchange costs.

### Vehicle Fuel

4. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if it remains Her Majesty's Government's policy to limit the amount of oil consumed as vehicle fuel in the United Kingdom.

**The Minister of State, Department of Energy (Mr. Alick Buchanan-Smith):** Our aim is to encourage energy efficiency measures that are cost-effective.

**Mr. Baker:** If I am correct in assuming that my right hon. Friend has not made representations to the Home Office that the present speed limit on motorways should be enforced for the sake of oil conservation, will he join me in making representations to the Secretary of State for Transport that the speed limit on motorways should be raised?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** My hon. Friend is correct in saying that the matter is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport. As I am sure my hon. Friend will acknowledge, many complex considerations and factors are involved. As I understand it, one of my right hon. Friend's main considerations at present is the very important question of road safety.

**Mr. Douglas:** When the Minister considers oil consumption, will he give some advice to the consumer, who seems somewhat bemused by the fact that when oil prices fall the advantage is not passed on to him, but when oil prices rise the oil companies take immediate steps to raise prices at the pumps?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** As the hon. Gentleman knows, whatever the price, energy conservation measures are worth while. I hope that he pays tribute to the work done by the motor industry in already achieving much better performance of British cars.

**Mr. Chapman:** I appreciate the need to encourage energy conservation, particularly in vehicles, but will my right hon. Friend confirm that it will not be at the expense of the Government's programme and commitment to introduce lead-free petrol, even if lead-free petrol is less efficient that leaded petrol in miles per gallon?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** The Government are committed to the introduction of lead-free petrol, and differential pricing and duty are a positive encouragement. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that he will be saying more about that in the next Budget. More than anything else, that policy underlines the Government's commitment to unleaded petrol.

**Mr. Rowlands:** Is the Minister aware that other issues could play a vital part in the whole question of oil supplies? For example, what will happen if the Iranians reach Basra? The hon. Gentleman will know the impact of what happened in 1979. Have the Government considered meeting the Institute of Economic Affairs to discuss that nightmarish possibility, which could have a profound impact on oil supplies and prices?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** Thus far, the IEA has not requested any meeting to discuss the fuel efficiency of vehicles in Britain.

### Oil-Fired Power Stations (Conversion)

5. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if, when he next meets the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board, he will discuss the conversion of existing oil-fired power stations to coal.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I understand that the board has concluded that conversion of oil-fired power stations to coal would be uneconomic at present.

**Mr. Pike:** Should not the Government be encouraging the CEGB to think again in the best energy interests of the nation? Does he appreciate the importance of conversions of power stations such as Padiham in my constituency?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** As I hope the hon. Gentleman, and, indeed, the whole House is aware, there has been a considerable narrowing of the differential between oil and coal prices in the past 18 months, which has considerably reinforced the case against conversion. I stress, however, that it is for the CEGB to take a decision on this.

**Mr. Forth:** Does my hon. Friend recall that during the miners' strike the miners tried to deny supplies of coal to the power stations and thus electricity to our people, and that reliable, continuous sources of supply were provided by oil? Will he bear that in mind when considering the matter in the future?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I shall, of course, bear that in mind, as any fair-minded citizen would, but the ultimate decision is for the CEGB.

**Mr. Jack Thompson:** Bearing in mind the Minister's comments a few moments ago about the economics of conversion from oil to coal, is not one reason for that programme the lack of investment in research and development in new technology in coal-burning power stations?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** No, I do not think that that is so. The issue rests on the economic case. Unless we observe the economics of the situation, the consumer and industry suffer and industry, in particular, becomes uncompetitive. Ultimately, those are the considerations that matter.

**Mr. Watts:** Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind especially the need to avoid any overdependence on coal and to maintain a diversity of sources of fuel for electricity generation, so that there is no risk of the country being held to ransom by Arthur Scargill and his friends on the Opposition Benches?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** Of all the industrial countries in western Europe, the United Kingdom is blessed with the greatest variety of fuel sources, and it is clearly right to take the best advantage that we can of that and avoid over-reliance on any one source.

**Mr. Wilson:** Has the Minister seen the report in the *Glasgow Herald* today that the CEGB is playing ducks and drakes with the Scottish supply system, and that having taken 20 per cent. of Scottish output during the cold weather it has now apparently stopped the imports? Before any decision is made about conversion of power stations, will the Minister look into what is being done to provide for the economic supply and use of power?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** One of the benefits of being part of the United Kingdom is the mutual assistance that can be given from time to time on both sides of the Scottish border with England and Wales. The fact that assistance goes one way at one time and the other way at another time does not justify criticising what happens on just one occasion, as the hon. Gentleman often chooses to do.

**Mr. Eadie:** Does the Minister agree that as Britain has more coal than oil there will still be coal when oil supplies have been exhausted, so that on economic grounds coal has the advantage? Secondly, as the power station construction industry is hungry for orders, is there not an economic case for giving it orders for conversion to coal because, on economic grounds, the nation and its people would benefit?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** The hon. Gentleman's arguments on economics, taken to their conclusion, would simply put up the price of electricity for the consumer. Having listened to some speeches from the Labour Benches in recent weeks, I am sure that Labour Members would not support that. It would also put up the price for industry, making our goods less competitive in the world. I should be interested to know whether that is what the hon. Gentleman is arguing for.

### Renewable Sources of Energy

6. **Mr. Dickens** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the amounts which his Department will spend in 1986-87 on research and development into renewable sources of energy; how this compares with 1978-79; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Expenditure on my Department's programme for research, development and demonstration into renewable sources of energy in 1986-87, including external contributions, is estimated to be £17·25 million compared with expenditure of £3·6 million in 1978-79.

**Mr. Dickens:** I congratulate the Department of Energy on those excellent figures, which, to be fair, must represent something like a doubling of investment since the Government came to office. Is my right hon. Friend prepared to involve heavily the private sector in investment into wave, wind and solar power and subterranean heat so that we are sure that resources are put into those areas that are technically and economically sound?

**Mr. Hunt:** Yes, my hon. Friend is right. We have sought to maximise contributions from external sources — in particular, the private sector—and over £3 million in the figures that I have announced for 1986-87 is expected to come from such sources, compared with £800,000 last year. More than £100 million has been invested by the Government in renewables research and development since 1979. My hon. Friend is right to stress that the Government have done more than we have to develop the renewable technologies.

### Sizewell

7. **Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects to announce his decision on the report of the inspector on the proposal by the Central Electricity Generating Board to construct a pressurised water reactor at Sizewell.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** In an answer pursuant to a question from my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) on Thursday 22 January, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that he would publish the report today. He has done so and has placed copies both of the full report and of a summary in the Library and Vote Office. My right hon. Friend has asked my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to arrange a debate before he makes any decision.

**Mr. Stern:** I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. Did he note that during the recent cold snap the CEGB transmitted more electricity than ever before, and that even ignoring that, the demand for electricity is approaching the higher end of the estimates given by the CEGB to the Sizewell inquiry? In view of that, will my right hon. Friend ask my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to arrange the earliest possible date for the House to consider and accept the main conclusions of the Layfield inquiry?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I note what my hon. Friend says. It is important that we should have a full debate in the House before a decision is taken, and that will be the position.

**Mr. Benn:** Is the Minister aware that a decision to purchase an American reactor, which the Americans have not chosen to order for 10 years, is a major political act and the decision should be taken by Parliament and not by the Minister? Secondly, can the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance that there will be no advance spending authorising the PWR, simply because the Layfield report has now been published, pending a decision by Parliament and, preferably, by the electorate, because during the election this issue will be a central matter between the parties?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I simply emphasise what I said a moment ago — that no decision will be taken until Parliament has debated this important issue and that important report.

**Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson:** Is not an early decision essential if we are to avoid large sections of the United Kingdom power construction industry going out of business altogether? In arriving at a decision, will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that Britain has had 30 years of building and working gas-cooled reactors, which are now in place and performing satisfactorily, but that while the PWR may be old technology we have little direct experience, except in military applications, of operating it in Britain, and the sums upon which Sizewell was originally based have now been turned completely upside down? Therefore, will he assure the House that even if the go-ahead is given to Sizewell, he is not shutting the door on further AGR development in the future?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I know that my right hon. Friend, as is his custom, will consider very carefully all the points that are made in the debate.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** Given that the report concludes that there has not yet been sufficient public and political consideration of the regulation of the safety of the nuclear industry, will the Government give two undertakings? First, will they undertake that no decision will be taken before the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate has published its report and the report has been given satisfactory consideration? Secondly, will they ensure that there is sufficient time for the political and public process of consultation to take place on that huge report, especially because on cost and needs grounds the prospect of Sizewell is far less likely to be justified now than ever before?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** Obviously, the hon. Gentleman has a number of points that he wishes to make. In those circumstances, I am sure that he welcomes the fact that there will be a full debate on the matter in the House.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Would the security arrangements for a pressurised water reactor be any different from those existing at present in Britain's nuclear power stations? Is it true that Mr. R. W. Marshall broke into the Trawsfynydd power station in Wales and that damage could have been done? If such an incident took place in the future, it might turn the British people against nuclear power and some of us do not want that to happen. Can we therefore have assurances about security at power stations?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** The hon. Gentleman's question relates to the Sizewell report. We shall have an opportunity to debate that matter and I take note of the hon. Gentleman's points.

**Sir Trevor Skeet:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that less than 1 per cent. of average radiation comes from the nuclear industry and that chapter 2 of the Sizewell report provides ample justification for going ahead with the Sizewell PWR programme as the most suitable programme for the United Kingdom?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I commend my hon. Friend for the speed with which he has managed to read what he regards as the relevant parts of the report since its publication. However, in all seriousness, it is important that the recommendations and conclusions are read in the context of the report as a whole. They must be considered together before any conclusions can be reached.

**Mr. Barron:** Paragraph 12 of chapter 108 of the Sizewell report refers to safety and states:

> "The examination of safety was not exhausted."

It continues:

> "many matters were examined only briefly if at all."

It also states:

> "Furthermore, the design was incomplete and not yet susceptible of a final assessment of its safety."

I understand the position if that is not the case. If that is the case, following the debate in the House, will it be left in the hands of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and the CEGB to make the final decision on safety? Is the Minister satisfied with that, as both those bodies seem to operate in a cloud of secrecy most of the time?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I am sorry that the hon. Gentleman did not take the advice that I gave earlier. I suggest that he takes that advice. Even knowing the assiduity of the hon. Gentleman, I cannot believe that he could have read the whole report in just one hour and 45 minutes.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas:** Now that the planning process has reached publication, can the Minister tell the House the Department's intentions for the future CEGB proposals following on from Sizewell and other Magnox sites, including Trawsfynydd in my constituency?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** Let us deal with Sizewell first.

**Mr. Haynes:** I should have thought that it would be more appropriate for the Secretary of the State to be present to answer such important questions. Bearing in mind that the report has been produced by an inspector by way of consultation, when will other people be consulted about nuclear power?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I would have hoped that the hon. Gentleman would regard himself as one of the representatives of the people. He will have an opportunity to take part in the debate in the House. I am sorry that, from his own mouth, he has said that he feels that he is not able to represent the people properly. If that is his view, it may not be the proper one.

**Mr. Kennedy:** Will the Minister and his departmental colleagues resist the temptation, which seems to be with him this afternoon, of suggesting that the acceptability of a balanced provision of energy resources, by nuclear or other means, necessitates acceptance of a report which points to the advisability of constructing a PWR? On the question asked by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), relating to PWR, why does it appear that the Government wish to accept American technology which the Americans do not believe is safe enough for their people?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** The hon. Gentleman asks me not to yield to temptation. That is precisely what I have done this afternoon.

**Mr. Orme:** May I press the Minister on the question of the debate? He and the House will agree that it is important to have a debate in the country as well as in the House. Can he give us some idea of the Government's thinking on the date for that debate?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I understand fully what the right hon. Gentleman says. It is a matter for the business managers of the House, and I have no doubt that they will have noted what he said.

## District Heating (Basildon)

8. **Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the cost-effectiveness of the district heating systems in Felmores and Langdon Hills in Basildon.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The Government recognise the important contribution made by district heating schemes where they are commercially viable. The operation of the two schemes mentioned by my hon. Friend is, however, a matter for the Commission for the New Towns, which is answerable to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

**Mr. Amess:** Is the Minister aware that many of my constituents in the Felmores and Langdon Hills area, of Basildon are completely dissatisfied with the district heating system, believing it to be expensive and inefficient? In the light of the great success enjoyed by Sid, will my hon. Friend do everything in his power to encourage the Commission for the New Towns to install individual gas-fired central heating?

**Mr. Hunt:** I very much regret the problems experienced by my hon. Friend's constituents. I understand that the former New Town Development Corporation asked the Department of the Environment to consider agreeing in principle to the replacement of the Felmores estate district heating system with independent systems for each dwelling. Last summer the Department of the Environment invited the Commission for the New Towns to carry out an analysis of that option and of the alternative of retaining the district heating systems with improvements. That analysis is still awaited.

## Conservation

9. **Mr. Rowlands** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what proposals he has to expand energy conservation measures for the domestic consumer.

**Mr. David Hunt:** As well as supporting the continuing expansion of community insulation projects, which have now insulated more than 300,000 homes, my Department continues actively to promote the cost-effective energy efficiency measures which all householders should take to benefit from reduced fuel bills.

**Mr. Rowlands:** Is it not rather an odd way to celebrate Energy Efficiency Year by removing loft insulation grants from millions of householders? Is the Minister aware that more than half our households have inadequte loft insulation, even by current standards? Is he aware that 12·5 million households lack effective draught-proofing and that 10·5 million households lack cavity wall insulation? What new measures will the Government introduce to deal with the backlog?

**Mr. Hunt:** The hon. Gentleman is distorting the position. He should be aware that on 19 December my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction announced that he would make available up to a further £1·5 million of resources, which is being distributed to councils in England which had exhausted their present allocations. But with nearly 90 per cent. of accessible roofs in England insulated, the Minister decided to concentrate the scheme's assistance on those who have most difficulty in affording the cost of loft insulation. Therefore, he announced that he would be introducing a new scheme, withdrawing the general grant of 66 per cent., but extending the availability of the more generous 90 per cent. grant to all householders who received housing benefit or supplementary benefit.

I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would realise that that change will assist greatly families with low incomes for whom it is most important to gain the maximum possible benefit from the money that they spend on heating their homes.

**Mr. Hannam:** Although I congratulate my hon. Friend on the success of the recent neighbourhood energy action week, does he accept that there is anxiety about the delay in the anouncement by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services of a replacement for the single payments scheme? Will he exert pressure on the Secretary of State for the Environment to include draught-proofing in any future home insulation scheme, as that is the best way to help elderly people to overcome problems such as those they experienced in the recent cold spell?

**Mr. Hunt:** I shall mention my hon. Friend's comments to my right hon. Friends the Secretaries of State, but the Government have given a clear undertaking to the House that adequate arrangements will be made to enable those important projects to continue after the social security reforms. Opposition Members should realise that the Government's programme of insulating low-income households dwarfs anything that existed when the Labour party was in power.

**Mr. Evans:** Is the Minister aware that those involved in the industry regard with disbelief the statement that 90 per cent. of lofts in Britain have been insulated? Will he disclose the figures on which the Government have based that statement? May I add my voice to those who urge that any money that is proposed to be saved on the loft insulation programme should be used to draught-proof the homes of those on social security benefit?

**Mr. Hunt:** I repeat what I said, that nearly 90 per cent. of accessible roofs in England are now insulated. It is right to concentrate resources on those who need the greatest help. They are getting the greatest help under this Government.

**Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** I know that my hon. Friend is aware of the relative inefficiency of the insulation of most of our homes. To what extent is the Department of Energy co-operating in sharing a common budget with the Department of Employment, the housing department within the Department of the Environment and the Department of Industry, and not leaving the matter only to the poor old DHSS?

**Mr. Hunt:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right to stress the fact that Government support for the community insulation project is coming from a range of Government Departments. That support is now worth £30 million a year. We shall continue to intensify it, with 360 of these groups already established, 180 more planned and with a target of more than 500 groups operating by the early part of next year.

### Leicester (Combined Heat and Power Consortium)

11. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will report on the recent visit to Leicester by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Wirral, West (Mr. Hunt), to view the presentation by the Leicester combined heat and power consortium.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I visited Leicester on Wednesday 21 January. The CHP consortium is to be complimented on producing a very professional report. The key to further development lies in attracting private sector finance, which I know the Leicester consortium is very much aware of, and I hope that it will achieve the potential to take this important project forward.

**Mr. Bruinvels:** Having accompanied my hon. Friend to view the combined heat and power consortium at Leicester, may I reinforce what he probably already knows namely, that it is ready and willing to get on with reducing the cost of heating in Leicester, but desperately needs additional help to meet the particularly high cost of rates of this project and any to cope with legislative burden? Not only are 400 jobs guaranteed if the construction goes ahead but there will be substantial savings for all my constituents and those of other hon. Members in Leicester.

**Mr. Hunt:** My hon. Friend is right to highlight the fact that Leicester is in the lead. I congratulate him and my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Spencer) on the strong support that they have given to the consortium. Following my meeting, I am urgently examining with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment the obstacles that the consortium has identified.

**Mr. Janner:** Does the Minister accept that the plans of the consortium have the full support of the council, irrespective of party, and that the council is to be congratulated on the efforts that it has made to back it? Meanwhile, as this will take much time to reach fruition, will the Minister press for help for the people who are in need and suffering from cold, especially during the recent spell, such as the elderly, the pensioners, the disabled, the ill, all of whom are not being looked after by the Government and who will suffer until this plan comes into operation?

**Mr. Hunt:** The hon. and learned Gentleman is absolutely right to pay tribute to those who support the consortium, such as my hon. Friends the hon. Member for Leicester, East, (Mr. Bruinvels) and my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, South, and the local authority. So far as Government help is concerned, it is a fact that this Government have provided record levels of support for the very target groups that the hon. and learned Gentleman mentioned.

**Mr. Spencer:** Is my hon. Friend aware that in my constituency we welcome a new source of energy which would lead to a reduction in heating costs and further sharpen the keen competitive edge of Leicester's industry? Will he see that any scheme remains firmly in the sector of private enterprise?

**Mr. Hunt:** I thank my hon. and learned Friend. I stress once again that this Government fully support CHP and agree that the key to future development must lie in projects which will attract private sector finance. I hope that Leicester has that potential.

### Geothermal Power

12. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what major projects his Department is sponsoring on geothermal power as an energy source; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** My Department is funding a further £6·85 million of research into geothermal energy to determine the cost-effective contribution that hot dry rocks could make in the United Kingdom. This includes a £5·85 million extension to the programme of reservoir investigations by the Camborne school of mines and a further £1 million on supporting studies.

**Mr. Thompson:** I thank my right hon. Friend for that renewed commitment by the Government to this alternative energy source. Does he agree that although we must continue to obtain energy from main fuels, including nuclear power, there should be an increasing commitment to alternative power sources, such as energy drawn from hot rocks beneath the earth's crust? Will he acknowledge that that is a good way of proceeding, and will he make further commitments in this direction?

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** My hon. Friend knows that the Department of Energy has made a major contribution in this instance and has invested about £20 million so far. The quality of the work that is being carried out is establishing the United Kingdom as a world leader in this technology. We are delighted to be able to support it and to see it continue.

## THE ARTS

### Crafts Council

33. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement about the work of the Crafts Council and its funding.

**The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce):** I fully support the work of the Crafts Council in promoting the wider practice and appreciation of the crafts. I am maintaining its funding broadly in line with inflation.

**Mr. Chapman:** Does my right hon. Friend welcome the priority that is given by the Crafts Council to the marketing and design of a wide range of craft products? Will he confirm that this has a beneficial spin-off for a wide range of industry, including exports? Will he bear that in mind sympathetically when he comes to review the continuation of a grant to the Crafts Council?

**Mr. Luce:** I much endorse what my hon. Friend has said. The council is doing an excellent job under the leadership of its chairman, Sir Nevil Macready, whose chairmanship has now been renewed. In the increased grant that I gave I was glad to be able specifically to allocate £100,000 to regional development, especially for marketing work, to help craftsmen to market their crafts and objects of art more effectively and to export them more effectively.

### Works of Art (Loans)

34. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Minister for the Arts whether he plans to encourage lending by the national collections to provincial museums and galleries.

**Mr. Luce:** Yes, Sir. Many loans already help to widen access to our national treasures, but I believe we could do more. The Museums and Galleries Commission plans to set up a modest touring exhibition scheme this year. I hope that it will help to stimulate yet further activity.

**Mr. Heathcoat-Amory:** I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. Will he direct his attention to specific national collections such as the Victoria and Albert and the British museums, both of which have large quantities of material in their basements that are seldom seen by the public? Will he persuade them to part with them, or loan them, to provincial museums and galleries? If security and insurance is a problem, perhaps central Government funding should be directed to that area of expenditure rather than to acquiring further materials and pictures that will be seldom seen by the public?

**Mr. Luce:** I agree with my hon. Friend that some of our national museums and galleries have a substantial proportion of their treasures in storage—not necessarily locked away—although it should be acknowledged that they rotate the objects of art that they display quite regularly. I believe that it is right to stress the need to encourage further loans of these objects of art to various parts of the country. It is with that in mind that the Government's indemnity scheme does a great deal to facilitate loans to be made to local museums, for example. It is to encourage this prospect that the Museums and Galleries Commission has now established the unit to which I have referred, which is designed to encourage exhibitions throughout the country.

**Mr. Robert Sheldon:** I welcome what the Minister has said, but will he go a little further and undertake positively to make funds available to assist with the project that is designed to ensure that some of the basement articles are displayed throughout the country? There are many items in London that would be received with rapture in other parts of the country. Will he go further than he has gone so far?

**Mr. Luce:** The commission has earmarked a modest sum especially for the purpose of encouraging that to happen and to link those who want to exhibit objects of art from our national museums and galleries. The right hon. Gentleman should not underestimate that which can be achieved through the Government's indemnity scheme. I am sure he knows that the expense of taking out commercial loans means that the cost of the premium is prohibitive. In my view, the Government's indemnity scheme plays the most prominent part.

**Mr. Freud:** Will the Minister encourage the national museums to publish an inventory of what they have in their basements? Such an inventory could be sent to local and provincial galleries. Perhaps the Minister could ask national museums to give advice to the provincial museums in respect of storing and exhibitions.

**Mr. Luce:** I shall certainly inquire whether it is possible for the national museums and galleries to provide an inventory. With the gradual introduction of computer services in those museums and galleries it may be possible to do that. I shall certainly let the hon. Gentleman know the results of my inquiries.

**Mr. Fisher:** Surely, if the Minister chose, he could give much more determined support for this policy. Does he accept that people in the regions have a right to see, and want to see, the riches of our national collections? Will he consider initiating a national policy to bring together the Musuems Commission, the Arts Council, area museum councils and regional arts associations, which could be funded to co-operate to open the national collections to the whole of the country?

**Mr. Luce:** May I first congratulate the hon. Gentleman on becoming Opposition spokesman for the arts. I hope that he finds the position as interesting as I do on this side of the Box. I think that we shall look forward, with interest, to discovering Labour party policy on the arts. I am very glad that he supports the general thrust of the discussion on the question of loans to galleries all over the country. It is for the Museum and Galleries Commission to co-ordinate the task nationally, and I shall do whatever I can to support it. The commission is the right body to put forward a national policy, and that is precisely what has been achieved with this new unit.

### Museums and Galleries (Grants)

35. **Sir David Price** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will seek to ensure that grants made to museums and galleries for the acquisition of artefacts are treated as capital rather than current expenditure.

**Mr. Luce:** Funds for national museums and galleries to acquire objects for their collections are voted annually as part of their grant-in-aid. These funds may, however, be carried forward from year to year if institutions wish to use them to accumulate a purchase fund.

**Sir David Price:** Will my right hon. Friend accept that the acquisition of a great work of art by a public gallery or museum is not a matter of a one-off piece of expenditure? It is the acquisition by the nation of something that is not only a capital asset but of something which, I hope, adds to the glory of our nation. Will my right hon. Friend suggest to the Treasury that to treat such an acquisition as current expenditure is an act of Treasury frivolity? The purchase should be treated as a capital asset. The entire grant should be considered as a capital matter and not a matter of current cash flow. Will my right hon. Friend explain that to the Treasury?

**Mr. Luce:** I appreciate the importance of the question that my hon. Friend has asked, but I must point out that it is possible for the national museums and galleries— indeed, it is possible to negotiate the same deal for the local authority museums and galleries — to accumulate a purchase fund for the acquisition of a work of art and to carry over 100 per cent. of that purchase fund to the following year. That is an important concession on the part of the Treasury.

We should not lose sight of the fact that there are other ways, in addition to the purchase fund, of purchasing works of art, or indeed preserving those works of art for the nation. For example, we now have the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and this does an important job. There is also the acceptance in lieu scheme, wherein up to £12 million can be drawn upon to help preserve works of art for the nation. The important tax changes of the last Budget have also contributed to preserving works of art in this country.

**Mr. Banks:** Perhaps the Minister would consider authorising a lease-back arrangement for the great national collections along the lines of some of the arrangements of local authorities. One can imagine the sort of revenue that that could generate. Has the Minister done anything to try to secure for the nation Van Gogh's painting of sunflowers that is due to come up for auction? Will the Minister make the money available to secure it for the nation? Indeed, will he start thinking about imposing some sort of levy on the obscenely high prices paid for paintings at auctions? Money could be taken from the price of those old masters and perhaps be dedicated to some of our young artists.

**Mr. Luce:** There are already well-established good procedures for intervention where it is thought that certain works of art ought to be considered for preservation in this country. Those procedures were set up by the Government in 1980 and the National Heritage Memorial Fund helps to fulfil that task. It is for it to make judgments about various works of art. As the hon. Gentleman knows, since the early 1950s there has been in existence the Export Review Committee, which has the job of recommending to me that certain works of art should be stopped from sale abroad until such time as we have tested whether this country is prepared to provide the funds for them.

**Mr. Cormack:** Will my right hon. Friend take Treasury Ministers on a tour of some of our national museums and, if they fail to be excited by the beauty of the objects displayed, will he point out just how much money they represent to the country, both in capital value and in the tourist revenue that they generate?

**Mr. Luce:** In fairness to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I should point out that he recognised the importance of this when we were able to announce the new acceptance in lieu scheme, which, as I have said, provides an extra £10 million in contingency reserve, on which we can now draw. That is in itself an important acknowledgement by my right hon. Friend of the need to preserve our works of art.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### Secondment

44. **Dr. Twinn** asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he will give the figures for secondment in and out of the Civil Service over the last three years.

**The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce):** Outward secondments increased from 632 in 1983 to 679 in 1985, and inward secondments from 133 to 227. Figures for 1986 are expected to be available in April this year, but the Government are working for a continued expansion in secondments.

**Dr. Twinn:** I thank my right hon. Friend for that information. Can he assure us that the Government will do everything that they can to expand the number of incoming secondments to the Civil Service, as the programme brings great benefit to the Civil Service and to industry? Could not the benefits to industry be more widely acknowledged by industry?

**Mr. Luce:** I agree with my hon. Friend. As he has seen from the figures, there are fewer inward secondments than outward secondments, and I am anxious to persuade industry and other sectors to lend some of their people to the Civil Service for a period of, say, two years. It does good to the Civil Service and should help it. The more that we can persuade industry, the better, and I shall continue my efforts in that direction.

**Mr. Dickens:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that politicians who enter this place having had experience in commerce and industry are perhaps more alert politicians? Is it not healthy that civil servants should be seconded into industry so that they know what the outside world is all about?

**Mr. Luce:** I do not know whether my hon. Friend is volunteering for secondment, but I agree that there is great value in officials having experience of the outside world. That two-year period can bring enormous benefits when they come back to the Civil Service. That is why I am increasing the target for the number of civil servants who should be seconded outside.

### CPSA (General Secretary)

47. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Minister for the Civil Service when he expects to meet the new general secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association to discuss Civil Service pay and conditions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce:** I meet the leaders of the non-industrial Civil Service trade unions from time to time, but have no immediate plans to meet Mr. John Ellis. Civil Service pay, in any case, is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

**Mr. Bruinvels:** My right hon. Friend will no doubt join me in congratulating the CPSA and its new leader, John Ellis, on such a decisive election win. Is this not the way that democracy can be seen to be at work, and does it not show that, in true and fair elections, the right people can be elected? When my right hon. Friend next sees Mr. Ellis, will he advise him to pay a visit to the Leicester DHSS office, to ensure that the workers in that office, who are members of the CPSA, are putting my constituents first and putting aside their differences and their past support for Militant?

**Mr. Luce:** I am sure that the vast majority of civil servants put service, not only to my hon. Friend's constituents but to the public as a whole, first. Let me endorse what he said. I should like to feel that the House will join me in congratulating the CPSA having conducted a fair and democratic election in which the majority of members participated. I welcome the fact that there was on this occasion a decisive result.

**Mr. Winnick:** As the Minister meets leaders of non-industrial trade unions may I ask whether he has recently met the appropriate trade unions in the Civil Service about the fact that it is now three years since the shameful ban was imposed on GCHQ employees belonging to a trade union? As, in a few moments, the Home Secretary will be making as much political capital as he can out of events on Saturday, does not the ban on trade unionists at GCHQ demonstrate beyond any doubt that the Government are the enemy of trade unionism?

**Mr. Luce:** The hon. Gentleman is talking absolute nonsense and he knows it. He also knows, and the House will have noted, that while this matter is principally for my right hon. the Foreign Secretary, by declaring this case inadmissible the European Commission on Human Rights has confirmed the Government's view that our actions were fully in accordance with our commitments to human rights.

**Mr. Favell:** How successful has my right hon. Friend been in persuading the CPSA and other Civil Service unions to have clerical work done in the north? Banks manage to have typing, for example, done well away from branches because modern communications enable dictation to be carried out over a distance. Is there any point in paying an arm and a leg for a typist in London when the work can be done at half the cost and twice as well in the north?

**Mr. Luce:** My hon. Friend has put his finger on an important point. It is perfectly true that it is much more expensive to recruit people in the south-east than it is to recruit them in other parts of Britain. He may like to note that over the past seven years there has been a natural progression of 5,000 officials moving outside London because it is thought that it is operationally more efficient to move them to other regions.

**Dr. McDonald:** Does the Minister not think that morale in the Civil Service would be much improved if the Government made it plain that they recognise the value of the Civil Service and if they sought to re-establish a settled pay system and improve equal opportunities throughout the service?

**Mr. Luce:** The hon. Lady's assumption that the morale of the Civil Service is low is wrong. Of course certain parts of the Civil Service are going through particular difficulties, some of them in the scientific field. On Wednesday the Government will launch, for the first time ever, an annual report on the work of the Management and Personnel Office and on the Civil Service as a whole. The hon. Lady will find there a strong tribute to the Civil Service by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Marlow:** As the cost of living, the cost of housing, and wage rates, are totally different in different parts of the country, is it not daft that civil servants are paid the same wherever they happen to be outside London? As we have a strong Government, is it not time that some action was taken on this?

**Mr. Luce:** Although Civil Service pay is principally a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, my hon. Friend may like to note that there has been increased progression towards a more flexible pay system in the Civil Service and that we now have a system of pay additions for those parts of the Civil Service presenting recruitment and retention problems. That is a move in the direction about which my hon. Friend speaks.

## THE ARTS

### VAT

39. **Mr. Freud** asked the Minister for the Arts what representations he has had regarding the effect of removing value added tax on the performing arts; and if he will make a statement.

**The Minister for the Arts (Mr. Richard Luce):** I have received a number of representations. In particular, the Society of West End Theatres has advocated the removal of VAT from theatre tickets, and the report compiled last year by the National Campaign for the Arts argued for the zero rating of the arts for VAT purposes. As the House knows, these are primarily matters for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

**Mr. Freud:** Although it is the job of his right hon. Friend to look into these matters, will the right hon. Gentleman make it clear to his right hon. Friend that a vast amount of work is done for no purpose other than raising subsidy for the theatre, and that that subsidy is then given to the Exchequer? If he could make that clear to his right hon. Friend, a great amount of work would be saved and much finance could be generated for the live theatre.

**Mr. Luce:** Of course I acknowledge that the theatre world and the arts world contribute VAT to the overall revenue of the Government. The hon. Gentleman must accept that this policy on indirect taxation is part of the broad strategy of the Government. We want to put greater stress on indirect taxation and seek the reduction of income tax. Against that background one must seek the broadest base for indirect tax, and one must acknowledge that. The best way we can positively help the arts is by of the kinds of changes that we saw in the last Budget, which encouraged individuals and corporations to give more to the arts. This is the time for the arts world to generate support from those sectors.

### South Bank Complex

40. **Dr. Twinn** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on progress of revitalising the South Bank arts complex.

**Mr. Luce:** The South Bank Board of the Arts Council has made great strides since it took over in April 1986. I am confident that the imaginative plans of the board will be increasingly justified by events as they come to fruition in the years ahead.

**Dr. Twinn:** Will my right hon. Friend accept the congratulations of Conservative Greater London Members of Parliament who have seen the energetic programme introduced by the committee at the South Bank Centre since it took over from the Greater London council, inheriting a mess when it did so?

**Mr. Luce:** I agree with my hon. Friend. The board, under the leadership of Ronnie Grierson, has shown great imagination in planning the longer term future of the South Bank. If we look back to the gloomy prognosis given by so many Opposition members over a year ago, we find the situation is quite different and that the plans for the future of the South Bank are exciting.

## Wapping (Disturbances)

3.30 pm

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will make a statement about the disorder at Wapping on Saturday evening.

I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the disorder followed a march from central London marking the anniversary of the News International dispute. The police estimate that 12,500 people took part. When the march reached Wapping at 7.15 pm disorder broke out almost immediately. Cordons of police officers in ordinary uniform came under attack with missiles. At about 7.40 pm, a lorry being used by the demonstrators was overturned, and an attempt was made to set it on fire. Disorder then continued for some hours. Missiles were thrown at the police, including rocks, bottles, ball bearings, darts, railings, scaffolding poles and pieces of paving stone. The police used mounted officers, and foot officers in protective equipment, to restore order. I understand that calm was restored by about midnight.

In all, 162 police officers were injured. The injuries included a broken bone in the hand, injuries to the face and legs and concussion. Two officers were detained in hospital overnight. I am glad to say that they have now both been discharged. The police know of 40 members of the public who were injured; there will have been others whose injuries did not come to police attention. I understand that 67 people were arrested, of whom 65 have now been charged with public order and other offences. Fifteen of those 67 people arrested are print workers.

This is the latest in a series of disturbances connected with demonstrations at Wapping. Over the past year, including last Saturday, 572 police officers have been injured, 1,462 people have been arrested, and over 1·2 million police man-hours have been spent. The total additional policing cost up to the end of 1986 is estimated at £5·3 million.

It is clear that some of those attending Saturday's demonstration armed themselves with ferocious weapons intent on violent attacks against the police. No serious attempt was made to stop the lorries leaving the plant, and they were able to do so without significant difficulty.

It also seems clear that the organisers of these demonstrations are unable to prevent violence or to control the activities of all their supporters. They must now, in my view, find some other way of making their point without providing occasions for violence and disorder.

I have conveyed to the Commissioner my full support for the action taken by the Metropolitan police to deal with this disgraceful incident, and my sympathy for the police officers who have been injured. The vicious attack on Saturday evening had nothing to do with peaceful protest or the peaceful furtherance of a dispute within the law. I trust that it will be condemned unreservedly by both sides of the House.

**Mr. Gerald Kaufman** (Manchester, Gorton) *rose*——

**Hon. Members:** Condemn it.

**Mr. Kaufman:** The House will want to voice its strongest possible condemnation of all the gratuitous violence at Wapping on Saturday night. The House will also wish to send its sympathy to all those who were injured during the ugly events at Wapping, to members of the Metropolitan police, local residents and all those who went to Wapping to avail themselves of their lawful and legitimate right — *[Interruption.]* — their lawful and legitimate right of peaceful demonstration. That peaceful non-violent demonstration was the objective of the overwhelming majority of those who were present at Wapping is shown by the fact that a highly active police presence found it necessary to arrest 67 people — only one half of 1 per cent. of the 12,500 people who took part.

Is the Home Secretary aware that the events at Wapping highlight three extremely serious problems? *[Interruption.]* The first is the problem for trade unionists pursuing a just and important grievance when outside elements not involved in the dispute batten on and exploit that grievance for their own sectarian purposes. It is no coincidence that most of those people who were arrested at Wapping on Saturday were neither print workers nor local residents. Brenda Dean of SOGAT '82 and Tony Dubbins of the National Graphical Association have today reiterated to me their absolute dissociation from those outside and alien to the democratic trade union Labour movement who fix themselves like leeches to a cause which they do not assist but actively discredit.

Secondly, there is the problem for the police, who have still not found it possible to work out tactics to deal with potential or actual disorder which protects both the police and innocent demonstrators and bystanders from danger and injury. In view of the seriousness of the situation and conflicting reports of exactly what took place at Wapping, it is essential that there be an urgent and independent public inquiry——

**Hon. Members:** No!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I warn the House that this is a day when we have a time problem. I must ask the House to hear the right hon. Gentleman in silence.

**Mr. Kaufman:** That was the party of order.

— that there should be an urgent and independent public inquiry into Saturday's events and the events leading up to Saturday, for which there should be made available all the video and sound recordings made at Wapping by the broadcasting authorities and other organisations, including the police.

Thirdly, we once again see clearly what happens under a Government who have a vested interest — [Hon. Members: "Oh."] — a vested interest in disorder. Any other Government, Conservative as well as Labour, would by now have tried to step in to assist in producing a solution to a dispute which has dragged on for so long. *[Interruption.]*

The present Government's policies actively foster confrontation. Any other Government would show concern at the serious and damaging way in which the massive and continuing police presence at Wapping is distracting the Metropolitan force from dealing with the 750,000 crimes which are being committed in London, a dilemma to which the Commissioner himself drew attention last Friday. The Prime Minister is perfectly content to mouth catchphrases about law and order — [Hon. Members: "Disgraceful."]. No doubt this will be broadcast and people will hear how Conservative Members behave in what is supposed to be a free Parliament.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg):** We do not like the right hon. Gentleman supporting rioters.

**Mr. Kaufman:** The hon. Gentleman is so stupid that he is not worth answering.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The shadow Minister is supposed to be asking questions.

**Mr. Kaufman:** Is the Home Secretary aware that the Prime Minister is perfectly content to mouth catchphrases about law and order while London suffers from its worst ever crime wave and its lowest ever crime clear-up rate? That is the harsh reality that spotlights the difference between this Government's hypocritical slogans and the crime and disorder over which they complacently preside.

**Mr. Hurd:** I can tell from that that the right hon. Gentleman finds himself in some difficulty. He is right to the extent that several hundred people detached themselves from the much larger procession and were responsible for the violence, but the organisers of the event know perfectly well that violence and violent people would attach themselves to it. There is nothing new about that —it happened in May—so it was deeply unwise to hold and organise a demonstration at that place at that time.

As regards the right hon. Gentleman's request for an inquiry, I would simply say that the background to such events is well known. Some of the events of Saturday night will be investigated by the courts as a result of the charges that have been made. Parliament has laid down the procedures for investigating complaints against the police, including supervision by the independent Police Complaints Authority.

Contrary to what the right hon. Gentleman has said, I have often pointed out in the House over the past year the dangers and damage done to the policing of London because of the diversion of policemen to the Wapping dispute. I would expect that, after a year of ambiguity, the right hon. Gentleman would make it clear whether, in his view, the police are right to be present at Wapping upholding the freedom of those who work there or whether he believes, as do some of his hon. Friends, that they should withdraw and leave the field clear for the thugs whom we saw in action on Saturday night.

**Mr. Cranley Onslow** (Woking): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the whole House will await with interest the answer by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) to his challenge? Meanwhile, can my right hon. Friend confirm the press reports that some Opposition Members were present and spoke at that disgraceful riot, including the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) and the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Brian Sedgemore** (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): No.

**Mr. Onslow:** Can my right hon. Friend also confirm that, if those reports were correct, the words that were attributed to those speakers were more likely to inflame the mob than to restrain it?

**Mr. Hurd:** I believe I am correct in saying that the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) was present and that he addressed the meeting. I have no account of what he said or whether he attempted to restrain the violence of those attacking the police.

**Dr. David Owen** (Plymouth, Devonport): Although condemnation of the violence should be total and unequivocal, the question has to be posed of what will be done. For a year now, we have seen not peaceful demonstrations in the defence of trade union rights, but a squalid public nuisance. Does the Home Secretary think that political demonstrations should continue to take place in Wapping highway, disrupting the residents' lives for over a year and putting them at risk? Indeed, a young boy recently lost his life on the highway because of this whole affair.

Is it not time that it was clearly stated that that is not in defence of reasonable trade unionism and that such demonstrations should take place in Trafalgar square?

**Mr. Hurd:** The right hon. Gentleman is elaborating a point that I made. It is not for me to get involved in the merits of the dispute; it is not for the police to get involved in the merits of the dispute. But it is perfectly reasonable that the Home Secretary should, as I have done often over the past months, say that it is wrong and unwise for those organising the dispute to conduct it in such a way that the consequences described by the right hon. Gentleman almost inevitably flow from it.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** (Bury St. Edmunds): Since the stated purpose of some of those who went to that demonstration —not the print workers—was specifically to embroil the police in violence and so damage their standing with the public, will my right hon. Friend study some of the literature that is circulated by those people? Is he aware that one leaflet shows how to make a petrol bomb, under the legend: "Pigs today and bacon tomorrow," and that another piece of that literature says:

> "We confront, we maim and we kill the police because we hate them. They are the class enemy."

Will not my right hon. Friend beseech Opposition Members who are doing their best to rid the Labour party of that sort of person——

**Mr. Dave Nellist** (Coventry, South-East): Don't you accuse people——

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** Will not my right hon. Friend beseech them to ask——

**Mr. Nellist:** Withdraw that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Nellist:** Withdraw that or repeat it outside.

**Mr. Hurd** *rose*——

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** Will my right hon. Friend, with the support of the Opposition Front Bench, not beseech local authorities that are financing that sort of literature to stop handing out the ratepayers' money for that purpose?

**Mr. Nellist:** Withdraw that or prove it outside.

**Mr. Hurd:** I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) will make available to the authorities any literature that he thinks ought to be investigated, in case it falls foul of the law, but he is right in saying that it is high time for those on the Opposition Benches who are seriously interested in the policing of London to bring to an end the ambiguity to which I have drawn attention.

**Mr. Michael Foot** (Blaenau Gwent): Since it is quite evident that, on this occasion and on previous occasions, the actions that have led to the violence have come not from just one quarter — [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] Evidence to that account has been presented to the Home Secretary on numerous occasions. Therefore, if the Home Secretary thinks that his case is so good, why is he so afraid of an independent inquiry, which is what the trade union leaders are asking for?

**Mr. Hurd:** Partly because, if one has an independent inquiry, one immediately cuts across the ordinary processes of law. I am anxious that those charged with offences on Saturday night or before should face those charges in the courts. I am anxious that any complaints against the police should be handled through the procedures that Parliament has laid down. Both those lines of action, which seem to me right and normal, would be to some extent complicated and frustrated if there was an inquiry — [HON. MEMBERS: "Scarman."] The Scarman inquiry dealt with the whole background. On this occasion it is very well known, though controversial.

The crucial point, which the right hon. Gentleman brought up, is that the conduct of the dispute on the trade union side has attracted around it a cluster of violent people. There is no dispute about that. I urge that those responsible for continuing the dispute find some way of doing so, if they feel that they must, while getting rid of the violent fringe that is causing all the trouble.

**Mr. John Wheeler** (Westminster, North): Does my right hon. Friend not agree that the Labour party cannot have it both ways—that if it pretends to have an interest in crime prevention and good policing in London, it must use its influence to get its people off the streets and into the negotiating room so that our police may go back to policing the streets of London?

**Mr. Hurd:** I entirely agree with my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Peter Shore** (Bethnal Green and Stepney): As the Member of Parliament for the area that includes Wapping, may I convey to the Home Secretary my profound and unreserved condemnation of the attacks that were made on the police on Saturday night? But may I equally convey to him my profound concern about the attacks that were made by the police on a number of my constituents who were peacefully demonstrating in the area? I entirely agree with the Home Secretary that individual cases and those who were arrested should be brought to trial, and complaints against the police properly heard, but surely the scale of the events and the important issues that are involved—including the maintenance of law and order in Britain in the 1980s — deserve a full, independent public inquiry and I urge that on the right hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Hurd:** What occurred on this occasion — as on previous occasions — is that a peaceful demonstration was transformed by attacks on the police from a minority of those present. Having endured that for some time, the police took action to restore order. Once that action has begun, all kinds of things happen and all kinds of people take all kinds of action. That is what I and the right hon. Gentleman mean when we say individual cases.

I cannot see any purpose in having a general inquiry, because the essence of the matter is not in dispute. The essence of the matter is that an industrial dispute, which has dragged on for month after month, with great harm to the policing of London, is complicated by the presence of violent people. The answer lies in the hands of those who are organising the dispute to conduct the dispute if they have to do so, in a way that disposes of that fringe.

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** (Altrincham and Sale): Will my right hon. Friend ask the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) to spell out how people can go on peaceful demonstrations when they are armed with stones, bricks and spears? Will he further say that the organisers of the demonstration, instead of weeping tears on television, should take their share of responsibility because they organised it? Can we have an investigation into what was being said behind the picket lines by people who, I believe, were inciting violence?

**Mr. Hurd:** If there is evidence of incitement, it has to be examined, but my hon. Friend's main point is entirely right. Several hundred people, a minority of the 12,500 people taking part — this has happened before — were responsible for what happened on Saturday night, and the onus falls on those responsible for these events to make sure they do not organise their affairs so that this happens again and again.

**Mr. Ron Leighton** (Newham, North-East): Although the Home Secretary is the one-man police authority for London, does he realise that he knows less about what happened on Saturday night than most people, because he was not there, and that he should listen to the constituency Members of Parliament who live in east London and who were there?

Will he accept it from me that the police behaved with excessive, unlawful, indiscriminate and quite sickening brutality and violence? Does he realise that if he allows the riot squad to continue in that way, they will soon kill somebody? Does he realise that those workers who are involved in an industrial dispute in this country have a perfect and proper right to demonstrate, and will continue to do so until there is a proper negotiated settlement? Finally, does he realise that, as his statement carried no credibility, the only thing that will satisfy the country is a proper independent inquiry to get at the truth?

**Mr. Hurd:** I have always listened with care to the hon. Gentleman because of his local knowledge, and to the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) and other Members with constituency interests in this matter. However, nothing that he has now said will distract the House from the basic facts of what happened on this occasion. [HON. MEMBERS: "You don't know."] There is no direct connection with the industrial dispute, because no attempt was made to intervene with the lorries that were coming out of the plant. It was a demonstration with speeches — that is legitimate, though on this occasion unwise—and it was also an attempt by several hundred people, equipped with ferocious weapons, to attack the police. Justice should take its course against such people, and I hope that that will be as strongly endorsed by the House as I believe it will be by the country.

**Mr. Neil Macfarlane** (Sutton and Cheam): Does my right hon. Friend consider that the extra-parliamentary activity and winning the streets, which has been advocated by Opposition Members, has now well and truly begun?

**Mr. Hurd:** I read an account of something similar being said by an hon. Member. I could not really believe that an

*[Mr. Hurd]*

hon. Member of this House, representing parliamentary democracy, would allow himself to make such a deeply undemocratic and anti-democratic remark.

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the many tens of thousands of men, women and children from all over the country who have been to Wapping over the past year will understand perfectly why the Home Secretary does not wish there to be an inquiry? It is because an inquiry would reveal what I and others who have been there could confirm from our own eyes—occasions when there have been savage and brutal baton charges by the police against those who were present, as last Saturday when the legal observer, John Bowden, had his face smashed in by a police baton, when a photographer of a national newspaper was trampled on by a horse, when one of the television units there had its lights smashed deliberately by the police and when the police broke the windows of the bus which has been used as a first-aid station since 3 May. Is the Home Secretary aware that those who were there understand perfectly that the Government need Rupert Murdoch and are giving him free police for the purpose of denying work to those who used to work for him?

**Mr. Hurd:** I repeat that neither the Home Secretary nor the police have, or should have, any part in deciding whether Mr. Murdoch is right or wrong, or whether SOGAT is right or wrong. That is not the business of the police. The right hon. Gentleman and his right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), have failed either to endorse or repudiate the concept that the police should withdraw from Wapping and allow the thugs to trample on those who are exercising their right to work there.

**Mr. Benn:** Public inquiry.

**Mr. Hurd:** The right hon. Gentleman is a former senior Minister and Privy Councillor. He knew perfectly well that violence had for a long time been attached to the dispute and that violent attacks have been made over and over again on the police, yet he went ahead and joined in a meeting——

**Mr. Kaufman:** Read it out.

**Mr. Hurd:** —at that time and at that place on Saturday night, and that casts serious doubt on his judgment.

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): Is the Home Secretary aware that I was one of those Members there on Saturday and I was able to observe police officers spraying members of the crowd with red paint in order to identify them for later arrest, that the police were using agents provocateurs in the crowd and that at 9.10 during the evening, when there was complete quiet throughout the crowd, a completely unprovoked dragoon-like charge was mounted by the police straight into that crowd, seriously injuring a number of people? Does not the right hon. Gentleman believe that he should go and witness the scale and ferocity of police violence against innocent, peaceful people protesting against the theft of their jobs by the Murdoch empire?

**Mr. Hurd:** I hope that the hon. Gentleman will let me have his evidence for the suggestion that the police used red dye.

**Mr. Corbyn:** Yes.

**Mr. Hurd:** I understand that a tin of red paint was thrown by a demonstrator.

I have looked carefully into the particular point about the use of mounted police. I do not think that there is any dispute that the trouble started when some of the demonstrators overturned a lorry which they had brought along and tried to set it on fire. That set off the first round of violence. As I understand it, and as I have been informed and believe, despite attempts to clear the area by officers on foot with shields, the police were continuing —this is just after 9 pm—to sustain a high level of injuries. That means that missiles of the kind that I have described were constantly being tossed at them. The efforts by foot police to deal with that, although they continued, were not successful. That is why the decision to use the mounted police was taken. Attempts were made to give a warning of that operation in advance. A loud hailer was used to that effect, but there was so much noise about that that warning did not have full effect. That is the background of continuing missile attacks on the police which led to the decision, which I believe was justifiable, to use the mounted police.

**Sir John Biggs-Davison** (Epping Forest): Since this is not the first time—as my right hon. Friend has said—that violent and brutish outside elements have exploited the troubles at Wapping, will my right hon. Friend tell the House whether the organisers of the march consulted the Commissioner about the routing or the wisdom of the march? In the light of what has happened, will consideration be given to the use of the Public Order Act 1986 to ensure that such opportunities for anarchic violence are not given at Wapping in future?

**Mr. Hurd:** The police were consulted about the nature of the original procession and the arrangements that should be made. They were consulted by the organisers. The police had no power once the demonstration became static to impose conditions.

**Mr. Kaufman:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Hurd:** I am glad that the right hon. Gentleman is urging me to use the powers that he so strongly opposed in the Public Order Act 1986. He will be glad to hear that preparations for introducing those powers are well advanced and I hope that they will be introduced within the next few weeks.

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): On behalf of many of my constituents who were at Wapping on Saturday night—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"] Because they have lost their jobs. On behalf of my constituents, may I say that they unreservedly condemn the political activists on the fringe of the demonstration who caused untold and unjustified trouble? However, will the Home Secretary accept that there is a severe crisis of confidence in London over the police tactics? Will he tell the public, who want the police to have the right priorities in catching and dealing with criminals, that massive deployment of personnel at Wapping week after week prevents much of the work that the police would rather be doing——

**Mr. Speaker:** Briefly, please.

**Mr. Simon Hughes:** —and that the only way to ensure that that concern is met is through a public inquiry for which many hon. Members have asked. That would ensure that the facts are objectively known.

**Mr. Hurd:** I heard but found it hard to believe that the demonstration was intended in some way to be a family occasion. It is absolutely amazing that people brought their children on a cold January night to a scene where there had been violence in the past and where there was clearly a risk of violence on this occasion.

Of course the hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) is right: there were approximately 1,000 police officers at Wapping on Saturday night and about 12,500 demonstrators of whom only several hundred were involved in violence. If the hon. Gentleman is seriously suggesting that the police should produce at Wapping either nobody or inadequate numbers of police officers so that they are swamped, I cannot see——

**Mr. Simon Hughes** *indicated dissent.*

**Mr. Hurd:** Well, that is the implication of the hon. Gentleman's remarks and the implication of what the right hon. Member for Gorton has consistently said. That is entirely wrong. The Commissioner has to decide, in the light of the information available to him, how many men he should deploy at Wapping on each occasion. That is his operational decision. That is irrelevant to the question of an inquiry.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We are under a time constraint today. I will allow three more questions from either side of the House, then we must move on.

**Mr. Jerry Hayes** (Harlow): Will my right hon. Friend congratulate and give credit where credit is due to the Leader of the Opposition for denouncing the violence on the picket lines and for denouncing the words of his hon. Friend the Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)? Will he tell the Leader of the Opposition in no uncertain terms that, if he was a real leader, he would kick out the scum of his party who are turning the Labour party into a party of mob rule and not law and order?

**Mr. Hurd:** I certainly think it is time that the Opposition responded to the prompting from this side of the House to renounce and be rid of from their midst the anti-police borough leaders in London, because there is undoubtedly a connection between all these anti-police activities.

**Mr. Merlyn Rees** (Morley and Leeds, South): Is the Home Secretary aware that all of us agree with him that the events that we saw on Saturday night and Sunday at Wapping were shameful? Will he also accept that I disagree with him that my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) should not have the right to go down to Wapping and speak—*[Interruption.]* He has the right to go down there and speak in favour of those who disagree with the actions taken by the newspaper proprietors.

The Home Secretary has said that he will not have an inquiry. Is he aware that there are three points of concern? The first is the allegation from the Home Secretary's hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) that local authorities use ratepayers' money—that was the allegation—to instigate what happened the other night. That should be investigated. Secondly, allegations have been made that it was not the trade unionists who caused the trouble, except perhaps marginally, but people from other organisations. Who are these other organisations? *[Interruption.]* It is all very well for people to say who they think they are. The allegation has been made and the country should know who they are. Thirdly, an allegation has been made to me that at 9.30 pm something went wrong and a charge was made when it should not have been made. That ought to be investigated as well, and the Home Secretary could report to the House.

**Mr. Hurd:** Of course I am not challenging the legal right of the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn). I was very careful not to do that. I was simply saying that his decision on that occasion cast some doubt on his judgment as a former senior Minister and Privy Councillor.

**Mr. Benn:** I saw it; you did not.

**Mr. Hurd:** I have dealt with the point raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds and I have nothing to add. As to outsiders, I will simply repeat the only point that I have made in that respect—that, of the 67 people arrested, 15 are print workers.

**Mr. Nellist:** What unions were the others in?

**Mr. Hurd:** I have the professions of the others, and they vary widely. As for the rest, the right hon. Member for Chesterfield has not undermined the case that I have made for letting the ordinary processes of law obtain and continue in this case.

**Mr. Nicholas Budgen** (Wolverhampton, South-West): Does my right hon. Friend agree that if there was a public inquiry it would inevitably be a judicial inquiry and that that would have the grave disadvantage of involving the judiciary in politics and would also inhibit criminal proceedings? On the other hand, criminal proceedings will in the end by decided by juries which give no reasons and cannot become involved in the political debate.

**Mr. Hurd:** I entirely agree with my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): I was at Wapping on Saturday and I am neither a liar nor blind. I can tell the Home Secretary that some stones were thrown at the police early on, and I condemn that. That is not only unlawful; it is very stupid when one is confronting thousands of police officers who are tooled up to the eyebrows. Did the Home Secretary see on television on Saturday night police officers indiscrimately beating with batons people whom they had already arrested? That is unlawful by any measure, and the Home Secretary must say what he will do about the undisciplined actions of those police officers.

Lastly, it is about time that the Government realised that they cannot continue washing their hands of this dispute. The dispute was caused by Rupert Murdoch, who sacked 5,000 workers. He is an American citizen. It is about time the Government intervened in the dispute.

**Mr. Hurd:** The sequence on Saturday night was familiar. First, the police attempted to contain disorder with ordinary police officers on foot using ordinary equipment. When the attacks on the police continued despite that, police armed with protective gear and with riot equipment were used.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** That is not true, Home Secretary. You have been misled.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Hurd:** Then, after 9 o'clock, in the circumstances that I described in answer to earlier questions, events continued to be out of control because of missile attacks on the police and the decision was made to use the mounted police.

**Mr. Benn:** You were not there.

**Mr. Hurd:** On each occasion, I am satisfied that those decisions by the police were justified. If they had not been taken, those whom I have described as, and who the House will agree were, the thugs, would have prevailed. That would have been a bad day for the people of London.

**Sir Ian Lloyd** (Havant): The Home Secretary will have noticed, that, in her description of the crowd at Wapping, Miss Brenda Dean used the words, "ordinary, decent, normal families". Does he agree that a sad and regrettable gulf is opening between Miss Dean's definition of that term and the understanding of that term in 26 million homes across the length and breadth of the country? Does he agree that, in those 26 million homes, the contempt for the objectives is exceeded only by the contempt for the methods used at Wapping?

**Mr. Hurd:** My criticism of the trade union leaders is not that they are continuing the dispute, because that is a matter for them, nor that they instigated or took part in the disorder, because they did not. My criticism of them is that, despite the overwhelming weight of advice that they have received, they continue to organise their part in the dispute in such a way as to produce these results. In doing that, they assume a heavy responsibility. I hope that they have now changed their minds and will pursue the dispute, if they must do so, in a way that will remove violence from the scene.

**Mr. Robert Litherland** (Manchester, Central): I am sponsored by SOGAT '82, a member of that union and extremely proud of it, and I was at Wapping. I condemn the violence, but I ask the Home Secretary to go to Wapping to see that obscene razor wire curtain that is an affront to all working people. Does he realise that with this whitewash he is seen to support Rupert Murdoch's brutal and violent strategy of confrontation?

**Mr. Hurd:** The hon. Gentleman leaves out of account the fact that, to use his words, hundreds of decent working people work and wish to continue to work at Wapping. That puts the police in a wholly unenviable position. The right hon. Member for Gorton and his colleagues have not yet answered the point: do they expect the police to continue to protect the right to work of those who are engaged at Wapping or do they believe that those workers should be abandoned?

**Mr. Nellist:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I ask you to reflect later on the intervention during those exchanges by the Conservative Member of Parliament for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths)? After quoting leaflets which he alleged were calling for the death of police on the picket lines, he linked those leaflets to two sources. The first was those members of the Labour party who may or may not be under threat of expulsion — I have been named as part of that group more than once. The second source identified by him and his colleagues is Labour Members in this Chamber.

As the guardian of the rights of Back-Bench Members, Mr. Speaker, will you find out whether the hon. Gentleman should be required tomorrow to withdraw those statements or produce the evidence outside the Chamber?

**Mr. Speaker:** I am not responsible for what is said. If the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) had named an individual Member, that would have been entirely different.

**Mr. Tony Favell** (Stockport): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I must warn the hon. Gentleman and the whole House that we have a time restraint today, which makes life difficult for us all, including the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Favell:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it not usual for you to allow a Member such as the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) to catch your eye when his name has been mentioned as often as his was this afternoon?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman should not assume my prerogative in these matters. It is a difficult enough job as it is.

**Mr. David Harris** (St. Ives): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Does not the remedy lie with a personal statement from the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner)? After all, serious allegations have been made against——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a continuation of questions.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover) *rose*——

**Hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Skinner:** I have no intention of making a personal statement, Mr. Speaker, but I will say this to you: whether I am in Parliament or outside, I shall fight for the working class that sent me here, just as the Tories, including the Home Secretary, fight for their class day in and day out —including all those crooks in the City.

## New Statesman and Mr. Duncan Campbell

4.15 pm

**Mr. Chris Smith** (Islington, South and Finsbury): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

> "The searches by special branch at the premises of the *New Statesman* and the homes of Mr. Duncan Campbell and other journalists following a request by the Attorney-General for the instigation of inquiries."

On Saturday, special branch officers entered the offices of the *New Statesman* in my constituency and began a comprehensive search of all papers held in those offices. That search continued through Sunday and was added to by a search of the homes of Mr. Duncan Campbell and other journalists. It is continuing. I was present when the offices of the *New Statesman* were searched and when the home of Mr. Duncan Campbell was searched. I hasten to say that I do not criticise the officers of special branch, who conducted their investigation with perfect courtesy and decorum. However, it is the first time that such a search has been mounted against an independent newspaper. It was instigated by a Government who are supposed to believe in the freedom of the press.

Major questions arise that should be discussed in the House. We must ask why the Government are trying to muzzle the press seven months after they first knew that the Zircon film was being made—a case of shutting the stable door months after the horse has bolted. We must ask why, as in the case two years ago of my constituent Clive Ponting, action is being taken under the discredited section 2 of the Official Secrets Act, which the Attorney-General himself has disowned. Why are the Government, far from being concerned about genuine national security considerations, engaged in a public operation to cover up their political embarrassment and interest? Above all, there are questions about the need to end the absurd secrecy and the paranoia about secrecy which characterises the Government and which should be replaced once and for all by proper, full and thorough freedom of information legislation.

These are issues of immense public concern and interest. The House must debate them urgently.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

> "The searches by special branch at the premises of the *New Statesman* and the homes of Mr. Duncan Campbell and other journalists following a request by the Attorney-General for the instigation of inquiries."

I listened with great care to what the hon. Gentleman said, but I regret that I do not consider the matter to be appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

## Personal Statement

4.20 pm

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): I wish to make a personal statement, Mr. Speaker.

On Monday 12 January the hon. Member for Davyhulme (Mr. Churchill), during a point of order to you, Mr. Speaker, alleged that a

> "highly regarded member of the Parliamentary press lobby"—

that is to say, Mr. Adam Raphael—

> "informed me"—

that is the hon. Gentleman—

> "that he had been told by the hon. Gentleman himself"—

that is the hon. Member for Workington—

> "that Sir Stephen Hastings and I"—

that is, the hon. Member for Davyhulme—

> "had been sent letters by the hon. Gentleman"—

that is myself—

> "identifying us."

That was identification of the hon. Gentleman and Sir Stephen Hastings as persons who

> "had engaged in a conspiracy with officers of MI5 to bring about the downfall of Her Majesty's Government by unconstitutional means". — [*Official Report,* 12 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 34.]

If the allegation that I had disclosed this matter to the journalist was true, it would mean that I had broken a solemn undertaking given to the House on Monday 15 December when I said:

> "I do not intend to name the Members of Parliament involved."—[*Official Report,* 15 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 783.]

In the circumstances, I wish to inform the House what happened. On Saturday 13 December, Grania Forbes, a political journalist on the *News of the World,* acquired a copy of the first edition of *The Observer*. She has stated that, during the course of the evening, at about 8 o'clock, she was informed, on a confidential basis by a senior Conservative politician, that the hon. Member and the former hon. Member referred to could be the hon. Member for Davyhulme and Sir Stephen Hastings, and that she then telephoned the hon. Member and put the allegation to him. That was two days before I spoke in the debate in the House. The story was therefore already known in Fleet street before I spoke.

On 15 December, I gave the undertaking not to divulge the names of the Members concerned. On Thursday 18 December, three days after that debate, the attention of Mr. Adam Raphael was drawn to an article in *Tribune* which identified the two Conservative politicians, by name, as agreeing that they had received material concerning allegations of plots against the Wilson Government.

It should be said that Mr. Raphael had also spoken to Grania Forbes, who told him that she had spoken to the hon. Member for Davyhulme. Adam Raphael then approached the hon. Gentleman to ask him about the allegations and ascertain whether he had received a letter from me. The hon. Gentleman agreed that he had received a letter from me and showed him his reply to me.

I make this statement, Mr. Speaker, to demonstrate that I have kept the undertaking that I gave to the House on 15 December that I would not identify the Members concerned and, furthermore, have not disclosed the names of the hon. Member for Davyhulme or Sir Stephen Hastings to Adam Raphael.

**Mr. Churchill** (Davyhulme): I recognise that I cannot in any way contest what the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) says in a personal statement, and it would not be my wish so to do. I wish to say that I was misquoted from *Hansard*. I did not make mention of Mr. Adam Raphael: it was the hon. Gentleman who made that reference. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it would be in order now for the hon. Gentleman to withdraw the false and malicious accusations that he made against Sir Stephen Hastings and myself on 15 December, for which he has produced not one shred of evidence.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) has made a personal statement which has been cleared by me. I take note of what the hon. Member for Davyhulme (Mr. Churchill) has said.

## Local Government Finance Bill (Allocation of Time)

4.24 pm

**The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen):** I beg to move,

That the following provisions shall apply to the remaining proceedings on the Bill:

*Committee, Report and Third Reading*

1.—(1) The remaining proceedings in Committee on the Bill and the proceedings on consideration and Third Reading of the Bill shall be completed in one allotted day and shall be brought to a conclusion at midnight on that day.

(2) Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) shall not apply to this Order.

*Proceedings on going into Committee*

2. When the Order of the Day is read for the House to resolve itself into a Committee on the Bill, Mr. Speaker shall leave the Chair without putting any Question, whether or not notice of an Instruction has been given.

*Conclusion of proceedings in Committee*

3. On the conclusion of the proceedings in Committee on the Bill the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without putting any Question, and the House shall proceed to consider the Bill, as amended, without any Question being put.

*Order of proceedings*

4. No Motion shall be made to alter the order in which proceedings in Committee or on consideration of the Bill are taken.

*Dilatory Motions*

5. No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, proceedings on the Bill shall be made on the alloted day except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

*Extra time*

6.—(1) On the allotted day paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings on the Bill for two hours after Ten o'clock.

(2) Any period during which proceedings on the Bill may be proceeded with after Ten o'clock under paragraph (7) of Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) shall be in addition to the said period of two hours.

(3) If the allotted day is one to which a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, a period of time equal to the duration of the proceedings upon that Motion shall be added to the said period of two hours.

*Private business*

7. Any private business which has been set down for consideration at Seven o'clock on the allotted day shall, instead of being considered as provided by Standing Orders, be considered at the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill on that day, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the private business for a period of three hours from the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or, if those proceedings are concluded before Ten o'clock, for a period equal to the time elapsing between Seven o'clock and the conclusion of those proceedings.

*Conclusion of proceedings*

8.—(1) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed by this Order and which have not previously been brought to a conclusion, the Chairman or Mr. Speaker shall forthwith put the following Questions (but no others):

- *(a)* any Question already proposed from the Chair;
- *(b)* any Question necessary to bring to a decision a Question so proposed (including in the case of a new Clause or new Schedule which has been read a second time, the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill);
- *(c)* the Question on any amendment or Motion standing on the Order Paper in the name of any Memberm, if that amendment or Motion is moved by a member of the Government;
- *(d)* any other Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded;

and on a Motion so made for a new Clause or a new Schedule, the Chairman or Mr. Speaker shall put only the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

(3) If the allotted day is one on which a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) stands over to Seven o'clock, the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion after that time shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

(4) If the allotted day is one to which a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion on that day shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

*Supplemental orders*

9.—(1) The proceedings on any Motion made in the House by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion one hour after they have been commenced, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(2) If on the alloted day the House is adjourned, or the sitting is suspended, before the time appointed by this Order for any proceedings on the Bill to be brought to a conclusion, no notice shall be required of a Motion made at the next sitting by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order.

*Saving*

10. Nothing in this Order shall—

*(a)* prevent any proceedings to which the Order applies from being taken or completed earlier than is required by the Order, or

*(b)* prevent any business from being proceeded with on the allotted day after the completion of all such proceedings on the Bill as are to be taken on that day.

*Re-committal*

11.—(1) References in this Order to proceedings on consideration or Third Reading include references to proceedings, at those stages respectively, for, on or in consequence of re-committal.

(2) On the allotted day no debate shall be permitted on any Motion to re-commit the Bill (whether as a whole or otherwise), and Mr. Speaker shall put forwith any Question necessary to dispose of the Motion, including the Question on any amendment moved to the Question.

*Interpretation*

12. In this Order—

"allotted day" means a day (other than a Friday) on which the Bill is put down as first Government Order of the Day provided that a Motion for allotting time to the proceedings on the Bill to be taken on that day either has been agreed on a previous day or is set down for consideration on that day;

"the Bill" means the Local Government Finance Bill.

As I move this timetable motion, Mr. Speaker, I am conscious that just a week ago we spent some time debating a dilatory motion affecting proceedings on the same Bill. Although the juxtaposition of the two debates may seem to have an element of perversity to it, notwithstanding the failure of that dilatory motion, the issues which we address today are wider and more important to the passage of the Bill than those in last week's debate. In addressing these issues I propose first to deal with the nature of the Bill and its urgency, and then with its passage so far. Finally, I intend to say a few words about its future consideration.

The House will recall that the reasons for this legislation were set out by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment in his statement of 16 December. In that statement he explained that, following legal advice, it had been established that the treatment of expenditure in local government finance was incorrect in law. This being the case, all past decisions involving the concepts of total or relevant expenditure were put in doubt.

My right hon. Friend therefore introduced this legislation primarily to validate for England and Wales all past decisions involving the use of relevant or total expenditure and to allow decisions to be taken for the remainder of the present rate support grant system and for rate limitation in line with the practice which has been adopted until now.

It is clearly in the interests of everyone involved in local authority finance, not least the local authorities themselves, that this complex area is restored to a basis of certainty as soon as possible. Quite rightly, neither my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment nor my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales thinks it proper to take further decisions on rate support grant matters or complete the rate limitation process until the law and the practice on this matter once more coincide. Thus, only after the Bill receives Royal Assent can Parliament approve the necessary rate support grant reports and local authorities be paid that grant for the coming financial year.

On the Government's part, the recognition of this urgency was shown by the introduction of the Bill immediately after my right hon. Friend's statement. Part I addresses the position in England and Wales, setting up a new method of calculating relevant and total expenditure for rate support grant purposes in future. It makes arrangements also for a rate limitation process for 1987-88. In addition, it validates what has already been done for rate support grant purposes and for rate limitation purposes. Part II is less substantial and deals with minor difficulties which have come to light in the present Scottish practice which, of course, derives from separate legislation. I accept at once that these provisions are both difficult and technical, but this is the case with many issues which the House debates.

The Bill received its Second Reading on 12 January by 233 votes to 175, following a debate lasting just over 6½ hours. Its consideration by a Committee of the whole House began one week later on 19 January and continued on 21 January. During the course of those two days the Bill was debated for more than 14½ hours, and the Committee considered 13 groups of amendments. A further 25 amendments or groups of amendments remain to be considered: of these only eight involve Government amendments.

I shall seek, Mr. Speaker, to deal with two points on which the Government have been criticised in Committee. The first criticism is directed at the number and length of Government amendments. I realise that there are difficulties for the House when, particularly on a complex subject, Government amendments are not available early. I have to observe that my right hon. Friend has been ungenerously treated by his critics. On the one hand, he is criticised for having waited to inform the House until after he had confirmed that there was indeed a problem: on the other, it is objected that the Bill has been brought to the House of Commons at a stage when the Government believe that it can still be improved by

*[Mr. John Biffen]*

amendments, rather than being delayed until it is a polished and refined version. Both sets of criticisms cannot be fairly sustained, although in politics they usually are.

The second point which was raised by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) was that the Bill should not have been committed to a Comittee of the whole House because of its technical and complicated nature. The hon. Gentleman is a fair person and will appreciate that the urgency with which the legislation is needed was one of the factors in deciding on this course. I can, however, assure him that, however urgent the Bill, we would not have taken this course had we felt that proper and detailed consideration of the Bill was beyond a Committee of the whole House. I would also point out to him that Members of another place conduct the Committee stage of legislation on the Floor of the Chamber, and apparently have no doubts about their ability to do so. Leaving that aside, progress in Committee has been slower than had been hoped. It has certainly been slower than is commensurate with the urgency of the Bill.

**Mr. Jack Straw** (Blackburn): Will the Leader of the House explain why the Government are in such great haste and will not allow a separate day for a Report stage, given that the Bill was significantly amended by the Government in Committee and the fact that by this timetable motion—it could have been different—in practice the House is being denied a Report stage because of the impracticability of submitting, and having accepted, manuscript amendments?

**Mr. Biffen:** The main motivation and desire has been to get the Bill to another place where it will undoubtedly be very fully considered and then reported to this place. I accept all the arguments of time that turn upon the niceties of just one more day—but a day, day, a day and so on stretches out. In all charity we have to judge whether there might be a change in attitude towards the passage of this legislation, if that one more day was forthcoming. Our view of human nature is a little more generous than that of the hon. Gentleman.

The motion before us today would provide for one allotted day until midnight to complete the proceedings on the consideration of the Third Reading of the Bill. That allotted day, as the House will be aware, is today. While I accept that there is an almost infinite amount of time which we could spend on the intricacies of the local government finance system, I believe that the House will think it not unreasonable that we should regulate our consideration of this measure in this way. We will of course have an opportunity to examine it further when it has been considered in another place.

**Mr. Allan Roberts** (Bootle): Does the right hon. Gentleman accept that progress has not been as speedy as it might have been because of the Government's action in tabling a large number of amendments in an unprecedented manner? New schedules, new clauses and a virtual process of rewriting took place in Committee such as I have never experienced—and I have served on every local government Bill since 1979.

**Mr. Biffen:** I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on having survived that experience with such robustness. I have touched on the problems caused by tabling amendments, but I still think that our reaction is reasonable in view of the time available and the speed with which this has had to be considered.

**Mr. Terry Davis** (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): Will the right hon. Gentleman clarify some details? To what extent were the Government's deliberations on the way to put forward this timetable motion influenced by the wish of the Secretary of State for the Environment to avoid any further embarrassment as a result of yet another court case between the Secretary of State for the Environment and the city of Birmingham for which leave was given last week?

**Mr. Biffen:** That thought, I am sure, was not either in the mind of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment or any one of us on the Treasury Bench when we calculated how best to present a timed debate on this measure.

I will end my remarks there, since the sooner we conclude our debate upon this motion, the sooner we may proceed to consider the Bill. There is still opportunity for constructive consideration of this Bill and I urge hon. Members to use it. I believe that there is general recognition of the need for the Bill's prime objective of restoring certainty to these aspects of local government finance and the recognition also that this needs to be achieved expeditiously. Among those seeking the early passage of the Bill must be the local authorities and their associations whose present approach to these matters will be validated by the Bill. This motion will help to ensure that we do not delay that validation unduly. I am inspired to that sentiment by the remarks of the hon. Member for Newham, North-West. He caught the mood of the Oppposition precisely and, for once, succinctly. On 21 January he exhorted the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) who was speaking to amendments 48 and 154 to "Drag it out." Those three words pretty well say it all and have inspired my actions ever since. I commend the motion to the House.

4.35 pm

**Mr. Alan Williams** (Swansea, West): The number of times that the Leader of the House during his brief defence of this unacceptable motion used the word "complex" is a justification of the argument that this measure should never have been debated in Committee on the Floor of the House in the first place.

We object that this, the 31st guillotine motion tabled by the Government—the 22nd on the Floor of the House, and of which at least six have been attributable to the Department that has caused this guillotine—is in itself guillotined by the way in which it has been tabled because it has been incorporated within the timetable that is available for the entire Bill.

Therefore, in discussing the merits and demerits of the guillotine as we should, we reduce the time available for the even more important discussion of the Bill's contents. We further object because, as far as we can gather, there is in effect to be no Report stage because of the way in which the timetable motion is worded.

The motion allows no time for the tabling of amendments and their scrutiny by Mr. Speaker. Consequently, we are to be denied a Report stage. A preposterous proposition was made by the Leader of the House. We are asked to guillotine the Bill after a couple of days of debate. The Committee stage is to be curtailed and the Report stage eliminated. Yet, what did the Leader of the House of Commons tell us, as elected Members of Parliament? He said that we needed to curtail our consideration of the Bill so that there should be full consideration of it in another place.

Is the right hon. Gentleman seriously suggesting that he, as Leader of the elected House of Commons, should come to the Chamber and tell us that we must cut short our discussions on a Bill to enable fuller discussion to take place in another place? All I can say to our colleagues in another place is that I hope that they take note of this abuse by the Leader of this House and I hope that they make him pay for it. I hope that they will take the opportunity that their procedures allow, with the absence of a guillotine system, to ensure that every minute detail of the Bill is examined.

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): Does not my right hon. Friend agree that the example he has just given of the words of the Leader of the House gives a new twist to the words of the noble Lord Hailsham about the elective dictatorship of this place?

**Mr. Williams:** My hon. Friend makes the point very effectively.

Thankfully, after a miserable weekend, I come to the debate from outside the area of local government and local government finance legislation. It has been my 23-year good fortune not to have been involved in the detail of it before. Having tried to make sense of it during the past few days, my lasting impression is of the complexity and convolution of the subject we are supposed to be debating. The opportunities for misunderstanding seem to be enormous. My political early warning system cautions that experience has shown, with this subject, haste is a dangerous policy for the Government to pursue. Essentially this matter needs slow and deliberate contemplation — as we would normally have — with a proper Committee and Report stage.

The present Bill may do what the Secretary of State claims or what my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) claims. I must admit that, having tried to read through the Bill in a few days, I do not pretend to know but, in the end, I had hoped that we would have the chance to know. Nothing that the Minister has said so far has convinced me that my hon. Friend is wrong. The Government have ignored our off[illegible] to give support to a simple Bill brought forward merely to rectify the problems of the past. In that way the Government would have got the Bill through the House.

Having read through the proceedings, certain things have become clearer to me. The first is that the Minister originally responsible for this Bill, the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), and the present Secretary of State have agreed upon one thing — the magnitude of the problem. They have agreed about the £30 billion that may be involved in the fiasco that underlies this Bill. That alone suggests that the Bill deserves considerable discussion in the House. Secondly, it has taken six years to establish that the original legislation was wrong. That also suggests that we, if we showed any sense in these matters, should give priority to get the matter right this time.

The third thing that strikes me is that there have been so many banana skins. The Government have already had to amend or seek to amend their rectifying Bill on 40 separate occasions. Fourthly, eminent lawyers, quoted by my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland the other day, expressed their clear views about the scope and breadth of the legal immunity that will be given to the Minister. That advice implied that that immunity is far wider than the Minister has so far admitted. I must draw the attention of the House to the comments made by the Secretary of State, under interrogation by my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) when he said:

> "It is impossible to disentangle some parts of any conceivable court case from those parts that relate to total expenditure."—[*Official Report*, 12 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 995.]

Those comments imply that our legal advice is right with regard to this Bill and that the legal protestations made by the Secretary of State are absolutely wrong. I hope that when the Secretary of State comes to make his speech he will address his remarks to that point — about the conflict of legal advice. That conflict is the nub of the difference between the two sides of the House.

Having read through the debate, the fifth point that strikes me is that we should always be careful when enacting retrospective legislation as there is always an implicit threat of a risk to the concept of the rule of law. We are fortunate, with regard to this Bill, in that we have, in the present Secretary of State, the greatest living exponent of retrospective legislation.

I have given five good reasons why I suggest that we need a thorough analysis of the Bill. However, so far we have spent only three parliamentary days discussing the Bill, and that includes Second Reading. Indeed, the Bill was published only one day before the Christmas recess. When a Bill has 17 clauses and four schedules I do not think the desire to discuss all that detail can be described as filibustering or causing undue delay. Yet we now face the guillotine.

The Secretary of State assures us that we can take his word that he has got it right this time. We would perhaps be more convinced of this had it not been for the fact that between the time that he gave us that assurance on Second Reading and the time when he next came to the House to discuss the Bill — an interval of three days — the Secretary of State had found it necessary to amend his Bill 40 times to get it right. The Secretary of State is so confused about what is right that he tabled amendments to two of the clauses and, having advanced those amendments, then withdrew them. Does this smack of a firm, determined knowledgeable Government? The right hon. Gentleman has impressed us!

If the Government have got it right this time, we are a little puzzled as to why, on Thursday 22 January, the Government tabled yet another Bill on the rate support grant system. All this must be viewed against a background — which is less than reassuring — of a Department overruled in the High Court on 15 April for illegally trying to rate-cap the city of Birmingham.

When the Secretary of State tells us that we must take his word he will understand that we have certain reservations. The right hon. Gentleman may come to the Dispatch Box and say that these amendments are proof of his determination to get everything right this time. Although I appreciate that some of us may have a cynical disposition, we might be inclined to think that those

*[Mr. Williams]*

measures show how far the Government have got it wrong this time. Yet the Secretary of State wants to rush over the cliff on this occasion with a guillotine motion.

It is not just a joke. When one considers the events that have led to this situation our doubts are compounded by suspicions. On 16 December, in the fourth RSG statement in five months, the Secretary of State said:

> "The first intimation I had that the legal advice was as I have described it was towards the end of October." — [*Official Report*, 16 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 1053].

That is clear enough, but on 12 January, in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland, the Secretary of State said:

> "I think I told the hon. Gentleman that I first became aware of the problem in September."—[*Official Report*, 12 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 43].

The Secretary of State gave no apology, showed neither remorse nor contrition for the indication that he had misled the House in his statement by the use of the words:

> "I think I told the hon. Gentleman."

That was another attempt to mislead the House about a matter upon which the House had already been misled. This man, this dissembling Minister, is asking the House to take his word in respect of those matters. He is not simply a man from whom one would not buy a second-hand car but a man to whom one would not sell a second-hand car.

One is bound to ask the Minister what on earth happened in the three months between September and 16 December. Why was there no mention in the Queen's Speech of the legal advice and the changes that would be needed? Why did the Minister not mention that legal advice and the changes that would be needed in his speech during the debate on the Queen's Speech? Why was there no explanation of the legal difficulties when the right hon. Gentleman failed to produce the statement on RSG in November? Why was there no mention of those problems when the right hon. Gentleman answered a private notice question on 3 December? Such were the opportunities to confide in the House of Commons but those opportunities were ignored.

Why should we trust someone who has misled the House and, not only that, has concealed facts of which he was well aware? The Secretary of State's description of events is, of course, somewhat imaginative. He said:

> "credit should go to the Government for having identified a legal weakness and for having sought immediately and honourably to put it right."

Three months does not exactly conform with the dictionary definition of the word immediate. I must leave it to the House to decide whether Government action was immediate and honourable. I have my conclusions in that respect. I was intrigued by the judgment made by one of the Secretary of State's hon. Friends, the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark). He asked:

> "Does my right hon. Friend agree that he is the least guilty in a long line of guilty Ministers".

Note that the hon. Gentleman does not say that the Secretary of State is not guilty, but simply that there might be extenuating circumstances. What the right hon. Gentleman seems to be saying is, "Honest guv, I didn't do it. I only hid the body." I repeat his comment:

> "It was the Government who spotted the error, so the credit should go to the Government for having identified a legal weakness".

In other words, in a further submission for remission, he is saying, "Don't I get some time off for coming clean eventually?" Indeed, he even tried the most novel defence that I have come across. He tried to rewrite constitutional history. It turns out that my hon. Friend the Member for Copeland is really the guilty party. The Secretary of State said:

> "It takes me to do not only my job but the Opposition's job in pointing out what Parliament failed to stop in 1980."

We now have a new definition of ministerial responsibility. When a Minister gets it wrong, the shadow Minister is expected to resign. It is imaginative and we have to give the Secretary of State credit where it is due.

I read with some bewilderment some of the comments made about the statement. The hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) said:

> "my right hon. Friend who has a brain that is even finer than that of his four distinguished predecessors".

There he sits, the Government candidate for Brain of Britain. May the good Lord protect us. What on earth must the rest of them be like? When he came to the Dispatch Box, he said — please do not laugh at this because it is serious—

> "I am the only person who is quite certain what the law is."

I looked at the official box and even the men in the white coats were laughing.

The matter becomes even more absurd the more one reads these comments, because the hon. Member for Eastbourne went on waxing eulogistic about the Secretary of State's policy. He said:

> "Is my right hon. Friend aware that he has earned the admiration of the House for his courage?" — [*Official Report*, 16 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 1053-7.]

That is an interesting proposition. Was it an act of courage, as suggested? The Secretary of State left it to the last possible minute. He left it so late that now we can discuss the Bill only under the threat of the guillotine. The Secretary of State came here only when he had no alternative but to come here because he could make no more statements that would progress the proceedings for next year's rate grant until he had cleared the position.

I must chastise my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn. He is excessively kind to the Secretary of State. I am sure that I read somewhere—I apologise if he did not say this — that he had said that the Secretary of State had delayed coming to the House until another local government Bill had received Royal Assent. That is generous of my hon. Friend. The reality is that the Secretary of State came forward only when he could delay no more. I do not call that courage. He knew that his reputation and job were on the line if he did not come and make his confession. Eventually, he went over the top only after he had been shown the firing squad, and that is what the Conservative party is claiming as its courageous Minister.

All this is hardly surprising if one has followed the Secretary of State's career, which is colourful, to put it mildly. He came to the job with a track record even worse than that of the Department he was joining. When he was at the Department of Transport, the Court of Appeal overruled him because he had tried to stop the GLC lorry ban when that was outside his legal powers. It would have been a resignation matter for most Ministers — those with pride and integrity. The Secretary of State came from the Department of Transport after the High Court had overruled him because he had wrongly demanded £250 million from the GLC when that was outside his powers, outside his rights and outside the law. Again, that would have been a matter of resignation for any Minister with integrity.

What was the judge's description—not ours—of the Secretary of State and his actions? It was that they were:

> "Unlawful, irrational and procedurally improper."

This is the Government's MENSA candidate. What a brilliant prime ministerial appointment it was to take a man with his record and put him in a Department with that record. He came with only one qualification—a discount on barristers' briefs. He is part of the Government's economy campaign.

The Secretary of State has said that the issue is urgent. Ministers knew before we went away for the Christmas recess that the business was there, was urgent and was complex. Why did we not have a two-week Christmas recess, as we have done in the past, so that the Bill could be judged properly?

There has been no delay, and no long speeches from the Labour side of the House. From Ministers there has been a flood of amendments, amendments to amendments and now more amendments to go in in the other place. For the first time, the Government have decided that it is time to impose a guillotine not on us but on Ministers, because they do not know what is coming next. There is no justification for imposing the measure on us and for that reason I call on the House to reject the motion.

4.57 pm

**Mr. William Shelton** (Streatham): Of the 20 minutes or so that the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) spent speaking, I noticed that, rather wisely, he spoke about the measure before us for only a few minutes. The rest of his speech was a good humoured but unnecessary and unpleasant attack on my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

It is necessary that the Bill should be guillotined today and that the Bill should go through. I speak as a Member with a constituency interest in Lambeth, and ratepayers there need the protection of the Bill against the tactics of Lambeth council, which is a classic example of Labour in power. Let me explain why the Bill is important for my constituents. If the Bill goes through, Lambeth will get a rate support grant of some £85 million, which is—I hope that my constituents will be aware of this—an increase of £21 million on the rate support grant that Lambeth received last year. That increase is good news.

Even better news for my constituents is that under the Bill Lambeth will be rate capped, with a budget of around £152 million, which will give a rate of about 113p in the pound. Last year, the budget was £167 million and the rate 126p in the pound. Lambeth council will have a reduction in budget of £15 million, and my constituents a reduction in their rate of 13p in the pound. That is the first reason why the Bill is so important for ratepayers in my constituency.

I accept, as perhaps my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is aware, that this will create a difficulty for the Lambeth councillors. At a policy and resources committee meeting of Lambeth council on 6 January, it was revealed by the officers, who bear no blame in the situation confronting Lambeth, that a preliminary budget forecast for this year showed a budget of £197 million, including £7 million carried forward unspent from last year on the salaries account, because the council cannot recruit sufficiently. Therefore, there is a shortfall of £45 million. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will tell me if our right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has power to increase the amount of rate support grant or to change the rate capping once the Bill has gone through. If Lambeth's problems stemmed mainly or entirely from rate capping or a lack of finance, I would be the first in a delegation to persuade my right hon. Friend to make more money available for Lambeth, but that is not the case. As I have said, Lambeth is a true picture of Labour in power—the services are breaking down, the council is a shambles, and money is wasted because of mismanagement, loony schemes and underspending on staff as was the case last year.

Members of the Opposition or people in the constituency who do not believe me perhaps saw the leaked report of the auditors. That report is soon to be published, but it was front page news in the *Sunday Telegraph*, I believe, the Sunday before last. The headline read: "Loony Left push London into Anarchy . . .". The auditor's report, which has not yet been published, concludes that social conditions and Government measures bear some of the responsibility, but most of the blame is directed at Left-wing Labour councillors and, of course, Lambeth is named. The report says that expenditure per person by councils since 1981 has fallen in real terms, except in inner London where it has risen by 20 per cent. in real terms. It also says that inner London has twice as many staff per capita as the

> "most deprived metropolitan districts outside London . . .".

I understand that there are certain pressures to have that leaked report modified, but I hope that they will be resisted. I draw the attention of the House to the last auditor's report, published in September 1986. *[Interruption.]* It is relevant because if the Bill does not go through the typical Labour profligacy of Lambeth will not be checked. I shall read a few of the comments from the September report. The auditor says:

> "Opportunities to reduce expenditure without reduction in standards have not been acted upon . . .
>
> My audit has led me to question the efficiency and effectiveness of the way in which some of the Council's services are managed . . . whether there is too much talking about problems and too little action."

That is typical of Labour. The auditor goes on to make specific and damning criticisms:

> "serious deficiencies in the accounting controls over domestic rents . . . shortcomings in the Council's accounting arrangements . . . clearly the situation cannot be allowed to continue".

Referring to the management of the council's fleet of 525 vehicles, the auditor states:

> "financial control procedures and the quantity and quality of management were inadequate".

On refuse collections he says:

> "costs for the current method of collection . . around £180,000 (16%) above the optimum."

On collection of rents, rates and so on, he says:

> "Large sums of money are owed to the Council . . . exceeding £34 million at the end of March."

He also refers to

> "Inadequacies of collection procedures."

The report goes on like that, page after page.

Any hon. Member who does not believe the auditor should look at the memorandum sent by the chief executive of Lambeth, Mr. George, to the leader of the council, Miss Linda Bellos. That memorandum, too, found its way into the press. It was a confidential

*[Mr. William Shelton]*

memorandum and I do not know how it found its way there, but I have a copy and I shall quote some of the highlights. The chief executive writes:

> "There is a grave danger that certain areas of service may have to be closed down and this may occur in areas of statutory responsibility with very serious consequences for the Council indeed . . . the Council is unable to recruit quickly or retain staff".

The chief executive highlights the high profile of the trades unions in Lambeth's affairs and talks about:

> "other detrimental consequences for the way in which the Council came to be run. In the absence of strong management the trades unions increasingly came to determine the nature and pace of introduction of organisational change and new procedures."

He also highlights the problem of political interference by Labour members so that

> "the role of Chairs of committees and directors and the Chief Executive are blurred and confused".

That, again, is a damning indictment of mainstream Labour in power. It is not just mismanagement—it is a classic case of what happens when the Labour party runs something. For example, Lambeth is spending £44,000 for extra staff in the council's own police unit. The council boycotts the community police association, for which it was recently deeply criticised by Lord Scarman. It spent £760,000 on propaganda about the rates in 1985-86 and £40,000 to fight the proposed Channel tunnel terminal at Waterloo.

**Mr. Stuart Holland** (Vauxhall) *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. I find it a little difficult to relate the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the allocation of time motion and the Bill which is the subject of the debate. I am sure that he will relate his remarks to the motion before the House.

**Mr. Shelton:** I am coming to the end of my speech. If the Bill does not go through, the antics that I have described will continue unchecked. There will be no rate capping and no reduction in the rates and instead of spending £500,000 on four new equality units catering for lesbians, gays, and so forth, the council will probably spend £1 million.

**Mr. Holland:** In the list that the hon. Gentleman has cited he has not drawn attention to the fact that Lambeth's housing investment grant has been cut from £56 million in 1979 to £33 million projected for the coming year. In current terms, that is a nominal cut of a third. Further, 40 per cent. of the residents in Lambeth claim housing benefit. Delays in those benefits, which affect the hon. Gentleman's point about slow payment of rent, have been affected because since 1982 the Government have brought in 36 statutory instruments that have affected housing benefit. Why does not the hon. Gentleman address himself to those real issues of cuts in housing expenditure and to the way in which the Government have fouled up the possible payment of housing benefit, which is of far more concern to the residents of Lambeth than the trivial points that he is raising?

**Mr. Shelton:** If what the hon. Gentleman says is true, how can responsible councillors spend £500,000 on equality units catering for lesbians, gays, ethnic minorities, the disabled and women? How can they spend £14,000 on a peace and nuclear affairs officer and £50,000 on a woman's day on 8 March? Of course the council has difficulties in its inner city area, but is it not irresponsible——

**Mr. Holland:** If the hon. Gentleman will give way, I will answer his points.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I realise that the hon. Member for Streatham (Mr. Shelton) was somewhat tempted by the Opposition but he must return to the motion.

**Mr. Shelton:** If the Bill does not go through the shambles in Lambeth will continue. While the council is spending that sort of money and spending at a rate above the rate at which the council will be capped, there are unprocessed claims for housing benefit, rent arrears, empty homes, squatters, staff shortages and, to use the words of the auditor's report, "a cycle of decay". The council is ignoring its responsibilities and seems to be capable only of ill spending money. It is typical of Labour in power and for the protection of my constituents I urge the House to support the Bill.

**Mr. Holland:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The House has been aware of the fact that you attempted to bring the hon. Member for Streatham (Mr. Shelton) to order several times. He paid no attention to your ruling——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. Member for Streatham (Mr. Shelton) has resumed his seat.

5.10 pm

**Mr. Michael Meadowcroft** (Leeds, West): It is sad that the Leader of the House came before us today with this motion when we have a certain regard for protection of the rights of the House. It is not insignificant that he appeared to have little heart for what he was saying and, sadly, that he has left the Chamber so soon. It is a shame that he did not come forward with the motion in any spirit of humility by saying, "Here is something that has been caused by the Government and by errors in the past. It has been brought upon us by matters that we have found to be wrong, that we are seeking to put right." Instead of doing that, he tried to brazen it out. What is worse, he used the age old threat that we have heard throughout the proceedings on the Bill that unless it goes through quickly it will hold up the rate support grant settlement.

As I have said before, I do not believe that it is beyond the wit of those who wish to deal with rate support grant to find some way of making that possible in the interim with the active support of Opposition Members. It compounds the felony to use the problem about rate support grant settlement as a reason for guillotining the Bill. It flies in the face of the fact that, had the Bill been solely to validate the financial problems, it would have been through by now.

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley):** If it is true, as I have been saying throughout the previous two days in Committee, that the Bill does precisely that, would it now be time for the hon. Gentleman to realise that he could deliver on his promise by not making his speech?

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** I do not know whether the Secretary of State misunderstands the Bill in its entirety or whether he now contradicts what he has said before. The Secretary of State has admitted in the Chamber during previous debates on the Bill that it goes further than validating the errors. If he has accepted that before, why is he now trying to say that, if all we want to do is secure the RSG settlement, we need not have the debate? The fact is that we oppose the Bill and many of its provisions because it goes way beyond validating the illegality that the Secretary of State discovered in his Department. It goes way beyond that in terms of codes of practice, in trying to define and in attempting to introduce retrospective legislation beyond what is necessary for the rate support grant settlements. That is why it does a disservice to the House to try to pretend that we have somehow brought about the need for a guillotine.

The Bill has been in Committee of the whole House for some 15 hours and we are roughly halfway through the amendments and new clauses. I do not believe that anybody could sustain the argument that there has been undue delay or excessive speeches by Opposition Members. It is not possible to say that there has been a filibuster. It showed the flimsy nature of the Leader of the House's argument that he had to pick up the comment of the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) who, when I said that I would not delay the House, said, "Drag it out, Michael." The Leader of the House did not point out that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West and I did not drag it out. The hon. Member for Newham, North-West could have dragged out the debate but he chose not to. To be fair to him, which is not always possible, he spoke little and often. He certainly did not delay the House unduly.

Many of the amendments selected for discussion, those we have dealt with and those to come, are Government amendments. There is a complex new schedule tabled by the Government. It was not tabled by my hon. Friends or by Labour Members. Therefore, it is a disservice to the House to propose this motion now.

A total of 66 amendments have been selected and of those 12 are Government amendments. There are no amendments piled up by the Opposition for the sake of it and there are no amendments which simply probe. A large proportion are Government amendments. One of the amendments selected for debate is in the name of two Conservative Members. I am sorry that the hon. Members for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock) and for Halifax (Mr. Galley) are not in the Chamber to defend their amendment against what will happen to it if the Bill is guillotined. It is a particularly important amendment. They have consistently argued that more resources are required for the fire and civil defence authority in west Yorkshire. Again, that is not something that Opposition Members have sought to set out to delay the Bill.

The right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) mentioned the problems about Report stage. I raised that issue on a point of order on 20 January. I pointed out the problems that would occur if there were to be no gap between the Committee of the whole House and Report stage, especially when there are such complex Government amendments, new clauses and the new schedule, which presumably the Government will drag through. We will then be faced with manuscript amendments which we would be unable to relate to particular lines of the Bill, and there would be problems of debate. To be fair, the Leader of the House said on that day that the Government did not intend to drive the Bill through and that the debate would terminate at a reasonable hour. Therefore, the question put in my legitimate point of order would not arise. After that, which I thought was fair to the House, it is intolerable that today the same thing does not apply and that we will either have to move straight from the Committee of the whole House to the Report stage, attenuated no doubt, or the Report stage will be virtually non-existent and the only debate on that will be for another place.

I am surprised that Government Ministers would risk provoking Members of another place to amend the Bill. We all know that our noble Friends are particularly concerned with their constitutional position and, to the chagrin of some Labour Members, they take their position so seriously that they do not push their views to a Division so often. I believe that the Government are risking an awful lot if, by attenuating the debate here, they provoke Members of another place to do their worst with the Bill. It may be that it will be counter-productive and do exactly what the Government do not want. Therefore, it is dangerous.

What is happening today may well validate the cash, but it will not validate the damage that is being done to local government. I hope that Conservative Members are on their knees night after night praying that there will never be a Labour Government who might try to use the powers that the Government are taking to themselves in this Bill, especially in view of the things that have been itemised by Conservative Members as happening in local government. If Labour Members were in government and they had the powers contained in this Bill and others being pushed through the House, Conservative Members would rue the day they ever put this Bill on the statute book, because the draconian centralising powers in the Bill could be used to devastating effect, directly opposite to that intended. It is important to recognise the danger.

Up and down the country there are Conservative members of local authorities who are not standing for re-election. There are some in my own city. They believe that the Government no longer see them as people of importance within the community. They believe that the powers they would want to enable them to operate within local government are being taken away.

It is significant that Conservative Members who have defended local government in the House were absent from previous debates on the Bill. They seem to have given up the struggle against their Government. The hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) was conspicuous by his absence, as was the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) and the hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark). They have all genuinely and bravely defended local government and it is significant that they seem to have given up the struggle.

The Conservative Government have broken the consensus about what should happen in the relationship with local government. They have been tempted, by what has happened in certain local authorities, to take powers to themselves which are not needed and which will ultimately prove to be counter-productive. Once that consensus is broken, I fear that they will have sown the wind and that they will therefore reap the whirlwind. Guillotining the Bill is callous in the extreme to local government and it adds insult to injury to the way in which the men and women who serve local authorities without fear or favour are treated by the Government. The Government will rue the day that they tabled the motion.

5.20 pm

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): If any group has broken the consensus in local government, it is the extreme Left, of which my hon. Friend the Member for Streatham (Mr. Shelton) gave an example. I could give another—Ealing.

I am surprised that the Labour party feels able to oppose any guillotine motion, as it was the Labour party which proposed no fewer than five guillotine motions in one day. Not one of those Bills had been considered in Committee on the Floor of the House, as has this one. The flimsiest of reasons was given for those motions. Indeed, they were anti-reasons for a draconian and, to my mind, anti-democratic action.

This Bill would validate a good deal of past expenditure and I am therefore surprised to hear the Labour Front Bench argue against it. The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) should know that the action of the Labour-controlled Greater London council, which imposed a rate increase of 100 per cent. and doubled bus and underground fares in 1981, would be invalid without the Bill. Many other actions which have to be permitted for democratic reasons, I suppose, would be validated. Among them is the expenditure by Ealing council of £140,000 for removing books from school and other libraries because they are considered racist and sexist. Without the motion, and therefore the Bill, such action is not legal, although it will in due course be rejected by the electorate. The £140,000 is intended to remove racist and sexist books such as "Robinson Crusoe" from Ealing schools. It is said to be racist because Man Friday has a subservient role and it is said to be sexist because there is no woman in it. That is an example of the absurd and wicked behaviour of some local authorities such as Ealing.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I apologise to the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) for interrupting his flow, but is this strictly relevant to the guillotine motion?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member is relating his speech to the allocation of time motion, and I am sure that he will continue to do so.

**Mr. Greenway:** I am trying to describe what will happen if the motion, and therefore the Bill, is not passed. The hon. Member for Newham, North-West is one of the great filibusterers of the House. Filibustering is a skill in which he excels and, without a guillotine motion, he could no doubt prolong the discussion of the Bill himself. We must bear that fact in mind.

Actions such as I have described could not be scrutinised properly if the guillotine motion and the Bill were not passed. Ealing council is spending £5·25 per line advertising teachers' jobs in *The Guardian* rather than £2·25 advertising them in *The Times Educational Supplement* and *Higher Education Supplement*, which are a much more relevant recruiting ground. Such an abuse of expenditure and so much else will, by a great irony, be the better exposed if the Bill is passed.

Some £3·1 million is to be spent each year on a grand new office block for over-grand councillors. A substantial sum of money has been spent on bogus consultations of residents in the process of taking their allotments away from them so that they can be built on. Such behaviour could be better scrutinised if the Bill were enacted.

I should mention one such action in a little more detail so that the House understands what I mean by bogus consultations. There are a few plots of land in part of Greenford which are all taken up by residents. Ealing council proposes to confiscate the land and build council houses on it. It is surrounded by houses. A lady of 76, Mrs. Skillman, heard at a public meeting that her house would be acquired compulsorily—the first intimation she had of it.

**Mr. Straw:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I hesitate to raise this point again, and I realise that the debate may range widely, but the hon. Gentleman appears to be making a constituency speech with no reference to the motion's title——

"Local Government Finance Bill (Allocation of Time)".

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I am sure that the hon. Member for Ealing, North will relate his speech to the motion.

**Mr. Greenway:** I most certainly will, Sir. We all know that the Labour party does not like to hear the truth about its colleagues in local government and the evil behaviour of Brent, Ealing, Haringey and the rest. It defends such councils, but I do not know how it can. This 76-year-old constituent, who has worked for 20 years with a sick husband to buy her house, needs the protection that the Bill, and therefore the motion, will afford. She has been victimised by a callous, wicked Labour council. I hope that Labour Members will see the meanness of their ways in encouraging them.

5.26 pm

**Mr. Terry Davis** (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): I would have more respect for the time-wasting remarks of the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) if he had spent more time in the Chamber during our consideration of the Bill.

The arguments employed by the Leader of the House will not wash. It is not true that there has been a filibuster during the Bill's Committee stage. If there had been, my collegues from Birmingham and I would have——

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) made a very rude remark about my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House when he left, but the hon. Gentleman sat down only two minutes ago and has himself rushed off. [HON. MEMBERS: "He is there."] He is going out of the door. I wonder whether it is in order to ask the hon. Gentleman to apologise to my right hon. Friend.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Let us get on with the debate.

**Mr. Davis:** It is not true that there has been a filibuster. If there had been, I and my right hon. and hon. Friends who represent Birmingham would have taken part because we oppose the Bill to the greatest possible extent. Instead, we have waited patiently for amendments that affect the city of Birmingham to be considered. Even with the guillotine motion we will still debate those amendments, but there has been no time-wasting in the meantime.

It is especially inappropriate for the Leader of the House to move a timetable motion on this Bill because it was this Secretary of State who said on 16 December that the need for the Bill arose from inadequate scrutiny of previous legislation. The Government are now moving a timetable motion which will curtail scrutiny of the Bill. I only hope that, some time in the future, the Secretary of State's successor will not tell the House that it must consider yet another Bill because there is a loophole in this legislation as a direct result of our not being able to give it proper scrutiny — because of the Government's draconian decision to move a timetable motion.

It would have been possible for the Government to provide adequate time. We could have come back earlier from the Christmas recess, we could have sat later in our two previous sittings, or the Government could have made more time available by providing more days. Instead, they are determined to bulldoze the Bill through, just as they have bulldozed through other local government legislation. This is a regrettable and deplorable decision and yet anoter example of the shabby way in which the Government treat local government.

5.30 pm

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): I congratulate the right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams), who opened the debate for the Opposition, on trying to prove to the House — unsuccessfully, I am afraid — that there is life after death. Having heard Labour Members' reactions to today's statement, I can assure the House that the Labour party is in terminal decline.

I should like to make a lesser and a greater point, and ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to say whether he intends to include them in the Bill at a later stage.

My first point is about the voting rights of co-opted members of education committees. It is quite sensible and understandable that the great majority of co-opted members, being very much in favour of education, would wish to see more money spent on education, because that is largely what they are there for. Co-opted members can sometimes sway decisions in favour of spending more money on education, and can sway those decisions against the majority on the local authority. Once that decision on the local education committee has been swayed it is sometimes very difficult, for quite understandable political reasons, for the majority party on the county council or local authority to reinstate the original situation. That sometimes leads to greater expenditure than would otherwise have been the will of the elected majority. Taxation without being representative is wrong, and something should be done about it.

My second and greater point concerns creative accounting. The Audit Commission has said that certain local authorities have creatively accounted and have sold assets on lease, and so on and so forth, to the extent of about £700 million. One of today's newspapers said that that figure could be a massive £5,000 million. We want to know what will happen because these are largely poor areas. Will the ratepayers of those areas have to pick up the tab at some stage, or will the general taxpayer have to pick up the tab? We ought to know.

There was once a noble bishop who, when confronted with a problem of great theological complexity, looked it straight in the eye and then passed by. I should like to think that the Government will not pass by this problem.

5.32 pm

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): I was surprised and somewhat gratified to figure so prominently in the speech of the Leader of the House. Alas, he greatly overrates my influence on Opposition Front Bench tactics, because, alas, my advice was ignored, as, I regret to say, it so often is.

I was brought into the justification for the motion, which is absurd. When I said to the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) that he should "drag it out", I was not referring to the Secretary of State, nor was I inviting him to dress up in women's clothing, handsome though he might look. All I was trying to do was to make it clear to Conservative Members—not that there were many of them here then, nor are there many here now—that they should not, in any way, underestimate our intention to make a great fight of this.

The record has shown that far more responsible advice was taken on the Opposition Front Bench, and we have made a very good fist of the Bill. We have done so responsibly, and we have in no way done it by trying to prolong discussion.

The Minister knows, because he is handed briefs that he probably has not seen until a few minutes before, that it is a highly technical Bill. None of us can say that we fully understand it. I am absolutely convinced—the Minister would probably agree with me if he could get up and say so — mistakes have been made as the Bill has gone through the House in the amendments that have been moved by the Government and the amendments that have been refused by the Government, which we have tried to make. No one can be 100 per cent. sure, and there is a great case to be made out for going slowly and surely on the Bill. One of the reasons why the Government took such a leisurely pace was that amendments were coming hot off the press while Ministers were considering it.

I hope that the attitude that we have taken has always been consistent with our view that the Bill is profoundly misguided in certain fundamental respects. Great mistakes have undoubtedly been made. We believe that the Government have been trying to hurry the Bill through to frustrate legal challenge, but in hurrying it through in the way that they have they will lay the Bill open to further legal challenge at a later date. That is why I shall oppose the motion.

5.34 pm

**Dr. John Cunningham** (Copeland): I say at the outset that not only could there have been agreement about a short Bill with the aims and objectives of clarifying the law, but there could have been agreement on the timetable of such a Bill, as the Secretary of State well knows.

I emphasise that the Government cannot shelter any longer behind the excuse of shortness of time, when Ministers have known about that state of affairs since September. Such is the confusion and incompetence in the Government's affairs that even as recently as Friday yet another Bill was published, the Rate Support Grants Bill, in the explanatory and financial memorandum to which there is again our old friend of an excuse: the Bill is designed to remove uncertainty in the law. Within months of one Bill receiving Royal Assent, the House is considering a second Bill and yet a third one appears necessary to clarify the law.

If that was not sufficient reason for us to object to the Bill being railroaded through, I received a letter from the Secretary of State for the Environment this afternoon—I thank him for this courtesy. He is trying to re-establish previous normal working relations by writing to me. It

*[Dr. John Cunningham]*

would be instructive to tell the House what the right hon. Gentleman had to say. In his letter he makes it clear that the Government will again have to amend the Bill. He wrote:

> "the amendment will relate to the information about total expenditure and rateable values to be used in making reports . . . it will be, as is the whole schedule highly technical and I am afraid rather long . . . It is very much in the local authority's interests that we get this schedule absolutely right and that is what my amendment will aim to do."

Incompetence, bordering on farce, has been a feature of our considerations of these matters. However, yet again we have a confession from the right hon. Gentleman, within days of previous denials, that major revision of the Government's legislation is again necessary before we have completed the Committee stage. That, of course, proves our point that this highly technical, highly complex legal and financial Bill has no place on the Floor of the House. As we argued from the outset, it should have been properly, carefully and slowly considered in Committee, before a proper Report stage.

What has happened now, in the way in which the timetable motion has been engineered and in the rather lame way in which it was moved by the Leader of the House — I am grateful that he is in his place — demonstrates the inadequacy of the procedures of the House when a Government are determined to railroad a Bill through, regardless of the consequences. As I have emphasised, we already have a further Bill, but we have not yet cleared up, nor do we appear able to, the major legal row about the Bill.

The point still at issue is that clause 4 contains a sweeping catch-all immunity for the Secretary of State from legal challenge in the courts, which is unprecedented, so far as we can tell, in modern legislation. *[Interruption.]* I emphasise that we share the widespread concern—the Secretary of State again murmurs that we are wrong—that he has failed adequately to define the immunities that he is seeking in the Bill. His inability to be clear about that was apparent in his somewhat contradictory remarks and in his uncertainty in response to questions by my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) on Wednesday 21 January at column 995 of the *Official Report*.

Obviously, many provisions of part VI of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act, 1980 are not dependent on total or relevant expenditure definitions, as we have constantly argued. Examples are the Secretary of State's duty to consult local authority associations; determination of the aggregate amount of domestic rate relief grant; calculation of block grant to each authority — deduction from total expenditure of the product of grant-related poundage multiplied by gross rateable value; the principles to be specified in the rate support grant report; the power of the Secretary of State to apply multipliers to the product of GRP multiplied by GRV; and the duty to frame guidance by reference to principles applicable to all authorities. None of those things is dependent upon definitions of total or relevant expenditure, and all of them are affected by the sweeping provisions for immunity that the Secretary of State is seeking.

We make no apology for saying that it is the duty of the House rigorously to examine those matters and to be satisfied about them before we can allow the Bill to pass. Why should the Secretary of State's decisions on all those issues be immune from legal challenge? Why are clause 4(1) and (2) not much more carefully qualified than at present? We have similar major reservations about the provisions with respect to rates limitation in clause 6.

If the Government were seeking simply to validate retrospectively past decisions for the reasons claimed—that is, reasons of the definition of total or relevant expenditure — decisions taken for the financial year 1987-88 would have been included in clause 6(2). Those decisions would then have been for the purpose of part I of the Rates Act 1984.

We have had no answer on this point, either. It seems clear that decisions on the 1987-88 rate limitations are, in clause 6(3), for a particular reason. Under the clause, decisions are

> "For the purposes of section 7 below and Schedule 2 to this Act".

They are not for the purposes of part I of the 1984 Act. In other words, it appears that at some point in the process of determining rate limitation for the coming financial year, but before the introduction of the Bill, the Secretary of State deliberately stopped taking decisions that he had a duty to take. He stopped taking those decisions in the context of the Rates Act 1984 and instead he began to act, presumably under the guidance of decisions in the context of the forthcoming legislation—the Bill—which was yet to be introduced to the House. That is an extraordinary state of affairs for a Secretary of State to find himself in, I agree, but it is an unsatisfactory way for him to act. I should like at some time, either now or later, some confirmation that that is the case.

The Secretary of State could well be forgiven for reflecting on the words of John Gay:

> "I know you lawyers can, with ease.
> Twist words and meanings as you please."

The right hon. Gentleman seems to have been doing a little of that himself while the Committee has considered the implications of the legislation.

We cannot accept the timetable motion. It is unreasonable, in the circumstances in which the House finds itself, to suggest that a timetable motion is necessary at all. I have no doubt that we shall discover that in another place their Lordships will have some searching questions to ask, not only about the provisions of the Bill but about the reason why they were not more carefully scrutinised and why more time was not allowed in the House before the Bill went to another place.

For those reasons I shall ask my right hon. and hon. Friends to reject the motion.

5.45 pm

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley):** I should like to deal first with two extraneous points. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) asked whether the Bill would prevent the co-option of non-elected people to education committees. It does not have that effect.

**Mr. Marlow:** I was suggesting that those people should not have voting rights, not that they should not be co-opted.

**Mr. Ridley:** Indeed, but the Bill does not affect that. The matter would have to be the subject of a separate piece of legislation.

The other matter that was irrelevant to the Bill was raised by the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr.

Cunningham), who mentioned the Rate Support Grants Bill, about which he was warned in July, September and December. He appears to have forgotten that the Government have always said that they would abolish grant recycling. For the hon. Gentleman to try to draw that into this discussion is ridiculous. It shows how right the Government are to introduce the timetable motion.

I shall not rehearse the urgent reasons for which the Bill is required because the House know them very well. I think that Opposition Members will find that local authorities will be keen to see the Bill on the statute book so that they know where they are.

There have been extraordinary examples of filibuster, particularly this afternoon. The right hon. Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) came to the debate from the cold, not having the faintest idea what the Bill or our discussions were all about. He talked for 20 minutes. Your patience, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was remarkable. I congratulate you upon it, letting that drivel from the right hon. Gentleman run on. I am sure that once the motion is passed, as it will be, the right hon. Gentleman will go away from the Committee and never be seen again. He was right when he said that he knew nothing about the rate support grant. I think that he said that he has been in the House for 26 years——

**Mr. Williams:** It is 23 years.

**Mr. Ridley:** Twenty three years. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that he knew nothing about the rate support grant. That was absolutely right. He would be wiser to absent himself from all matters connected with local government after his pathetic filibuster this afternoon.

The right hon. Gentleman accused me of misleading the House. That is a serious charge, and it is not true. I nearly asked him to withdraw it, because I have been absolutely frank with the House throughout the Bill. If the right hon. Gentleman had been present at our discussions and taken the slightest bit of notice, he would not have dared to make that charge, so I invite him to withdraw that remark.

**Mr. Williams:** I do not withdraw that remark, and invite the Secretary of State to look at his own comments, as quoted from *Hansard*, in which he gave one date on one occasion and another date on the other. He made no attempt to apologise. It is not for me to withdraw; it is for the right hon. Gentleman to apologise.

**Mr. Ridley:** The right hon. Gentleman has compounded his error. He has not read *Hansard* properly. He will know perfectly well that I told the House that, at the end of September, I received from my officials advice that the total expenditure definition was doubtful. I therefore told the House that I sought legal advice from my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, which was received on 21 October — I am sorry; at the end of October. The right hon. Gentleman must now realise that what I said was absolutely right. I did not know that there was a problem that had to be legislated upon until I received that advice. Therefore, I should be grateful if the right hon. Gentleman would now withdraw that accusation.

**Dr. Cunningham** *rose*——

**Mr. Ridley:** I am not giving way to the hon. Gentleman. I was talking to the right hon. Member for Swansea, West.

**Dr. Cunningham:** I thank the right hon. Gentleman for giving way.

**Mr. Ridley:** I have not given way.

**Dr. Cunningham** *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I understood the Secretary of State to say that he had not given way.

**Mr. Ridley:** I was giving way to the right hon. Member for Swansea, West.

**Mr. Williams:** The hon. Gentleman must look at the *Official Report* for 16 December, when the Secretary of State said:

> "The first intimation I had that the legal advice was as I have described it was towards the end of October and this was confirmed in a second opinion". — [*Official Report*, 16 December 1986; Vol. 107, c.1053.]

On Second Reading the Secretary of State announced that he knew in September. The conclusion that one is left with is that it is not good enough simply to listen to what the right hon. Gentleman says; one has to see whether his eyes are rolling as he says it.

**Mr. Ridley:** The right hon. Gentleman has not done his homework, and would not understand even if he had. I bitterly resent what he is saying because it is an unfair and untrue charge, and I shall ask him to withdraw it. On Second Reading I said perfectly clearly that I was told that there was doubt about the definition of total expenditure at the end of September. I then received legal advice, and it was not until then that it was known that it was necessary to legislate. That is what I have said throughout, and it is no good the right hon. Gentleman sitting there shaking his head. He has made a mess of his speech this afternoon and he should withdraw from the debate if he does not understand it.

**Dr. Cunningham:** The Secretary of State is struggling in a quagmire of his own making. On 16 December I asked:

> "For how long has the Secretary of State known of this situation? When did he first receive the legal advice to which he referred?"

The Secretary of State replied:

> "The first intimation I had that the legal advice was as I have described it was towards the end of October, and this was confirmed in a second opinion."—[*Official Report*, 16 December 1986; Vol. 1401, c. 1052-53.]

We now know that the Secretary of State had known about it since September. He has caused the confusion, and he has been less than candid with the House.

**Mr. Ridley:** Will the hon. Gentleman get this point straight, please? Officials told me that there was a problem and legal advice was needed to resolve it. That was at the end of September. The legal advice was recieved at the end of October, and that is what I referred to when answering his question. I said that the first time that I received legal advice was at the end of October. I would now be grateful if the right hon. Member for Swansea, West would please withdraw his offensive remarks. He cannot come into a debate, make an accusation of that sort and expect to get away with it.

**Mr. Williams:** I value my integrity in the House as much as the right hon. Gentleman values his. I have never maligned an hon. Member, and if I have ever done anything in the House that I felt was wrong I have been willing to withdraw it. In this case I am absolutely correct; the circumstances are as reported in *Hansard*, and as I have described them in my speech.

**Mr. Ridley:** The House will know that the hon. Gentleman cannot be relied upon to do the decent thing in a situation such as this.

We have already had 14 hours 50 minutes of debate in Committee, two and a half hours of which was spent on procedural motions and points of order. During those two long days only 17 groups of amendments were considered and 25 groups of amendments remain provisionally selected by the Chairman. At this rate we shall need three more days in Committee alone.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** So what?

**Mr. Ridley:** Authorities might not receive any grant. The Opposition have had a bad time recently on everything from defence to their extraordinary attempt to counter the sort of points that my hon. Friends forEaling, North (Mr. Greenway) and for Streatham (Mr. Shelton) were so rightly emphasising in the debate this afternoon. This is a pathetic attempt to accuse decent, efficient Tory councils of meanness. They dropped that pretty quickly. Then we had the extraordinary visit to Bishop's Stortford, when the Opposition announced that a financial collapse was imminent. The stock exchange went up 19·5 points on the day and 65 points on the week, having digested the economic policies of the Labour party.

The hon. Member for Copeland thought that the Bill would be different. He thought that he would be able to make his reputation without slipping on a banana skin. He thought that there was potential for him to put right the appalling blunders of the Labour party on the Bill.

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** Will the Secretary of State reflect on the fact that I have served on all 12 local government Bills introduced since 1979? The major difference between this Bill and the others has been the conduct of the Government, the Secretary of State and other Ministers. The Secretary of State has treated the House, the Opposition and local government with more contempt than any of his predecessors and he should be ashamed of himself.

**Mr. Ridley:** The major difference is that the Opposition have not understood the Bill. The hon. Member for Copeland certainly has not understood the Bill. To coin a phrase, the hon. Gentleman has been making bricks without straw. He invented the first scare that I was putting myself above the law in some way, and the other scare that the Bill contained draconian, centralising powers, as the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) called them.

It is odd that the hon. Member for Copeland sought to make the point on a point of order on Wednesday afternoon when it was not remotely a point of order and when he knew that the debate of substance would not be reached until late that night. He knew that I could not reply on the point of order; he knew that he was talking rubbish, and he hoped that it would be picked up by the press because he made it at 3.30 pm when he hoped that the press would be there. I thought that was a shabby trick. The hon. Gentleman knows what a point of order is, and he knew that what he was saying was not a point of order. The hon. Gentleman did not bother to raise the matter in the clause 4 stand part debate; he left it to the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), who accepted the Government's case on that matter entirely, and when he received my letter today he realised how wrong he was.

**Mr. Straw:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Ridley:** Sit down. I will give way when I feel like it. The hon. Member for Copeland is trying to make accusations about the Bill which will stick in prime time because he knows, as all my hon. Friends know, that what the Bill does is validate the past in the way that I always said it did.

**Mr. Straw:** I would have accused the Secretary of State of seeking to mislead the House in suggesting that I had accepted the Government's case had I not thought that it was a joke. The Secretary of State was present during the debates on 19 January about the effect of clause 4(6). Would he like to quote one single word or sentence where I intimated that I had accepted the Government's case?

**Mr. Ridley:** I was accusing the hon. Member for Copeland of making bricks without straw. If he had straw with him, I am happy to admit that the hon. Gentleman is wrong, as well as his hon. Friend. I was trying to pay him a compliment by saying that he was the only Member on the Opposition Benches who knows what the Bill does.

The Bill simply validates all that was done because of the definition of the law not being as everybody thought it was. I admit that it is more complicated than we would all like, but the great mistake that the Opposition have made is to think that it puts me above the law or gives me excessive centralising draconian powers. There is not a single word of truth in that at all. It is right we should debate the Bill for the rest of the day and put it on the statute book as quickly as we can.

5.59 pm

**Mr. Michael Hancock** (Portsmouth, South): If ever there was a reason why we should not rush to vote on the guillotine motion, we have just heard it. It must surely have reinforced the doubt that every hon. Member must feel that the Secretary of State is the only person here who understands the Bill because he is so vague about its concept and ambitions.

On 21 January the Minister for Local Government said:

> "I shall have to be careful with the words because all these words mean something and have to be interpreted . . . I try to interpret them for myself at the same time as I interpret them for the Committee and five minutes later I wonder if I have. I should prefer to write to the hon. Member"—

that is me—

> "about this".—[*Official Report*, 21 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 981.]

If a Minister in the Department promoting the Bill has doubts about the interpretation of the words in it—much of what has gone on before is about the way in which those words will be interpreted and the way in which local authorities will have to respond—the Secretary of State must surely see the merits of allowing the House to go into a proper Committee stage to try to draw from him and his colleagues the real meaning and implication of their words.

The Minister of State is dead right—words mean something and they must be interpreted correctly. Much of what has happened in the 15 hours in which we have discussed the Bill will lead to a gross misinterpretation of what the Bill is about and will undoubtedly mean that many local authorities will be drawn into expensive legal battles with the Government. The hon. Member for Streatham (Mr. Shelton) talked about the shambles that had occurred in many Labour authorities in London. I want to draw the Secretary of State's attention to the shambles that will occur if he adopts the powers that the Bill would give him. In answer to me last week in the House he said that Hampshire county council could levy a rate not in excess of 1·5 per cent. His Department told Hampshire county council that it would be happy if that rate increase was 4 per cent. greater than that—some 5·8 per cent. A real shambles would occur if Hampshire adopted that policy. It would mean that about £20 million worth of cuts would have to be made. It would mean fewer policemen, firemen and social workers. It would mean cuts in education. It would mean a really regressive and nasty turn for services in Hampshire. The council would have to make £20 million worth of cuts if it took the Secretary of State's advice.

The Secretary of State tried to score a cheap and silly political point in answering my question. Unfortunately, the substance of the Bill is a silly political point. Surely we have a responsibility to expose that and to try to get the Secretary of State to come to the House with the integrity and honesty that is needed to spell out what is meant by some of the terms in the Bill. Many of the amendments that will be before us later this evening are probing amendments—they have to be, by the very complexity of the subject before us. They hope to probe and bring out the reasons behind the Bill, to discover who will be affected by it and what powers the Secretary of State will have. The shambles is here for all to see—we do not have to quote chapter and verse from our own experiences in local authorities.

To do our job properly we must devote time and energy, and the Government must provide that time, to examining the Bill properly. That will not be possible with the timetable motion before us. I fully understand the embarrassment felt by the Leader of the House at having to present such a motion because he, above all, must realise that it is not giving the local authorities a fair chance and certainly not giving the House a fair chance to examine a complex and far-reaching piece of legislation.

*Question put:—*

*The House divided:* Ayes 247, Noes 173.

**Division No. 70]** **[6.05 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Hayes, J.
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Holt, Richard
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Jackson, Robert
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Pawsey, James
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan

Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Richard Ryder and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

## NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ray Powell.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the following provisions shall apply to the remaining proceedings on the Bill:

*Committee, Report and Third Reading*

1.—(1) The remaining proceedings in Committee on the Bill and the proceedings on consideration and Third Reading of the Bill shall be completed in one allotted day and shall be brought to a conclusion at midnight on that day.

(2) Standing Order No. 80 (Business Committee) shall not apply to this Order.

*Proceedings on going into Committee*

2. When the Order of the Day is read for the House to resolve itself into a Committee on the Bill, Mr. Speaker shall leave the Chair without putting any Question, whether or not notice of an Instruction has been given.

*Conclusion of proceedings in Committee*

3. On the conclusion of the proceedings in Committee on the Bill the Chairman shall report the Bill to the House without putting any Question, and the House shall proceed to consider the Bill, as amended, without any Question being put.

*Order of proceedings*

4. No Motion shall be made to alter the order in which proceedings in Committee or on consideration of the Bill are taken.

*Dilatory Motions*

5. No dilatory Motion with respect to, or in the course of, proceedings on the Bill shall be made on the alloted day except by a member of the Government, and the Question on any such Motion shall be put forthwith.

*Extra time*

6.—(1) On the allotted day paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings on the Bill for two hours after Ten o'clock.

(2) Any period during which proceedings on the Bill may be proceeded with after Ten o'clock under paragraph (7) of Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) shall be in addition to the said period of two hours.

(3) If the allotted day is one to which a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, a period of time equal to the duration of the proceedings upon that Motion shall be added to the said period of two hours.

*Private business*

7. Any private business which has been set down for consideration at Seven o'clock on the allotted day shall, instead of being considered as provided by Standing Orders,

be considered at the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill on that day, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the private business for a period of three hours from the conclusion of the proceedings on the Bill or, if those proceedings are concluded before Ten o'clock, for a period equal to the time elapsing between Seven o'clock and the conclusion of those proceedings.

*Conclusion of proceedings*

8.—(1) For the purpose of bringing to a conclusion any proceedings which are to be brought to a conclusion at a time appointed by this Order and which have not previously been brought to a conclusion, the Chairman or Mr. Speaker shall forthwith put the following Questions (but no others):

*(a)* any Question already proposed from the Chair;

*(b)* any Question necessary to bring to a decision a Question so proposed (including in the case of a new Clause or new Schedule which has been read a second time, the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill);

*(c)* the Question on any amendment or Motion standing on the Order Paper in the name of any Memberm, if that amendment or Motion is moved by a member of the Government;

*(d)* any other Question necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded;

and on a Motion so made for a new Clause or a new Schedule, the Chairman or Mr. Speaker shall put only the Question that the Clause or Schedule be added to the Bill.

(2) Proceedings under sub-paragraph (1) above shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House.

(3) If the allotted day is one on which a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration) stands over to Seven o'clock, the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion after that time shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

(4) If the allotted day is one to which a Motion for the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 stands over from an earlier day, the bringing to a conclusion of any proceedings on the Bill which, under this Order, are to be brought to a conclusion on that day shall be postponed for a period equal to the duration of the proceedings on that Motion.

*Supplemental orders*

9.—(1) The proceedings on any Motion made in the House by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion one hour after they have been commenced, and paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business) shall apply to the proceedings.

(2) If on the alloted day the House is adjourned, or the sitting is suspended, before the time appointed by this Order for any proceedings on the Bill to be brought to a conclusion, no notice shall be required of a Motion made at the next sitting by a member of the Government for varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order.

*Saving*

10. Nothing in this Order shall—

*(a)* prevent any proceedings to which the Order applies from being taken or completed earlier than is required by the Order, or

*(b)* prevent any business from being proceeded with on the allotted day after the completion of all such proceedings on the Bill as are to be taken on that day.

*Re-committal*

11.—(1) References in this Order to proceedings on consideration or Third Reading include references to proceedings, at those stages respectively, for, on or in consequence of re-committal.

(2) On the allotted day no debate shall be permitted on any Motion to re-commit the Bill (whether as a whole or otherwise), and Mr. Speaker shall put forwith any Question necessary to dispose of the Motion, including the Question on any amendment moved to the Question.

*Interpretation*

12. In this Order—

"allotted day" means a day (other than a Friday) on which the Bill is put down as first Government Order of the Day provided that a Motion for allotting time to the proceedings on the Bill to be taken on that day either has been agreed on a previous day or is set down for consideration on that day;

"the Bill" means the Local Government Finance Bill.

# Orders of the Day

## Local Government Finance Bill

Committee *[Progress 21 January]*

[SIR PAUL DEAN *in the Chair.*]

### Clause 5

FURTHER PROVISION AS TO FUTURE

6.17 pm

**Mr. Terry Davis** (Birmingham, Hodge Hill): I beg to move amendment No. 87, in page 5, line 9, after 'years', insert

> 'unless the accounts for the intermediate year were certified by the auditors for the local authority before 16th December 1986'.

Before we can consider amendment No. 87, we need to consider clause 5 because this is the first debate that we have had on this clause. But before we consider clause 5, we must look back at clause 3, which we have already considered. Clause 3 provides for the definition of relevant and total expenditure for the year 1987-88 and for subsequent years. As a result of clause 5, the same definition is to apply, after the passing of the Bill for the years 1983-84 to 1986-87. These past years are described as the "intermediate years".

The amendment would benefit the city of Birmingham council. To the best of my knowledge, it would benefit only the city of Birmingham. It is designed to benefit Birmingham specifically in respect of expenditure for 1984-85, for which the accounts have already been audited and certified by the auditors. On Second Reading, the Secretary of State referred to what I would describe as the Birmingham problem. In response to my intervention, he said:

> "Birmingham council moved a sum of money which it did not have into a special fund, and at a later stage it moved that money back into the rate fund, thereby claiming grant."—[*Official Report*, 12 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 45.]

Later, in response to my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), the Secretary of State went on to say, again in relation to Birmingham:

> "But if there were no funds and the funds that were shifted did not exist, then I am sure that the hon. Gentleman would be the first to agree with me that that was a fiddle."—[*Official Report*, 12 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 104.]

It was clear that the Secretary of State believed that Birmingham had made a paper transaction involving money that did not exist. I was especially concerned by his reference to "a fiddle" and discussed the matter with the city treasurer immediately after Second Reading and on several other occasions. The present city treasurer was not the treasurer in Birmingham at the time of the transaction in 1984-85, but he assures me that there is no question of the council cheating. Indeed, he has authorised me to say on his behalf that he will give a categoric assurance that nothing untoward or underhand was done by the city of Birmingham in 1984-85 in its handling of its accounts.

On 15 January, the city treasurer, Mr. Farrar, wrote to the under-secretary in charge of local government finance policy in the Department of the Environment, Mr. Brearley, to make similar comments to him, and through him to the Secretary of State. Mr. Farrar said:

> "Comments made by the Secretary of State during the course of the second reading debate on the Bill, however, indicate that he is under a basic misconception as to Birmingham's position . . . It is not right to suggest as the Secretary of State seems to do . . . that Birmingham's fund contribution in 1984-85 equal to the rate fund deficit 'did not exist'."

As the city treasurer explained to Mr. Brearley, the city council operates, like all local government, on the basis of receipts and payments during a financial year. Unlike central Government, year end accounts are drawn up on an income and expenditure basis, including accruals for debtors and creditors. It follows that a year end deficit does not automatically mean a cash deficit. I repeat that there was no question of the city transferring money that it did not have. The money was in its account. But as we can see from reports from the former city treasurer—Mr. Sabin, who has left to become chief executive of Kent county council—the city of Birmingham was underspending considerably compared with its budgeted expenditure for 1984-85, so he suggested to the council that a sum equivalent to the underspend should be transferred to a special fund to be called the supply of goods and services fund.

There was some correspondence about the transfer while the city's accounts were being audited — *[Interruption.]* The Secretary of State is making noises from a sedentary position. No doubt he is agreeing that there was some correspondence, of which he has copies. There was nothing underhand about the way in which the city treasurer and the council, with the agreement of Conservative and Labour councillors, behaved in this matter. They have hidden nothing from the Government. It is the Government who are behaving deplorably and deserve to be criticised.

There was some correspondence between the Audit Commission and the city's auditors, Price Waterhouse. I have a copy of a letter, which has also been provided to the Secretary of State, dated 31 January 1986 from Mr. I. M. Pickwell of the Audit Commission to Mr. J. Layton of Price Waterhouse. Mr. Pickwell said that he had some doubts whether the transfer could be regarded as legitimate expenditure. He said:

> "Underlying these thoughts of course is my own view that a local authority has a basic duty to fix a balanced budget for the year and to seek to conduct its business so that it remains 'in balance'."

The city's solicitor wrote to Price Waterhouse with regard to this point and explained that there was no question of the city council being unable to finance its end of year deficit without recourse to borrowing. It did not need to borrow money because it had cash. He explained that the city had underspent and that it had transferred an equivalent sum to a special fund. The same practice had occurred the previous year.

On the basis of that correspondence, Price Waterhouse wrote to Mr. Pickwell of the Audit Commission saying:

> "In certain circumstances you may judge a transfer to a fund to be unreasonable when, for example, a transfer should only be financed by way of unauthorised borrowing, but we have no evidence to justify these comments in connection with the City's position."

In his letter, the city's solicitor also examined the suggestion that the year end deficit had occurred as a result of the transfer. He told Price Waterhouse:

"It is wrong to assume a causal link between the decision to make the fund contribution and the end of year deficit. The City Treasurer reported to the Finance and Management Committee on 10th April 1985 that the deficit arose not from overspending the 1984-85 budget but from a combination of factors, the most significant being block grant and rate proceed losses in 1984-85 and previous years."

The deficit arose because of accounting adjustments, not because of the way in which the council had conducted its affairs.

After examining this matter and the books, Price Waterhouse wrote again to the Audit Commission on 21 March, saying:

"We have examined the legislation and whilst tenable arguments exist for your reservations, on balance, we tend to favour the views put forward by the City. We take this view since it seems to us that the City's discretion to create funds is unfettered."

That was on 21 March — six months before the Secretary of State said that he began to have doubts about the legality of the way in which he proposed to treat council expenditure. On 16 May 1986, Mr. Layton of Price Waterhouse told the Department of the Environment:

"We have considered this issue in some detail and have concluded that the contribution is a lawful charge on the City's accounts and its effect has been properly shown on the face of the grant claim."

That correspondence shows that Birmingham council acted honourably and above board in these matters. The transfer to a special fund had occurred previously. In 1983-84, the then Conservative-controlled city council had transferred an even larger amount to a special fund described as the special projects repairs and renewals fund. It follows that this practice was not abnormal. It was not invented for the 1984-85 budget and, in the face of the auditor's certificate for that year, the Secretary of State is wrong to try to revise the amount and to insist on removing £8 million from the city of Birmingham.

This is not just a case of accounting practice. On Second Reading, the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland mentioned the point. He said:

"On examining our Scottish practices in the light of the problems which have emerged in England and Wales, we discovered that we have counted as expenditure transfers between the general rate fund and special funds in assessing authorities' expenditure for the purpose of imposing grant penalties. According to the system we operate"—

that is, the system in Scotland—

"we would also have been prepared to count such transfers as expenditure had they occurred in the accounts of authorities for whom we were proposing a rate reduction."
—[*Official Report*, 12 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 109.]

We therefore have evidence from the auditors and from the Government that the council's actions were not abnormal, were not an underhanded method of cheating and were not, as the Secretary of State claimed on Second Reading, "a fiddle". They were above board, honest and open, and the accounts were certified by the auditors.

We have restricted our amendment to Birmingham because the city's accounts were audited and certified before the Secretary of State's announcement in the House on 16 December. We are not trying to open a loophole that other councils could exploit or that Birmingham could exploit in the future. We are concentrating entirely on 1984-85, which is an important year because the Secretary of State's decision, as contained in the Bill and which he communicated to the city council, will mean that the city will lose £8 million, despite the fact that it made the decision above board and with the agreement of the Conservative and Labour parties on the council.

In our view, the entire Bill is unjustified, but this aspect of the Secretary of State's behaviour is totally unjustified. I urge him, even at this late stage, to accept the amendment and to restore the £8 million to the city of Birmingham.

6.30 pm

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley):** I am grateful to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) for setting out the case clearly. The matter is complicated, so I am sure that the Committee will bear with me if I give a fairly long, careful and detailed answer. I hope to convince the House that no injustice is being done and that everything is as it should be.

First, I shall say a few words about the amendment, not in any sense to rest on my case that it is defective, which it is, but just to dispose of that point before we come to the substance of the Birmingham matter.

The amendment relates to the years 1983-84 to 1986-87 in England and 1984-85 to 1986-87 in Wales. These are the years in respect of which we intend to make further supplementary reports. At the outset I should make one point clear. All authorities have known that for these years further supplementary reports are intended and they have therefore been aware that the amounts of block grant payable for those years is likely to change.

The amendment would have the effect that the definition of relevant and total expenditure in clause 5 would not apply to authorities whose accounts for any one of the intermediate years had been certified by their auditors before 16 December 1986 for that year. This would mean that in practice it would be impossible to make another supplementary report for any year for which one authority had had its accounts certified by the auditors. This is simply not sensible and I recommend that the amendment be not made. I shall not rest further on that other than to say that that is not the way to achieve what the hon. Member for Hodge Hill seeks to achieve.

The amendment is misconceived also as a device to help Birmingham and the 12 other authorities that may have engaged in what is known as deficit financing. Auditors are responsible for certifying that the accounts are correct. I have a totally different responsibility. I have a responsibility to the House of Commons and to the other authorities because block grant is close ended. My responsibility is to administer the rate support grant equitably and in accordance with current legislation, principally our old friend the 1980 Act. Those two responsibilities are quite different. Birmingham and the other local authorities appear to have — I have not reached any final view about this because we are still trying to get full details——

**Mr. Robin Corbett** (Birmingham, Erdington): Is the Secretary of State saying that auditors, whether Price Waterhouse or anyone else, act under no legal constraints? Is he saying that they simply have to say "These are correct"? That surely cannot be the position.

**Mr. Ridley:** Auditors have one clearly defined function and they have their own body of law which governs what they should do. I operate in a totally different area. Under the 1980 Act, I am responsible to Parliament for administering the rate support grant system. If I administer it wrongly or unfairly I can be challenged in court by the other authorities that will suffer. Just because

*[Mr. Ridley]*

an auditor approves or disapproves of something, it does not follow that I pay or do not pay grant as a result. I must pay grant according to the rate support grant law, not according to what the auditor says.

In 1984-85, Birmingham created its supply of goods and services fund, which the hon. Member for Hodge Hill mentioned, and contributed £15,545,000 from its general rate fund to the new fund. By making this contribution, its rate fund revenue account ended the year with a £7,450,980 deficit; that is, about half the money was there, but the other half was not.

Had Birmingham contributed only half of its general rate fund, that is about £7·5 million, to this fund, we estimate that it would not have incurred a deficit and that its total expenditure would have been nearly £8 million lower. Such a transaction would not cause concern for rate support grant purposes.

In 1984-85, Birmingham was on a positive marginal rate of grant, so the higher its total expenditure the more block grant it received. Contributions to special funds add to total expenditure and an extra £8 million would result in a gain to the city of about £0·4 million of block grant for that year.

In 1985-86, Birmingham was on a negative marginal rate of grant. By reducing total expenditure by £8 million, it would gain about £17·3 million in block grant. Taking the two years together, therefore, these transactions imply a block grant gain of about £17·7 million, largely representing reduced holdback and therefore at the expense of the Exchequer.

The question for me is, should I pay this grant? First, I must make it clear that I am not in a position to take a final view on the matter today, statutorily or otherwise. The city council may wish to make further representations. I wish to consider what other councils in a similar position say to me. In short, I retain an open mind. However, I can give an indication of my preliminary view in the light of the papers that Birmingham has sent to me. Those papers make the following matters clear.

First, the council took a decision to put a certain sum into a special fund knowing that that would create a deficit on the general rate fund. It did that to gain an increased entitlement to block grant.

Secondly, the Audit Commission, when asked about the proposed action, expressed considerable reservations, as the hon. Member for Hodge Hill will know, having seen the correspondence, and suggested that the city council's auditors draw it to the attention of my Department.

Thirdly, although the auditors took the view that the transaction was lawful, they agreed to draw it to the attention of my Department to consider the rate support grant implications. They did that in the letter of 16 May 1986.

The issue this practice raises is whether it is right and equitable that I, as Secretary of State, should agree to pay grant on figures for total expenditure affected by this practice. Deficit financing is a game that any authority can play. It requires no money. Are the Opposition really suggesting that the distribution of grant should be at the whim of authorities which choose to adopt this practice to any extent they please?

If Birmingham had run up as a deficit not £8 million but £80 million or even £800 million, the consequences in the grant that it would have attracted would have been infinitely greater. Hon. Members will agree that it cannot be right that grant should be obtained simply by this method.

**Ms. Clare Short** (Birmingham, Ladywood): The Secretary of State said that the question was whether it was right or equitable for Birmingham and other authorities to have done that. That is not the question. The question tonight is whether it is right for him to take powers to change the law retrospectively. The debate is not about what we all think is moral, right and fair in terms of local government finance. It is about retrospection in legislation.

**Mr. Ridley:** I am coming to that point. If the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) will listen, I will answer that point fully. Some hon. Members suggested, as she did, that I might be taking action against Birmingham by sheltering behind powers in this Local Government Finance Bill which I did not previously have. That is not the case. I do not wish to traduce her, but there seemed to be an acceptance in what the hon. Member for Ladywood said that there was perhaps some justification for me to look at this practice with considerable concern.

Any hon. Member may intervene if he thinks that I have not convinced him that to run up a deficit on one account to put it in and out of a special account might be an unfair way of getting block grant at the expense of other authorities.

**Ms. Clare Short:** I wish to put it on record that it is my view, having considered all the details, that there was nothing dishonourable or wrong in what Birmingham did. It is the duty of Birmingham to maximise the sum that it can obtain from central Government to provide for the needs and the services of Birmingham. The Secretary of State must not introduce any suggestion of fiddling. There was no such inference to be drawn from my previous remarks.

**Mr. Ridley:** I merely implied that I do not think that the Committee would consider that I should pay grant in the circumstances that I have outlined. I think that the circumstances are as I have described them, but I shall not be sure of that until all the facts are before me.

**Mr. Terry Davis:** The right hon. Gentleman is being fair in the way in which he is approaching the comments of my hon. Friends. He is putting an emphasis on motivation and suggesting that the city council decided to maximise grant and obtained money that would not otherwise have been made available to it. Has he read the report of the city treasurer to the finance and management committee of 28 January 1985, which sets out the reasons for the city treasurer's recommendation that a special fund should be created?

**Mr. Ridley:** Without checking, I am not sure whether I have read that letter. I have read all the correspondence that was sent to me. I cannot check the date of the letter——

**Mr. Terry Davis:** It is a report, not a letter.

**Mr. Ridley:** I have read everything that was sent to me. If the report was sent to me, I have read it. Obviously I cannot remember the date of every letter and report. It appeared from the correspondence that the city council acted deliberately. It realised that it would gain more block grant by acting in that way. There is nothing wrong in that and I am not saying that the council was wrong. The Committee has to consider whether it would be right——

**Mr. Corbett:** Is the right hon. Gentleman saying that it acted illegally?

**Mr. Ridley:** It was not an illegal act. The Committee has to decide whether it would be right for me to pay block grant on the transaction. Birmingham can try every tactic that it likes but I have to accept only that which other authorities and the law would regard as reasonable.

The position, on what I am advised is the proper interpretation of existing statutes, is this. Before the Bill is enacted, the law provides that no transfers from the general rate fund to special funds would count as relevant expenditure, whether creating a deficit or not. If we had proceeded to court to resolve this matter prior to the Bill becoming an Act, there would have been no question of Birmingham receiving any money. The reason for the Bill is to make the law such that transactions between the rate fund and the special fund will attract grant. With the present state of the law, it would not attract grant.

On the basis of current practice, I would have taken steps to ensure that authorities could not gain grant unfairly by deficit financing once I had discovered that deficit financing was taking place. The way in which I have operated the system is to have paid block grant on the basis of the best information available to me about authorities' total expenditures. If an authority submitted a figure of total expenditure which I considered was not a fair statement of its expenditure, I would seek to replace that figure with one which was a fair statement of total expenditure, on the ground that the replacement figure represented the best available information. Before using this figure, I would give the authority involved the opportunity to comment. If all had been well with my powers, I would have continued to act in that way to prevent authorities from gaining unfair advantage through deficit financing once it had come to light that it was happening.

**Mr. Michael Meadowcroft** (Leeds, West): I have listened carefully to the Secretary of State's remarks about deficit financing. Does he agree that there is a factor to which he has not referred which further confuses the issue, which is the argument over what is deficit financing? Leeds city council's representations to the Department of the Environment include the claim that it did not put the account in deficit in the way that he suggests. There is a series of complicated figures and it is suggested that putting together the transport grant and everything else produces an artificial figure of the sort that is set out in the right hon. Gentleman's allegations about the actions of Leeds city council. The city council argues that the Department has taken an incorrect approach. I should like to know what is being done to resolve this arithmetical problem, which does not involve moral, legal or retrospective considerations.

6.45 pm

**Mr. Ridley:** I have not mentioned Leeds, but I have said that we want to get at the facts, which will show what every authority has done in the group that we are considering. We want to analyse what has happened and then to talk to the authorities before coming to a firm conclusion whether grant should be paid. We can resolve the issue of what Leeds city council has done by the council coming to my Department and giving it the full details. We shall form a view in the light of what we learn. As I have explained, the deficit financing issue first came to light in a letter from the Birmingham auditors of 16 May. That is when we started to examine our powers, and we concluded that the practice followed in calculating the relevant and total expenditure was incorrect in law. That in turn led to the advice which I received from my officials at the end of September, which was that I should take legal advice on whether the definition was wrong and whether we should legislate in the way that the Bill seeks to do.

The Bill enables total expenditure to be calculated in line with the practice that we have adopted. It will provide that transfers to special funds count within relevant, and therefore total, expenditure. It will provide also that I may specify adjustments to relevant expenditure that would enable certain sorts of transfer, such as deficit financing of special funds, to be excluded. These specifications will, of course, be subject to the scrutiny of the court in the normal way, as were directions on total expenditure under the 1980 Act. Any decision that I would have taken if it had not been necessary to introduce the Bill, or that I may take despite the fact that we have the Bill, will be subject to judicial review if any authority decides that it would like to take that course.

There are two classes of authority which might feel that they wish to take legal action. One group consists of the Birmingham and Leeds type of authority which has been engaging in deficit financing, and the other of all the authorities which have not been, which might feel that they would lose grant as a result of the grant paid to deficit financers.

To sum up, my current belief, subject to any further evidence that I may receive, is that it would be inequitable to pay grant that reflects deficit financing of special funds, either now or under the Bill. On the basis of the present statutes, deficit financing could not count for grant purposes. I am sure that local authorities would not want me to take account of deficit financing when paying grants. Under the Bill it will be open to me to make specifications that will exclude deficit financing from relevant and total expenditure. Those specifications will be subject to the scrutiny of the court in the normal way.

I must advise the Committee to reject the amendment. It would not achieve that which the hon. Member for Hodge Hill wishes. Great interest has been shown in the subject and I hope that the full account that I have given the Committee will enable the hon. Gentleman to feel that he should not press the amendment to a Division.

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): There is an important issue to be raised but we shall discuss it as briefly as possible. The Secretary of State has helped matters slightly by the approach that he has taken and is taking. However, there is a need for us to probe even further.

The right hon. Gentleman has said that he has to pay grant on the basis of rate support grant law and not on the basis of what the auditor says. Surely it must follow that if an audutior says in respect of a certificate that there has been a fiddle and something unlawful has taken place, the Secretary of State will not pay any grant. The auditors said that Birmingham's expenditure was a lawful charge on the city's account, so surely that cannot be dismissed by the

*[Mr. Jeff Rooker]*

Secretary of State as a fiddle. I believe that that was one of his descriptions of the action of Birmingham city council.

I agree that it would be an abuse if local authorities sought to create extra grant from the Government—the right hon. Gentleman mentioned the sum of £80 million. Birmingham council did not set out to create a grant deficit—artificial or otherwise—in order to maximise grant. It discovered only in January 1985 that there had been an underspend. That was the difficulty faced by Birmingham. It did not set out to create the deficit. It was an accident.

That was made clear in the correspondence, especially the letter from the city solicitor, dated 25 February 1986, which contained four propositions. One of those propositions made it quite clear that:

> "The General Rate Act 1967 Section 2 specifically anticipates that an authority may go into deficit in any one year by requiring the rate to meet expenditure in previous rating periods."

That is not what lay behind what the city sought to do. The letter went on:

> "The decision to establish the Supply of Goods and Services Fund was made at the meeting of the Finance and Management Committee on 28 January 1985."

That report is one that we would like the Secretary of State to read—if he has not already done so. The letter continues:

> "In making that decision the Committee were aware of a prospective deficit for the year of £8·4 million and of a financial advantage to the council of making the fund contribution."

The facts are that the council was aware of the prospective deficit and it was the prospective underspend. One cannot claim that Birmingham city council, having come under Labour control in May 1984, went hell for leather to overspend. In January 1985, the council was aware that it had underspent and was seeking to protect its position. Both the Audit Commission and the city auditors——

**Mr. Ridley:** Will the hon. Gentleman also read out the fourth paragraph which states:

> "The fund contribution has increased the amount of block grant payable to the Council and is therefore to the Council's financial advantage."

**Mr. Rooker:** I had intended to read out paragraph 4 and I also missed out the first point made in the letter.

The decision that Birmingham took in January was the result of knowing that there would be an underspend which it could not help. It did not deliberately create a situation on an artificial deficit grant in order to maximise the grant it received.

In January 1985 it became apparent that there would be an underspend and it would have been stupid for the officers of the city council not to advise the council of the most advantageous way out of a difficult situation. One of the officers at that time was Mr. Paul Sabim, who is now chief executive of Kent and probably one of the highest paid local government officers in the country, earning a salary approaching £60,000. The city would have been stupid not to take such advice. That advice was sought after circumstances discovered in the January. It is important to understand that the council did not deliberately seek the situation.

I asked the Secretary of State to consider the reasons given by Birmingham council and he did say he had an open mind. The underspend caused the problem, not because the council had gone into deficit financing per se; nor did it use artificial figures or money that was not available. Despite the Secretary of State's apparent sweetness, what sticks in the craw of the right hon. Gentleman is the fact that in May 1984 Labour took control of Birmingham, at the will of the electorate, after two consecutive years of reduction in rates under Tory administration. The fact is that Birmingham people woke up and discovered the effect of those rate cuts. I will not go over the background as it would be out of order and everyone is aware of the facts. The fact is that there was a threatened wholesale sacking of dinner ladies and a reduction in all services because of the cut in rates. The people of Birmimgham decided to change the policy and change the council. It is that which sticks in the craw of the Secretary of State. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis) has already said that the decision to set up the fund for 1983-84 and 1984-85 was taken on an all-party basis. Birmingham council had operated on that basis.

Since the change of council, year after year, without exception the Government have forced, by fixation and manipulation of rate support grant legislation, Birmingham council, under Labour control, to put up the rates. That is what happened. It is a case of "Ridley's revenge for Bosworth's blunder" in losing control of the jewel in the crown.

The conduct of those Conservative Members who represent Birmingham has been absolutely disgraceful. They have put party before the city and they deserve the undying contempt of their constituents. As a direct result of the action in the Bill and the decisions the Secretary of State will take later on, the rates paid by Birmingham's ratepayers will go up when they should not. The council will be faced with this for five years without the possibility of knowing whether the council has rated correctly. How can local government operate on this basis? How can a Labour-controlled, Tory-controlled or hung authority operate in such a manner? Where there is majority control, how can it be that local government will not know for five years after the event whether it is able to fix a rate?

The Secretary of State has a lot of ground to make up before he can convince the people of Birmingham that he is not exacting revenge upon them.

**Ms. Clare Short:** It is remarkable that the Secretary of State has been calm, reasonable and not at all rude in answering the contribution of my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis). I have not had the pleasure or displeasure of being on a Committee where the Secretary of State has led for the Government, but in my time in this House I have not met another member of the Government who is so unnecessarily arrogant and rude in putting forward his case.

What was notable about the Birmingham issue was the change in the Secretary of State's whole demeanour. Suddenly the right hon. Gentleman says that he has an open mind and that he will reconsider everything. That is welcome, of course. Our basic job is to defend Birmingham from the cuts and poverty that it currently faces. Nevertheless, the Secretary of State's attitude was undoubtedly different from normal.

I refer to a letter that I have mentioned previously in the Committee. It is a letter dated 16 December to the chief executive of Birmingham, Mr. Tom Caulcott, from the Department of the Environment. The letter refers to the

Bill and states that it gives the Secretary of State power to look back at what Birmingham did in 1984-85 in setting up the special fund and that the Department will look into the details under the new powers in the Bill and then decide what to do. The Secretary of State tried to imply that Birmingham would have been in trouble whether or not the legislation was introduced, but that letter indicates otherwise. It is because of the Bill that the Secretary of State can act in this way.

At previous sittings of the Committee I attempted to refer to Birmingham's case and that of other authorities affected by this provision of clause 5 because it represents an unacceptable element of retrospection in the Bill. Until now, the Secretary of State has brushed aside all such references. He says that he wants to come to Birmingham to discuss the case, but when he says that he is merely restating the law to be as everyone had thought it was previously that is clearly not true in this instance. The legal officers in Birmingham, two different city treasurers and Price Waterhouse, the auditors, crawled over the law and decided that what Birmingham was doing was absolutely lawful, but the powers in this Bill and in clause 5 would bring into question the legality of what Birmingham did. That is pure, absolute retrospection. It is changing the law after the action has been taken. The Secretary of State is giving himself powers to take away from the city of Birmingham £8 million that it thought it had. At least I thought that it was £8 million, as that is what the brief from Birmingham said. The Secretary of State, however, in the course of his calm and reasonable remarks, quietly referred to £17·1 million. That is terrifying—perhaps we are talking about more than £8 million.

7 pm

In 1984-85, with all-party support, Birmingham took a decision which was authorised by the auditors with clear legal advice from the city treasurer that what it was doing was legal. The Secretary of State is now seeking to change the law. My hon. Friend the Member for Hodge Hill said that he thought that the provision affected only Birmingham, but, as the Secretary of State made clear, it goes wider than Birmingham and 12 other authorities are affected. Probably none has a considerable sum at stake, but the majority of them are Labour controlled. It may be worth listing them briefly. They are Cambridgeshire and Warwickshire, both hung authorities, Liverpool, St. Helens, Wigan, Leeds, Birmingham, Hammersmith and Fulham, Lewisham, Newham and Ealing—all Labour controlled—Oadby and Wigston, and West Wiltshire, which are Tory controlled.

I understand that the figures involved in those cases are fairly limited.

**Mr. Ridley:** I point out, for the sake of accuracy, that Warwickshire is not doing the same thing as deficit financing. It is a separate case. Anyone who wants to raise that case can do so, but it has nothing to do with this group.

**Ms. Short:** I am grateful for that information. The list was provided by the city of Birmingham. I am sure that the neighbouring county of Warwickshire will be relieved.

What the Secretary of State is doing is truly arrogant. When he refers to what Birmingham did and talks about whether it was right or equitable, he is substituting his judgment of what is right and of how local authorities should behave for what the law said when the council took its action. He is not entitled to do that. He has to bring forward law that applies to local government, and local government then has to act under the provision of that law. If he is unhappy with the actions that it then takes, as the Government constantly have been, he must bring in new legislation to change future behaviour rather than refer back to previous behaviour.

It is no secret that the people of Birmingham are deeply disgruntled about the way in which they have been treated by the Government. Birmingham is a peculiarly low-spending authority in Labour hands, and all sorts of games have been played with Birmingham finances as the Government have changed the nature of local government finance to prevent high-spending Labour authorities from protecting jobs and services while allowing low-spending Tory authorities to increase spending when they wished. When the Secretary of State found that that entitled Birmingham to an increase of about £61 million in rate support grant over the past couple of years, he indulged in all sorts of manoeuvres and fiddles to take considerable sums of money away from Birmingham. This £8 million—Heaven help us if it is £17·1 million—is more of the same treatment. I hope that the Secretary of State will not be as punitive as he says that he can be under the Bill.

The principle of retrospective legislation is deeply objectionable. The Secretary of State's justification is that his action is necessary because everyone misunderstood the law, but that does not apply in this instance. He is going beyond that justification to take away from cities such as Birmingham considerable sums of money that they desperately need.

**Mr. Corbett:** The Government's case for the Bill is set out in the Secretary of State's misleading claim when he announced the Bill. He said:

> "We are merely validating the past and putting right for the future the position that the whole House thought obtained."—[*Official Report*, 16 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 1054.]

In other words, the Bill was to end the uncertainty. That qualifies for a Goebbels' award for distortion.

At the heart of this amendment is the city of Birmingham. Not content with stealing £39 million from the rate support grant, the Secretary of State now proposes, in the name of certainty, to fine us £8 million. Was the supply of goods and services fund set up by the city of Birmingham in 1984-85 legal? Yes, says the city of Birmingham, on an all-party basis. Yes, says Price Waterhouse, its professional auditors and the Audit Commission, so loved by the Secretary of State. Then, years later, along comes the Secretary of State to say no, retrospectively. Moreover it is a Secretary of State who was not merely convicted but actually pleaded guilty when the city of Birmingham took him to court last year for another £7 million robbery. He then came down here and changed the law. In effect, the Secretary of State is accusing the city of Birmingham of something of akin to fraud, Price Waterhouse of something akin to professional incompetence and the Audit Commission of being a willing partner in those actions. Those are extremely serious charges, touching on the commercial reputation of Price Waterhouse, the integrity of the Audit Commission and the integrity and professionalism of officers of the city of Birmingham council.

The Secretary of State says that he has an open mind about the amendment, but I fear that at the back of that open mind is an empty head. He has given no sign that he

*[Mr. Corbett]*

is prepared to think again about what the amendment seeks to achieve. It gives him the opportunity to acknowledge and admit his false charges against the city of Birmingham. My hon. Friends have shown that those charges are false. The amendment enables him to accept, without damage to the stated intention of the Bill or any other local authority, that what the city of Birmingham did was legal when it did it. It was told that it was legal when it set up that special fund. Therefore, it should remain legal, as attested to by the independent auditors and the Audit Commission. If the Secretary of State meant what he said earlier about a no-change policy, he has only one honourable course. His integrity is at stake in this debate.

The loss of £8 million is equivalent to 5p on the rates or an extra £12·75 for a family in a typical post-war three-bedroomed semi with a garage. The honourable course for the Secretary of State is to ensure that his stated no-change policy will apply under the Bill. If he is not willing to do that and prefers dogma to decency, he will perpetrate a gross misjudgment and an abuse of his powers. His honour and integrity are at stake in his worthless allegation about connivance and fiddling by the city of Birmingham, its auditors and the Audit Commission. If he insists that he is right — he has all but done so tonight — he will be shown to be weak in both judgment and prudence.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** I shall be brief, because we want to get on to major amendments. However, lest this should be solely a Birmingham argument, I make two brief points about the city of Leeds, which is caught in the same trap.

The Secretary of State said earlier that if Leeds had a case that the accounting situation was not as alleged by his Department, it should make its case to him. It has done so and on 17 December it responded in detail to the case put by officials from the Department of the Environment. I hope that the Secretary of State's undertaking will be taken on board and the case will be considered carefully. I am certainly no advocate of many of the policies carried out by the Labour-controlled council in Leeds. I have expressed my opposition to them in the Chamber on numerous occasions.

I endeavour to be fair about what is done in relation to local government. The city council decided on certain procedures which at that time were legal and the council could not be questioned about their legality by the Department of the Environment. It is wrong for the Government later to say that they dislike and challenge the morality of what was done and will penalise the council. Whether the expenditure, or the use of the special fund or whatever it was, was expenditure that I and my Liberal colleagues on the council would have supported, I support the argument in the House that the council should not now be penalised retrospectively for something that it did in good faith and within the law as it stood. I support the amendment.

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): The Secretary of State says that this Bill is to regularise payments made by way of rate support grant in good faith to local authorities which had incurred expenditure or which had accrued income. It is difficult to quarrel with his proposition that it is right to try to regularise acts carried out in good faith, especially in cases where the problem has arisen as a result of the intricate controls that the Department of the Environment has sought to impose on local authorities. It is quite understandable that once the Department interferes in such detail with the judgment of local authorities about their expenditure, trouble is bound to result.

We give the Secretary of State the benefit of the doubt on the main proposition. Where local authorities and he acted in good faith there is a case for saying let byegones be byegones and for allowing the Secretary of State to make an exception to the general rule of law, even though that exception is retrospective. My next point about retrospection has been pressed upon me many times because I represent the London borough of Lambeth, where the councillors have been surcharged. The argument about retrospection runs in two ways: I have never objected to retrospective legislation that forgives and forgets and which makes lawful that which was previously unlawful. My objection to retrospective legislation is when it makes unlawful that which was lawful. That is at the centre of the debate about Birmingham.

For the sake of argument we allow the Secretary of State to make an exception to a rule of law, but in the case of Birmingham he proposes to make an exception to the exception and to say that some things done in good faith by local authorities should be an exception to his general rule and should, if he so decides, be disallowed. If Birmingham had deliberately engaged in deficit financing or in a dishonest or illegal transaction, neither I nor any of my hon. Friends would support the Birmingham case. That is not the argument advanced by the Secretary of State. His argument is simply one of convenience.

If one wants to find a comparison in other forms of law, one can find it in the distinction between tax evasion and tax avoidance. Tax evasion is illegal and a criminal offence where it involves falsifying accounts in order to gain advantage from the Inland Revenue. Tax avoidance is what a judge has described as perfectly lawful. It means putting one's affairs in such order as to minimise tax liability. It is not only lawful for local authorities to do that in the field of rate support grant but, as I understand it from events in my own local authority, it is the duty of a local council to maximise its income. One of the reasons why my councillors were surcharged was that it was alleged by the district auditor that they failed to maximise their income. If a local authority acts within the law it may well be its duty, like Birmingham, to maximise its income —provided it acts in good faith and in a lawful way.

The facts which have emerged from this debate are, firstly, that Birmingham acted in good faith. There is no evidence against that proposition. Secondly, I understand that it is strongly disputed by those who urged the Birmingham case — Labour and Tory alike — that the deficit, if there was one, was the consequence of the transaction that the Secretary of State seeks to impugn. Thirdly, the transaction was open and above board, had all-party support and was precedented in previous years. Fourthly, the transaction was sanctioned and authorised by a firm of accountants and auditors which is beyond reproach.

For those reasons the matter was entered into lawfully and in good faith. That is why we object to a retrospective change in the law which would disallow that which was believed to be lawful, and was lawful at the time. It is written in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam:

"The Moving Finger writes: and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it."

We do not believe that the piety or the wit or even the tears of the Secretary of State should retrospectively change Birmingham's accounts.

7.15 pm

**Mr. Terry Davis:** I am not sure whether the Secretary of State wishes to intervene again, but if he does I shall be happy to give way to him. Perhaps having listened to my arguments and to the arguments of my hon. Friends, he is about to give us some good news.

**Mr. Ridley:** It would be courteous of me to respond to speeches made after my earlier one. One or two things have been said and I should like to comment on them. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) rightly said that Birmingham had an underspend for the year in question. In that case, how did it end up with a deficit? That point was not quite appreciated by some Opposition hon. Members. Birmingham had an underspend of about £7·5 million but transferred to the special fund about £15 million — far more than the underspend. Therefore, it was short of £7·5 million and that transaction caused some doubt in the minds of the Audit Commission and the auditor.

The hon. Member for Perry Barr cannot and should not seek to maintain that this is in any sense revenge by the Government against Birmingham. Birmingham has the best rate support grant settlement for next year of any local authority. It has £31 million more than it got this year. Birmingham has the best figure in the country for both the percentage and the volume of increase, and for that reason the hon. Gentleman should drop his thesis.

**Ms. Clare Short:** That all sounds very good, but the Secretary of State must also say that, according to EEC figures, Birmingham has the biggest area of poverty in western Europe and is well below its grant-related expenditure. Yes, it is to have an increase, but that increase will come nowhere near to meeting its need to provide services at the level at which the Government judges local authorities should provide them.

**Mr. Ridley:** The Labour party's definition of a cut is that when an authority wants £60 million more it gets £30 million more and that is described as a cut of £30 million. In truth, it is an increase of £30 million. We have that trend in all Labour figures about cuts, but Labour is talking about cuts from what local government wants, but they are usually increases on what the authorities had last year. Let me put the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) right again.

**Mr. Jack Straw** (Blackburn): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Ridley:** No, I must get on. I am taking up Opposition time. I can tell the hon. Lady and the hon. Member for Birmingham, Erdington (Mr. Corbett) that the Bill is not designed to deal with Birmingham and the other authorities. The power existed under the old 1980 Act, and if we had come to the conclusion that we should deal with deficit financing we could have done so in two ways. First, we could have asked Birmingham to replace the figure of total expenditure with a figure that we thought was a fairer statement of what it had spent. Alternatively, under the 1980 Act I could have made a direction before this Bill was ever conceived. Therefore, there were two ways in which I could have dealt with it if I had wished to. I would have employed one of those methods if I had decided that it was necessary. There is no retrospection.

The hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) said that there is either tax avoidance or tax evasion. With respect, it is neither of those things. Year after year local authorities up and down the land try all sorts of things to see whether they can get a little more rate support grant. I do not blame them. It has been acknowledged in the debate that that is a perfectly proper thing to do. They do not necessarily succeed. We have to see whether what they are trying is fair and right and we have to obey the law. Grant is never determined until we have the full details of all those things

Birmingham is well enough advised to tell hon. Members that we are not taking powers retrospectively in the Bill. The powers were there before and will be there in the future if the Bill is passed and in most cases they would have been subject to judicial review. Therefore, the case of the hon. Member for Ladywood does not stand up.

**Mr. Terry Davis:** I want to correct some of the points made by the Secretary of State.

Birmingham Members are not complaining about the cut in the amount of money we want. We are talking about a cut in the amount of money that we need — not the amount that we want. In his original proposals the Secretary of State was planning to give Birmingham a much larger amount than he is now proposing. My hon. Friends and I would want much more because we live with the problems of poverty in Birmingham. The reduction about which we are complaining is the Secretary of State's reduction in the amount that he was planning to give compared with the amount that he is now planning to give. When I talk about the reduction in the amount that we need, I mean need — according to the Secretary of State's criteria—that is, grant-related expenditure.

The right hon. Gentleman told the House that there was an underspend of £7·5 million. That is not correct. I have looked at the reports. The underspend was twice that amount. The Secretary of State is confused. He is talking about Birmingham's expenditure being less than the money it took in receipts. We are talking about an underspend compared with budget. The underspend compared with budget was twice the figure mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman claimed that the deficit was the result of the transfer to a special fund, but that is not correct. I remind him that he or his officials have received correspondence from the city treasurer and other officers in Birmingham explaining that the deficit was not the result of a transfer to a special fund. I do not know whether the Secretary of State is indicating that he agrees or disagrees. My hon. Friends will tell him that I am well known in Birmingham for not accepting lightly what the city officers tell us. However, one exception to my criticism of the city officers is the present city treasurer. He has assured me that there was nothing untoward or underhand in the way in which Birmingham treated its accounts in 1984-85, and I believe him.

The Secretary of State said tonight from the Dispatch Box that the transfer was to obtain extra grant. I have had the advantage of going through the reports that were considered by the committees of the city council and by all parties on the council. I cannot find any suggestion in the

*[Mr. Terry Davis]*

reports that there should be a transfer to obtain extra grant. On the contrary, the transfer was recommended by the then city treasurer because the council was going to have a windfall gain as a result of reductions in interest rates. The budget was based on one level of interest rates and when the interest rates went down the council found that it was not going to spend as much as expected. The city treasurer advised the city councillors to transfer that amount of money to a special fund in case there was a windfall loss on the succeeding year as a result of interest rates rising again. The report says that they should do it not to obtain extra grant but to avoid grant penalty in succeeding years because the council would then be able to charge some items of expenditure to the special fund and thus avoid penalty.

The right hon. Gentleman said that he approaches the matter with an open mind. If I have been correctly informed by city officers, that is not what he has said to the leader of the city council and the city officers in Birmingham. They do not think that he has an open mind. He said that there are some defects in the wording of our amendment. I make no apology for that. It is usual for the wording in Back Benchers' amendments to be defective. However, it is usual in those circumstances for a Secretary of State who is sympathetic to accept the principle of an amendment and to ask for it to be withdrawn so that he can table a suitable amendment in another place. The Secretary of State has not done that. Therefore, I ask my hon. Friends representing Birmingham constituencies and those from the rest of the United Kingdom to support me in the Division Lobby.

*Question put,* That the amendment be made:—

*The Committee divided:* Ayes 168, Noes 242.

**Division No. 71]** **[7.25 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. James Hamilton and
Mr. Don Dixon.

NOES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Budgen, Nick
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Dickens, Geoffrey

Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Forman, Nigel
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Hayes, J.
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hirst, Michael
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Howarth, Alan *(Strat'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Jackson, Robert
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Key, Robert
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers

Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Needham, Richard
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter

Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth

Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstor*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Richard Ryder and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

*Amendments made:* No. 89, in page 5, line 13, leave out 'and (7)' and insert ' , (7) and (8)'.

No. 90, in page 5, line 27, at end insert—

'(4A) In the application (by virtue of subsection (3) above) of sections 1 and 2 above in relation to an intermediate year beginning in 1983, 1984 and 1985, section 1 shall have effect as if for "a joint authority" in subsection (1)(c) there were substituted "the Greater London Council.".' — *[Dr. Boyson.]*

*Clause 5, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

## Clause 6

### VALIDATION OF PAST ACTS

*Question proposed,* That the clause stand part of the Bill.

**Mr. Straw:** I should first explain that we decided not to move the group of amendments beginning with amendment No. 93 and also that beginning with amendment No. 96 solely because of the shortage of time now available to the Committee to deal with some extremely important issues before the guillotine comes down at 12 o'clock.

I wish to make some brief points about clause 6 before we move on to a major debate on the rate-capping procedures in the Bill which come up in two groups of amendments, that beginning with amendment No. 106 and that beginning with amendment No. 107. I hope that it will be for the convenience of the Committee if I take them together to expedite the debate.

We do not intend to press clause 6 to a vote. Again, that is solely because of the time constraints. The fact that we shall not push the matter to a Division should not in any sense be taken as evidence that we accept part of the purpose and force of clause 6.

We have previously had extensive debates on the operation of clause 4(6), which has become known as the judge-proofing subsection in so far as decisions taken before the passing of the Act relate to part VI of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. We have a similar objection to the operation of clause 6(4) that relates to the rate-capping powers of the Secretary of State. Under clause 6, any orders made under section 2(3) of the Rates Act 1984 are deemed to have been estimated in compliance with part VI of the 1980 Act. That is understandable within the scheme of the Bill. The clause then goes on to state:

"Anything done by the Secretary of State before the passing of this Act for the purposes of Part I of the 1984 Act"—

*[Mr. Straw]*

which relates to selective rate capping in the years beginning 1985 or 1986 shall also—

"be deemed to have been done in compliance with the provisions of that Part".

Again, we comprehend why that is being included in the Bill, even if we disagree with it. However, subsection (3) states:

'For the purpose of section 7 below and Schedule 2 to this Act"

which are the clauses and the schedule which substitute formula rate capping for the procedure under the 1984 Act, any designation of an authority in relation to this forthcoming financial year and any determination and notification of an authority's total expenditure,

"shall, if made before the passing of this Act, be deemed to have been made in compliance with the provisions of Part I".

Subsection (4) of the Bill states:

"This section shall have effect notwithstanding any decision of a court (whether before or after the passing of this Act) purporting to have a contrary effect."

Therefore, I should like to ask the Minister why it is necessary to have such a judge-proofing provision within the clause. Already, decisions that the Secretary of State has made, or could make, up to the passing of the Act are deemed to have been made in compliance with either the 1980 Act or the 1984 Act. If that matter went to court and some issue were made about the Secretary of State's powers to make decisions once the Act had been passed, the court could read subsections (1), (2) and (3)—the courts would be perfectly capable of understanding what they mean—and apply them. Assuming that they had been applied properly, the deeming provisions would protect the Secretary of State.

7.45 pm

Therefore, why is it necessary, given the way in which subsections (1) to (3) will operate, for there to be the omnibus subsection (4), which prevents the court from making any decisions in circumstances in which they would otherwise be able to make them?

I should like to give the Minister an example. Later we may hear from my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) about the fact that, in Islington's view, the borough fell just below the trigger point for rate capping, which, as I recall, was 12·5 per cent. over grant-related expenditure assessment. In a sense, that is a matter of fact, and an application of the rules. As the law stood before the Bill, Islington would have been able to go to court, if the Secretary of State had disagreed with it, and argued that point. That is right because it is exactly what the courts exist for—to determine and arbitrate on an issue such as that. However, under the Bill, Islington is denied that opportunity.

What purpose is served by preventing a borough—I know that there are political objections to Islington, but I do not think the Minister will take up that point—from going to court and arguing a point like that?

We believe that judge-proofing provisions like those in clause 4(6) go way beyond anything that is necessary simply to put the law in good order, as was the ostensible purpose of the Bill. For that reason, we thoroughly oppose clause 6 and especially subsection (4).

**The Minister for Local Government (Dr. Rhodes Boyson):** I am grateful to the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) for letting the Committee know that he will not seek to divide it on clause 6, but will be raising queries about cerain points about it. The clause is vitally important to the Bill. As the hon. Member for Blackburn said, it is about the validation of past acts in relation to rates limitation.

There are three matters that need validating and which the clause covers. First, the clause validates any orders made under section 2(3) of the Rates Act 1984 before the passing of the Bill. These orders have the effect of exempting local authorities from being selected for rate limitation if their total expenditure is less than the specified figure. That level is now £11·1 million for English authorities and has been increased by two successive orders from the figure of £10 million, originally specified in the Rates Act.

Secondly, the clause validates anything done by my right hon. Friends before the passage of the Bill for the purpose of part I of the 1984 Act in relation to the years 1985-86 and 1986-87. It validates rates limitations for those years.

My third point is that made by the hon. Member for Blackburn. The clause validates any designation of an authority for rate limitation for 1987-88 and any determination and notification of an expenditure level for 1987-88, before the passing of the Bill.

As the hon. Member for Blackburn said, the clause provides that validation will have effect notwithstanding any decision of a court whether before or after the passing of the Bill purporting to have contrary effect. The clause thus provides the validation necessary if there is to be certainty as to how the law stands in relation to these decisions. The clause plays a key role in enabling us to maintain the status quo. That is why we consider that that is an essential part of the Bill.

The reason for clause 6 is exactly the same as that for clause 4(6), mentioned by the hon. Member for Blackburn—to make it absolutely clear that the past decisions described in clause 6(1) to (3) are valid even if a court, having heard a case before enactment of the Bill, declares the decision to be invalid on the basis of existing law. At the late stage at which we are now, when authorities have to make their decisions and determine the rate on 1 April, it is absolutely essential that we pass the Bill with full validation and without being at risk of returning to the present position, with the problem over definition.

**Mr. Straw:** The Minister says that the clause has been drafted to provide certainty and that that has to be balanced against the need for justice. Clause 6(1), for example, relates to orders laid before the passing of the Act. The minute the Act comes into force, that deeming provision will come into force. If that was the only point of issue in a court, it would find in favour of the Secretary of State. Why is it then necessary to exclude any possibility of court action, including circumstances in which, procedurally the Secretary of State may have erred?

**Dr. Boyson:** As I have already said to the hon. Gentleman, I understand and appreciate why he is putting that point. We must be certain that the validation stands up without threat so that rate-capped authorities know what the situation is. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) may intervene if he wants to. I know the strength of his feelings on almost every issue that comes up in Committee.

Rate capping this year is a one-year matter. For the authorities that were rate-capped last year and those that will be rate-capped for the first time this year, we have made special arrangements for this year only. The following year we shall revert to the normal procedure of individual decisions on individual boroughs. But this year we must act so that the authorities know where they are and so that there can be no more doubt on the level of rates that will be allowed or on the level of expenditure.

**Mr. Straw:** I regard the Minister's explanation about the need for subsection (4) as tautologous and wholly unsatisfactory. As I explained, we oppose the clause, and hope to come back to it when the other place has considered the matter.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 6 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

## Clause 7

### RESTRICTIONS ON RATING AND PRECEPTING

**Mr. Straw:** I beg to move amendment No. 106, in page 6, line 15, at end insert—

'3(A) Subsection (2) above shall not apply to designated authorities referred to in section 2(6)*(g)*, *(h)* and *(i)* of the Rates Act 1984.'.

I hope that you will accept, Mr. Armstrong, that it would be for the convenience of the Committee, and will allow a proper debate on the rate-capping procedures in the Bill, to discuss amendment No. 107 and the amendments grouped with it, as well as those grouped with No. 106.

**The First Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Mr. Ernest Armstrong):** If that is for the convenience of the Committee, we shall discuss at the same time the following amendments: No. 107, in page 6, line 17, leave out from 'determined' to end of line 18, and insert—

'(i) The preliminary maximum limit shall be determined in accordance with Schedule 2 to this Act.

(ii) As soon as practicable after carrying out his duty under subsection (5) below, notifying in writing and consult each designated authority in respect of the preliminary maximum limit applicable to it under sub-paragraph (i).

(iii) If the preliminary maximum limit notified to a designated authority by the Secretary of State is accepted by the authority within seven days, the Secretary of State shall serve a notice upon it specifying that limit as the maximum limit.

(iv) If the designated authority and the Secretary of State agree on a different maximum, the Secretary of State shall serve a notice upon it specifying the agreed limit as the maximum limit.

(v) In any other case, the Secretary of State shall, as soon as resonably practicable after consultation under sub-paragraph (i) above has concluded, prescribe a maximum limit, by specifying by Order a maximum equal to or greater than the preliminary maximum limit, and shall serve a notice upon the designated authority specifying the maximum limit prescribed for it under such Order.

(vi) The power to make an Order under sub-paragraph (v) above shall be exercisable by Statutory Instrument and no such order shall be made until a draft of it has been laid before and approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament.'.

No. 108, in page 6, line 17, leave out

'with Schedule 2 to this Act'

and insert

'with the procedures for redetermination set out in Part I of the 1984 Act and in accordance with the decisions of a court.'.

No. 112, in page 6, leave out lines 23 and 24.

No. 113, in page 6, line 26, after second 'the', insert 'preliminary'.

Government amendment No. 114.

No. 115, in page 6, line 29, after second 'the', insert 'preliminary'.

No. 117, in page 6, line 30, at end add—

'*(d)* a period of notice, which shall be not less than two weeks, within which the Authority may apply for the application of the formula to be reconsidered; and the results of any such reconsideration may be brought into effect by the Secretary of State by Order in substitution of the relevant formula in Schedule 2 to the extent that it applies to that authority, or any other designated authority as the Secretary of State sees fit.'.

No. 118, in schedule 2, page 11, line 33, after 'the', insert 'preliminary'.

No. 120, in schedule 2, page 11, line 35, leave out sub-paragraph (1).

No. 119, in schedule 2, page 11, line 35, after 'of', insert 'the Inner London Education authority and'.

No. 122, in schedule 2, page 11, line 43, leave out from 'is' in line 43 to end of line 44.

No. 129, in schedule 2, page 12, leave out lines 1 to 13.

No. 126, in schedule 2, page 12, line 8, leave out '1·025' and insert '1·05'.

No. 189, in schedule 2, page 12, line 8, leave out '1·025' and insert '1·04'.

No. 127, in schedule 2, page 12, line 12, leave out '1·02' and insert '1·14'.

No. 130, in schedule 2, page 12, line 14, leave out sub-paragraph (6).

No. 138, in schedule 2, page 13, line 3, at beginning insert—

'In the case of the Inner London Education Authority B is the amount which before 19th December 1986 the Authority submitted under section 65 of the 1980 Act (Information) as the amount the Authority estimates as its total expenditure for the financial year beginning in 1986 (taking, if more than one such amount was submitted before that date, the latest to be so submitted). In the case of other authorities.'.

No. 141, in schedule 2, page 13, line 14, after 'the' insert 'preliminary'.

**Mr. Straw:** I shall be as brief as I can, Mr. Armstrong, and I hope to catch your eye at the end of the debate as well, if it is necessary.

Three years ago, the Rates Bill was just beginning its Committee stage. On the Floor of the House and in Committee, the Labour Opposition objected to the principle of rate capping, to the idea that it was right and sensible for the Government to seek——

**Dr. Boyson:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman. I want to be clear about the basis of our discussions. Are we on amendment No. 106 and amendment No. 116——

**Mr. Straw:** No. We are on amendments Nos. 106 and 107 and their groups.

**Dr. Boyson:** I see. I am now clear what amendments we are on.

**Mr. Straw:** As I said, we are seeking to use the two groups of amendments as an opportunity to debate the effects on local authorities of rate-capping procedures in the Bill.

We objected to the principle of rate capping because we thought it was wrong and not sensible for the Government to seek to impose and substitute their judgment about the level of expenditure and the rates that should obtain in an individual area for the judgment of councillors and their

*[Mr. Straw]*

electors. That objection still stands, which is why the Labour party is committed to the repeal of the Rates Act and, pending that repeal, to refusing to use its powers.

In the House and in Committee the then Secretary of State, the right hon. Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin), sought to assuage the concerns not only of Labour Members but of many Conservative Members about the constitutional change that was to be made by rate capping, in the relationship between the Government and local authorities. The then Secretary of State spent many hours, as I clearly recall, spelling out a careful procedure for rate capping, which he claimed would be fair to local authorities. He said that the fairness was encapsulted in two sets of operations—first, in applying so-called principles of rate capping, which would act on all authorities equally so that an individual authority could not be picked out unfairly simply by the whim of the Secretary of State.

Secondly, authorities having been brought into the rate-capped net by an application of general principles, they would be given careful individual consideration, on their merits, with regard to the Secretary of State's decision about their expenditure levels, by way of an appeal procedure known as redetermination. After a hesitant start in the first year, caused by the suspicions of many of the rate-capped authorities about the way in which redetermination would work and the fact that it could trigger powers of the Secretary of State to impose even lower expenditure limits than previously, I will not say that the redetermination procedure worked satisfactorily, but at least it enabled the authorities, when they felt that they were badly done by, to make their case to the Secretary of State, so that he made a decision on the individual merits of the case that they put forward.

Now we find that all the undertakings that the then Secretary of State gave the House and the Committee about the way in which the individual merits of the authorities' expenditure would be taken into account are to be swept aside by the Bill. In place of individual redetermination and individual determination of limits, we find in schedule 2 lengthy algebraic calculations by which authorities' rate limits are to be determined by formula. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) is one of the House's algebraic experts, and he knows this formula by heart:

$$``\left((EL-(BG+E))\times\frac{100}{RV}\right)+T''$$

That formula is now to be applied without exception and without individual consideration to a large number of authorities that happened to be rate-capped last year. The same formula is applied to newly rate-capped authorities. They thought that they would get a 1 per cent. increase in their original expenditure limit but they now find, when they read the correction sheet that has been handed around, that they get a 2 per cent. correction. But in every case except one, to which I shall refer, the individual merits of the authority are not considered. The only case in which the individual merits are considered is the Inner London education authority. My hon. Friend the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) will discuss its plight at greater length.

I declare an interest not only as a former member of ILEA but as a parent of children in ILEA schools. On any examination, the way in which ILEA has been treated by the Bill and the Secretary of State is absolutely outrageous. It is to have an uplift in its expenditure limit of 0·6 per cent. No other consideration will be given to it in respect of the teachers' pay settlement. All the other education authorities will receive what is known as the T factor to pay for the teachers' settlement, over the previously accepted rate of inflation, but ILEA will receive an increase of 0·6 per cent. I am fed up with the ignorant attacks that are made on the ILEA, especially by those who have personal knowledge of the work of that authority.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** They take advantage.

8 pm

**Mr. Straw:** I gave the hon. Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) notice that I intended to say this. On many occasions in the House he has made outrageous attacks on ILEA and its profligacy, yet the hon. Gentleman has close personal knowledge of at least one ILEA primary school, and he has not offered any criticism of the standard of provision in that school, a standard of provision which may be adversely affected if this kind of expenditure limit goes through.

I shall briefly set out how the principal amendments would operate. The Secretary of State is claiming that there is no time to operate the proper redetermination procedure. Our amendments translate the formulae in schedule 2 into preliminary maximum limits rather than final ones, and prescribe a further procedure to be followed by the Secretary of State closely based on the rate-capping model. The purpose of those amendments is to re-establish the redetermination procedure abandoned for 1987-88 in the Bill. The amendments recognise the legal difficulty over past definitions, but demonstrate that there is no necessary reason why the Secretary of State cannot follow a proper procedure which recognises individual needs, rather than a blanket set of formulae in primary legislation.

The main amendment, No. 107, sets out a tight procedure which may be followed by the Secretary of State for the modified redetermination. The formulae in schedule 2 would be preliminary and for discussion purposes. The Secretary of State would then be required to inform authorities and consult them as soon as practicable. An authority could accept the limit within seven days, whereupon a notice would be issued to that effect. Likewise, a notice would be issued in a case where a different maximum was agreed. In the case of a disagreement, the Secretary of State would impose a maximum by order subject to affirmative resolution by both Houses, and after consultation an order could be made as soon as reasonably practicable. I will come back to the importance of the order-making procedure.

The whole procedure could be over in a matter of weeks, and gives the lie to the urgency claimed by the Government. If they will agree these procedures and delete the other contentious and unnecessary areas of the Bill, it will achieve its objectives more quickly than seems possible at present. Designated authorities would, however, as previously, have the opportunity to argue for a redetermined limit.

I shall now deal with amendments Nos. 108 and 117, and I shall say a word about the need for votes on affirmative resolutions. Amendment No. 108 would restore the previous redetermination process intact—

that is an alternative to amendment No. 107. Amendment No. 117 would allow a period of two weeks for local authorities to apply for redetermination and for a subsequent order to vary the application of the relevant formulae in respect of one or more authorities. Taken together, those two amendments act as an alternative to No. 107.

I now return to the matter of orders. Not only are the individual authorities being denied proper consideration of their expenditure circumstances under the Bill, but so too is the House. We were told time and again by the Secretary of State that his decisions on expenditure limits and rate limits would be subject to proper legitimation by the House. For the last two years, there have been full-day debates on the rate-capping orders. Those debates were essential, because, since the passing of the abolition Act over 40 authorities — almost all the authorities within inner London, and many of the major joint boards outside inner London—are now subject to rate capping. Under this procedure there will be no opportunity for the House or the other place to discuss the effect of rate-capping orders upon individual authorities, save for this debate. We probably have no more than two hours for the debate, which is wholly unacceptable when we consider the consequences for many authorities and many people within those authorities of these rate-capping decisions.

I hope, even at this late stage, that the Secretary of State and the Minister in his stead will accept the sense of what we are proposing.

**Mr. Roy Galley** (Halifax): May I briefly refer to amendment No. 189 standing in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock) and myself? It is a point which relates to fire authorities, and more particularly to the west Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority. It is similar to many of the amendments in the section, and it is in the form of special pleading. Our motivation is concern about the financial position of the west Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority in 1987.

There has been considerable progress on a detailed process of redetermination on the expenditure limit for that authority. The initial bid was for a total redetermination of £3·7 million. That was based on a 1985 report about fire cover throughout the whole of west Yorkshire, which attempted to improve arrangements in certain parts of the county and made a number of other desirable additions to the current provision. Such a bid for resources had to be seen in the light of a report by Her Majesty's inspector of fire services in 1986, who expressed the view that

> "The present deployment of men"—

in west Yorkshire—

> "is insufficient to maintain appliance manning to the accepted standards."

One has to look at the £3·7 million redetermination bid in a wider context. One has to strike a balance between what is essential and what is desirable; what the ratepayer can afford and the appropriateness of efficiency improvements. The more important figure is not so much the total redetermination of £3·7 million as the £1·7 million that will be required in 1987-1988 to maintain current levels of fire cover and general service provision in west Yorkshire. That £1·7 million, over and above the initial expenditure limit given, is the minimum amount required to provide current levels of service. My hon. Friend may say that that is greater than the rate of inflation and therefore we cannot contemplate it. But 85 per cent. of the costs of the west Yorkshire fire authority are manpower; other overheads are only 15 per cent. and there is little that can be done to influence that 15 per cent. Eighty-five per cent. of the figure is manpower costs, and pay is determined, as my hon. Friend knows, on the basis of the national formula, which is automatically agreed. I understand that most firemen this year received an increase of 7·2 per cent., so it is necessary to build that into any calculations of the finances of that fire and civil defence authority.

West Yorkshire fire authority seems to be quite an efficient authority which, over the last couple of years, has sought a considerable number of efficiency improvements. It has reduced the number of special and pumping appliances, taken new initiatives in regard to training arrangements, improved organisation of transport, improved property management and improved the use of non-uniformed staff. The fire authority is competent and bears comparison with that of any other metropolitan area in the country.

The motivation behind the initial bid for redetermination was not simply to improve the provision for the fire authority but to obtain a better deal for west Yorkshire. If one compares that with other metropolitan areas it seems to do quite badly. We are treated unfairly in our part of the world and we seek to be treated more fairly.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** (Stretford): The hon. Gentleman is dealing with an important amendment, which is similar to one that I tabled. I support his case for west Yorkshire. Greater Manchester also feels unfairly treated, but it is generally recognised that west Yorkshire is probably the least advantaged of all fire authorities. As I have a vested interest, I would be delighted if the hon. Gentleman would say whether he intends to put this to a vote.

**Mr. Galley:** It is rather too early in the proceedings to answer that question. I shall see what my hon. Friend the Minister has to say before I decide, and I shall also have to consult my hon. Friend the Member for Batley and Spen.

**Mr. Allen McKay** (Barnsley, West and Penistone): I am a little disappointed in the hon. Gentleman's reply. Labour Members were contacted continually last week by members of the Fire Brigades Union in west Yorkshire, asking us to support the hon. Gentleman's amendment. We have decided full-bloodedly to support the hon. Gentleman's amendment in the Lobby tonight.

**Mr. Galley:** I find it rather odd that members of the Fire Brigades Union in west Yorkshire should have contacted a Member from south Yorkshire but not me on this matter. I am seeking to put the case for west Yorkshire, and I shall continue to do so as well as I can and to seek to obtain the best deal possible.

**Mr. Allen Roberts** (Bootle): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Galley:** No, I shall not. Allow me to proceed with my next major point about the fire and civil defence authority for west Yorkshire, which is the matter which I am concerned with. We seem to fare badly compared to other metropolitan areas. The most poignant point that can be made is that west Yorkshire has the highest rate per pound and next to the lowest level of total grant percentage.

*[Mr. Galley]*

It is obviously not possible in the Bill to deal specifically with individual fire authorities and others. Therefore, my amendment seeks a revision of the formula slightly to increase the expenditure level for all fire authorities. The formula in the Bill would reduce the shortfall required for current service levels to be maintained — I emphasise that — to about £800,000. Instead of the previous shortfall of £1·7 million, the 2·5 per cent. uplift formula in the schedule would reduce that shortfall to £800,000. Amendment No. 189 would add £500,000 to the expenditure level. Therefore, it would be somewhat less than the total that we sought for west Yorkshire, but it seemed to be a reasonable compromise and would come near to the £1·7 million figure that we seek. If it were accepted, it would ease the operational problems in the course of the next financial year. It would mean an increase in the precept of 4 per cent., slightly more than the rate of inflation. The total addition to public expenditure would, if my hon. Friend were to accept the amendment, be small across all metropolitan fire authorities.

I assure my hon. Friend that I would not be proposing such an amendment if it did not relate to a vital service, about which the general public in west Yorkshire are rightly concerned, and if the fire authority was not efficient. Therefore, I hope that it will be possible for my hon. Friend to make some moves in my direction to give some sympathetic consideration to this modest amendment. If he is unable to do anything this year, I hope that he will at least say that we shall have a fair redetermination in subsequent years.

**Mr. Bill Michie** (Sheffield, Heeley): I want to speak to the amendments relating to rate capping and redetermination as they affect Sheffield, and, in particular, paragraph 22 of schedule 22. The effect of rate capping and the failure to get redetermination on local authorities such as Sheffield has already been described as serious by many of my colleagues. The effect upon education, housing, transport and the south Yorkshire fire service has been explained time and time again with little effect. I am assured that my colleagues from south Yorkshire will be discussing those issues later, particularly that of the fire service, as will my colleagues from west Yorkshire.

8.15 pm

I want to concentrate for a short while on a report that I received at the weekend from the family and community services in Sheffield on the implications of the Department of Health and Social Services inspection of elderly people's homes in Sheffield. Obviously there has always been great concern about the standard of accommodation and services for elderly people. In August 1986, the DHSS inspected those homes and the final results have now been made known to us. Frankly, they are worrying, to say the least.

The recommendations have considerable implications for revenue funding. Bearing in mind that Sheffield is rate capped and has no chance of redetermination, the local authority is in a catch 22 situation. The recommendations talk about the action that should be taken to maintain the fabric of buildings and the necessity for the repair and maintenance of building stock to be carried out quickly. Due to the significant building programme in the early 1970s many residential units now need considerable maintenance and redevelopment, which is obviously costly.

The current levels of revenue expenditure available for repairs and maintenance mean that only essential and emergency repairs can be carried out. Over the years, those have been carried out, but as Sheffield was rate-capped not last year but the year before and again this year, some of those programmes have, slowly but surely, been coming out of "synch", as we call it, because of financial problems. The deterioration of existing services and maintenance will continue unless an additional £145,000 per annum is found. That will be difficult given the financial restrictions of legislation on the council.

Maintenance programmes already identified by the DHSS include £3,000 for the maintenance of hoists in bathrooms in the homes of elderly people. That is a small item but since, as I have said many times in the House, Sheffield is top of the league in its number of old age pensioners, certainly those over 70 and 80 years of age, that is a serious problem that must be resolved. With present financial constraints, that seems almost impossible.

The report states that funding needs to be made available for improving the environment. That includes decoration and carpeting, which may seem something of a luxury these days, but the DHSS believes that we should provide such an environment, and the Sheffield city council agrees. But the cost of that cannot be plucked out of thin air. It must be put into revenue and capital programmes, but that cannot now be carried out.

The report also talks about three particular capital expenditure areas which have revenue consequences — the fabric of the buildings, the improvement of air and water temperatures, the provision of better storage space and toilet facilities, and so on. There is an immediate need to carry out external work to approximately 25 of the adult residential units. That would incur an additional capital expenditure of approximately £1·7 million. These projects have already been identified in the report.

Unfortunately, due to the increasing restrictions on the social services budget over the past two or three years, delays have occurred in the regular maintenance of buildings. Strangely, my next point ties in nicely with the debate about fire service restrictions; fire precaution upgradings have not been carried out, because of the financial restrictions in the past year. It must be frightening for all right hon. and hon. Members to realise that local authorities are so severely restricted financially that they cannot carry out the upgrading of fire precautions in the homes of the elderly.

I will leave my hon. Friends to discuss other items affecting Sheffield and south Yorkshire. However, unless we have additional input of revenue and capital there is no way that we can carry out what I believe to be our moral as well as statutory duties. There is little point in the DHSS inspecting homes and making recommendations if other Departments are severely financially restricted. I hope that the Minister and the Secretary of State will take my points on board and I hope that at least some help will be given to alleviate the suffering and pressure on councils today.

**Mr. Allen McKay:** I want to refer to a point made by the hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) when he moved the amendment. The hon. Gentleman wanted to know why the Fire Brigades Union from west Yorkshire should get in touch with me. The answer is obvious. As the amendment was tabled by the Conservatives, the union wanted to ensure that Labour Members would support that good amendment. That is why I was approached. The union wanted me to forget my differences. It considered the amendment to be so important that it wanted me to support it. When and if the amendment is put to the vote, Labour Members will not be found wanting in support of the amendment.

I want to consider the fire brigade's position in south Yorkshire. The position in south Yorkshire is very similar to that in west Yorkshire, although there is a slightly different and difficult problem following Her Majesty's inspector's report and the Secretary of State's imposed reduction in the authorised establishment of existing fire service personnel. The service was inspected by the Home Office inspector. That report determined what the manpower levels in south Yorkshire should be. It authorised an establishment for the Yorkshire county fire service of 1,114 whole-time and 196 part-time posts. Those are the Home Office figures of what is considered to be adequate to cover the south Yorkshire area.

The inspector arrived at the figures by comparing the manpower level in south Yorkshire with that in other areas and by applying a standard formula. The fire service in south Yorkshire is already below the establishment determined by the inspector, the Secretary of State and the Home Office. Rather than reduce the figures, manpower should be increased to the Home Office standard. However, the Bill will further reduce the already inadequate manpower.

On the one hand, the Home Secretary says that we must increase the number of firemen on the books to comply with the statutory requirements. On the other hand, the Secretary of State for the Environment claims that we must reduce the number which the Home Office claims is inadequate for fire cover. That is ridiculous.

As the hon. Member for Halifax said, 80 per cent. of fire service expenditure in any area is accounted for by manpower. The Bill is intended to save money, but there is no way that money can be saved other than by reducing the already inadequate level of manpower. The fire chief is already worried about the service, and he is now even more concerned after seeing the figures. He realises that he will not be able to meet his statutory obligations on fire cover.

As I said in the previous debate, I was a retained fireman for 14 years in the south Yorkshire fire service. We prided ourselves on every turn-out that we could reach a fire within the time stipulated by the Home Office because of the speed and efficiency of the service. We were able to provide a back-up to every station within our locality so that, as in a puzzle or a game of chess, one mobile moved in to cover another mobile when that went out. We maintained that standard of operation, which could be achieved only by having the proper appliances, the right number of men and efficient training. We provided a fire cover on which people could depend, and the people praised us when we turned out.

What will happen now? The Secretary of State has laid down certain objectives for the fire service. He stipulates the level of cover that must be provided. He states that efficient and sufficient machines and efficient and sufficient men must be provided. He specifies a time for the turn-out and the time to reach fires, large and small. The fire chief of south Yorkshire fire service is now worried that fire cover will begin to deteriorate and that the turn-out time will lengthen. In an attempt to meet the requirements laid down by the Secretary of State for the Environment, the fire chief will have to stop training because he needs sufficient men to cover for fires. He will have to use the trainers to man the service.

The south Yorkshire fire service has not had a new fire applicance for the past two years because of the need to make savings. Rather than providing a replacement for a mobile, mobiles will have to be in the garage for longer periods, they will have to be maintained more and the cost of maintenance will rise. That is a queer way to save money.

There is also a strong possibility that redundancies will take place in what is already an inadequate level of manpower. Indeed, the new training establishment will not open. There will be no training establishment to keep up with the Home Office requirements, In addition, the superannuation scheme will have to be curtailed. That will not help the firemen's morale, as they have looked forward to that scheme and accepted it willingly.

All these factors will lead to a loss of confidence within the fire service. Is it right for the Home Office to create a figure which is already below the stated manpower level for adequate fire cover and for the Secretary of State for the Environment to claim that he will not provide the money to supply the number of firemen and appliances which the inspector says is adequate to provide an efficient fire cover in the service? The Secretary of State must answer that question tonight.

Can the Secretary of State explain how the south Yorkshire authority can fulfil its statutory duties when the Bill implies that there will be a reduction in essential training? Can he explain how the fire chief will be responsible for the inadequacy of his service, not because of him, his plans or his men, but simply because the Secretary of State for the Environment will not meet the financial requirements of the Home Office?

8.30 pm

If the Secretary of State has read the *Yorkshire Post* recently, he will know why I am seeking his views on the assessment of the fire service. The *Yorkshire Post* has highlighted the fact that, because of the way in which home furniture is built, the rate of death by fire is increasing dramatically. We must look not only to the fire service but to legislation to prevent that from happening. To prevent such deaths, the fire service must make more inspections, but, if the money is not provided, it will make fewer inspections and the position will become worse. In south Yorkshire, during the past 10 years, the death rate from fire has doubled. We should be asking why and what we can do about it instead of cutting a service that is already not good enough. We should be examining those matters, not ways of saving money. It could—I do not say "would"— result in the loss of human life and property, the saving of which is the prime duty of any fire service. As my old fire chief used to say to me, I would sacrifice a £24,000 appliance to save one life. The Secretary of State should consider that.

I also wish to highlight the way in which expenditure is calculated and relate it to Barnsley. At present, Barnsley has about 22 per cent. unemployment, largely because of the rundown of the main industries in the area. I have always been taught that where manpower is available,

*[Mr. Allen McKay]*

where there are good communications and where land and factory space are available, industry would come in. That has not happened in Barnsley.

The authority wondered why it was being treated differently from other authorities in relation to expenditure and grants, so it decided to examine what was happening in Barnsley. It discovered that it was being penalised because the grant was determined on figures based on the 1981 census. Since events have moved so quickly in the area, the 1981 census is giving the Secretary of State an inaccurate picture of Barnsley and district. With the factor in the formula, there is room to take those matters into account.

Since April 1981, the number of people out of work in Barnsley has increased by 72 per cent., compared with 32 per cent. generally in the United Kingdom. Between January 1985 and April 1986, of the travel-to-work areas, Barnsley had by far the highest percentage increase of unemployment — 22 per cent. Between April 1984 and April 1986, the number of people who had been out of work for more than a year increased by 29 per cent., compared with an average of 11 per cent.

Recently the Minister of State said that there was a shift towards service employment. But Barnsley has less service employment than any other local authority area. It has the fourth highest percentage of people aged over 75 who are supported by the local authority. It has the twelfth highest percentage in the metropolitan districts of children aged under 18 in local authority care. Between 1979 and 1986, the number of people receiving supplementary benefit doubled. The formula does not take those matters into consideration. It must be reconsidered and altered because its application to the authorities is wrong.

To return to my argument on the fire service and transport, the Secretary of State promised that some of the matters that I have highlighted would be taken into consideration in the redetermination. The Bill has stopped that redetermination, so his promise means nothing, unless he will meet representatives of the fire service and transport and redetermine their expenditure.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** I support the general case set out in amendment No. 106 for a fairer and more equitable way of determining rate levels under the Bill. I commend the hon. Members for Halifax (Mr. Galley) and for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock) for tabling amendment No. 189. I am well aware that the Minister is in a difficult position. He is not a Home Office Minister and he must defend the measure, but it seems that something has gone wrong with the Government's calculations. I suspect that there has been a simple arithmetical error which no one is prepared to admit. I cannot believe that the Government would be prepared to continue along the road where the nationally agreed standard of service cannot be met within the budget allowed. It is ludicrous for the Home Office to apply standards and then for the Department of the Environment to say, "You cannot have the cash to meet them." Unfortunately, that is the present position of the west Yorkshire fire service.

The other crucial point, which is demonstrated by the fact that the amendment is in the names of two Conservative Members, is that there has been complete unanimity of approach among members of the west Yorkshire fire authority. They have formed three-party delegations to meet the Minister and other hon. Members, and the recommendation to hon. Members came from all three political groups on the fire authority. Rarely in our debates, or, indeed, in local government, can we secure unanimity on one issue and sustain it for some time. I beg the Minister to take into account the fact that no one in west Yorkshire is endeavouring to make political capital from this. No one has said, "If you do not get this, we shall knock you over the head in the press." There has been genuine anxiety about an emergency service.

I appreciate the way in which the hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) spoke from the heart and with experience — and at some length. If we are to work constructively, as is so often commended to us by Mr. Speaker and others, this is exactly the sort of amendment that the House should support. We are not raising great scares about what might happen, but simply accepting the agreed position of all the parties in west Yorkshire and of the fire service officers that they will be unable to recruit the staff that they need. Indeed, they will have to stop recruitment to the fire service if they cannot secure a change in the legislation. I hope that the Minister of State will not think that this debate merits the good natured banter that we often have across the Chamber, welcome though that is. It is a matter that must be treated seriously. When the Committee divides on the amendment, it will be interesting to see whether we can secure the same unanimity in the House as we have in west Yorkshire.

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** I rise briefly to mention the direct effect that this clause, if unamended, will have on the Yorkshire fire service, the Merseyside fire service and the police authority.

The hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) should not be surprised that Yorkshire Labour Members have been contacted by the Fire Brigades Union. The effect of his amendment has been significant in that all hon. Members of all parties have been contacted about it. I was not contacted by anyone from Yorkshire, but by the Merseyside county fire brigade chief officer, Mr. Wilmot, who sent me a telegram that he received from the west Yorkshire fire authority urging me to support the amendment and pointing out that the effect of the limitation is to leave that authority with insufficient resources to maintain existing standards of service which, it says, we should be aware, from previous material supplied, falls below nationally recommended levels.

That telegram was sent to me and other hon. Members who represent Merseyside constituencies partly because Merseyside is in the same predicament with regard to this legislation. When the committee of the Merseyside fire and civil defence authority met on 26 September its members considered a report submitted by the treasurer, who advised that the potential expenditure for 1987-88 would be £2·161 million in excess of the £29·284 million expenditure level determined by the Secretary of State.

A request was made by the elected members of the committee for a redetermination of expenditure to £31·455 million. That was a sensible thing to do, especially as the legislation allowed for an application for redetermination. A meeting took place between members and officers of the authority and Home Office representatives, who are not here to answer. That meeting took place on 19 November

1986. Further information in support of the authority's bid for redetermination was submitted, but this legislation abolishes the right of appeal for redetermination.

The standard formula applied to the Merseyside fire and civil defence authority and to all authorities for determining the maximum precept uses the expenditure limit as originally determined at £29·284 million, plus 2·5 per cent., which still produces a totally inadequate expenditure level of just over £30 million. That is a fait accompli. If the Bill, unamended, becomes an Act all the efforts that they thought were legal to seek redetermination and to get a level of expenditure that would enable them to provide effective and efficient fire and civil defence services on Merseyside will be for nothing.

On 26 September 1986 the treasurer advised that the expenditure to which the authority would be committed in 1987-88 totalled £30·345 million. If one looks at the position as a result of the general blanket redetermination in this clause, one sees a shortfall of £1,745,000. The command, control and vehicle replacement programme cannot go ahead and manpower cannot be increased to fulfil the authority's full obligations for dealing with fire and the other disasters and hazards that the fire brigade has to deal with. As my hon. Friends have already said, this is a matter of life and death. The treasurer's report includes the figure of 1,593 full-time fire officers for which the authority wants money. The additional cost of maintaining that establishment, compared with the present establishment of 1,505 plus recruits, which was approved by the Home Office, is £445,000.

In 1986, the Merseyside authority followed a detailed assessment of potential expenditure for 1987-88 and submitted an application for redetermination of that expenditure limit to the sum of £31·445 million. That application has been effectively rejected, not by a redetermination process, not after representations to a Minister who considered the whole thing in a balanced way, but by this blanket piece of legislation and this clause that is before us now.

It is scandalous that the Merseyside fire services should be so dealt with and given such scant attention by the Minister. I am not surprised that the authority placed on record its grave concern that once again the Government have shown a callous disregard for the safety of the people of Merseyside by taking steps to provide insufficient capital resources to enable the authority to maintain the adequate fire cover in the region.

8.45 pm

The position is even worse for the Merseyside police authority. Since 1979 there has been a 40 per cent. increase in crime on Merseyside. This Bill takes £6 million from the police authority. In the previous rate support grant settlement—one of the first of the three arranged by the Secretary of State—that police authority suffered a £6 million cut.

In my constituency young people are easy prey to the hard drug pushers. Five years ago there was no heroin problem. A phenomenon of the Thatcher years is high youth unemployment and heroin coming in through the port and the airport, partly as a result of the cuts in Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise staff. Those people, who see no hope for the future because they have no job and no prospects, are being led astray by drug pushers in a way that previously did not happen. There has been a massive increase in crime on Merseyside. It is a major problem, yet the party of law and order takes £6 million from the local authority in this redetermination. That is a scandal. I have received many representations, not just from the Merseyside police authority, its officers and elected representatives, but from the community, voluntary groups and policemen who have the difficult job of policing my constituency to ask for the replacement of this £6 million.

If the Conservative Government were serious about law and order, they would not cut £6 million off the budget of a police authority covering an area like Merseyside with its problems and with a crime wave that has been stoked up by the industrial, economic and unemployment policies of the Government.

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): I am sorry to have to speak on this matter because, since 1979, on innumerable occasions I have pleaded with the Government to adopt a sensible, sane and reasonably generous policy towards the Inner London education authority. On all occasions my efforts have failed.

I should declare an interest. One of my children went through ILEA schools, came out at the other end and went to university. I am grateful to all the people who taught and encouraged her in all the difficult circumstances they faced—not from her, but from the Government—during the period when she was at school.

Similarly, my eldest son is at that secondary school and our youngest son is at the primary school. They are the nearest primary and mixed comprehensive secondary schools to where we live.

Neither of the Secretaries of State who are involved in this matter would need to declare an interest. The old Etonian Secretary of State for the Environment and the Secretary of State for Education and Science—I do not know which school he attended but it was certainly a public school—would not need to declare an interest about sending their children to Inner London education authority secondary schools. It is fair to say that the present Secretary of State for Education and Science, who has had much influence on deciding what happens on the education aspects of the Bill, has pursued a squalid, vindictive vendetta against ILEA, certainly as long as I have been a Member.

First, he crept on to the Front Bench by launching a squalid and misleading attack on ILEA, thus endearing himself to the Prime Minister and getting himself a junior ministerial office. Since then he has pushed his way on to the Front Bench and continues his vindictive efforts to damage the authority.

**Mr. Richard Caborn** (Sheffield, Central): Is my hon. Friend giving the right hon. Gentleman a character reference?

**Mr. Dobson:** The truth will out.

The propositions which are set out in the Bill would lead to ILEA having to face cuts amounting to £125 million. There would be cuts of £19 million, because the Government are so incompetent that they cannot estimate accurately the existing level of ILEA's costs. There would be cuts of £40 million because no provision has been made for pay and price increases that are taking place and are likely to take place in future. There would then be a further £71 million of cuts, which would affect every institution in ILEA. They would mean substantial cuts in every form of provision that is now being made by the authority.

*[Mr. Dobson]*

If there were any Conservative Members in their places who represent inner London constituencies, I have no doubt that they would claim that ILEA spends too much money. I note that there is not one Conservative Member who represents an inner London constituency in his place this evening, yet we are debating cuts amounting to £125 million in the provision that is made for the children of those whom they falsely claim to represent. As I have said, if they were here, some would say that ILEA spends too much money.

It is a fact that ILEA spends an average of £1,265 per annum per pupil in its primary schools. On the same basis, it spends £1,940 per pupil in its secondary schools. That is a lot of money. But how much do Conservative Members spend on their children's education? Those who send their children to Eton pay £4,950 a year. The fees at Harrow are £5,850 and £5,760 at Winchester. If it is argued by Conservative Members that those sums include boarding fees, let us take account of St. Paul's which was attended by the Secretary of State for Education and Science when he was a lad. The fees for a day boy at St. Paul's are £2,925. For a day boy at Westminster school, the fees are £3,075. It is said that ILEA is a spendthrift authority, but it is spending at least £1,000 less on those who attend its secondary schools than the fees that are paid by some Conservative Members who send their children to schools in the private sector. Yet they tell us that ILEA should reduce its spending without any consideration of the problems that are faced by ILEA.

I am not uncritical of ILEA. I recognise that there are wrongs within it and faults in all its schools. There are faults with many of its institutions and arrangements. I agree that improvements should be made, but unfortunately the authority has never had the time to turn its attention to effecting improvements since 1979. From that time onwards it has been able to do virtually nothing, apart from defend itself against squalid attacks, which have usually been led by he who is now the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

I shall illustrate what would have to be done to bring about cuts of £71 million that even the Government have acknowledged they want. It is estimated that there will be slightly more than 1,000 vacancies in ILEA primary schools, and 677 of them would remain unfilled as a contribution to achieving a saving of £71 million. The Minister for Local Government introduced a Bill that addressed itself to special education. If he was serious when he introduced it, he should understand that 102 posts in special education in ILEA would not be filled as a result of the proposed cuts. Massive savings would have to be achieved in the support staff sector. They may be financial savings, but the schools will suffer.

I regard school meals as one of the finest services that is provided. If anyone wants to help poor children, there is not a more clear, direct or cheaper way of doing so than ensuring that grub passes down their throats. Unfortunately, the service has suffered great damage under this Government. ILEA provides a holiday meals service for its children, but that will have to go if the proposed cuts are implemented. That means that for six or seven weeks during the summer some of the poorest children in the land will not get the meals that they have been receiving from the holiday meals service.

There would have to be massive cuts in the catering staff, which would do great damage to the incomes of some of the poorest families. It is usually women who work in the catering section and they perform as useful a task as anyone in the land, and certainly a more useful one than anyone who has occupied the Treasury Bench this evening.

I accept that ILEA spends more money than many other education authorities. For example, it provides clothing vouchers for children aged over 15 years so that they are rather better dressed when they go to school. It provides education maintenance grants to enable children who are aged between 16 and 19 years to stay on at school. I thought that we were trying to encourage children to do that. The proposed cuts would entail a reduction of £189,000 in the provision of education maintenance grants. These are examples of what we are being asked to accept if the Bill is approved this evening.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** It is unfortunate that there are no Conservative Members in their places who can speak about ILEA. I am sure that my hon. Friend will recall the recent reports of the Sub-Committee on Race Relations and Immigration of the Select Committee on Home Affairs, an all-party Sub-Committee, which was complimentary about the role that ILEA has played in the education of Bangladeshi children. That is precisely because of the imaginative approach that ILEA has adopted in an important area of education. No fair parallel could be found in any other education authority.

**Mr. Dobson:** My hon. Friend has raised an important issue. Before the Secretary of State for Education and Science did a bunk from London and began to represent Mole Valley—one of the most prosperous areas in the country with the lowest level of unemployment of any English constituency—he represented Marylebone. That constituency is now represented predominantly by the hon. Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler), who chaired the Sub-Committee to which my hon. Friend has referred. It is a pity that he is not in the Chamber this evening to advocate that a greater effort should be made to implement its recommendations. The Sub-Committee drew attention in its report to the many Bangladeshi children in certain parts of London, including the area that I represent, and paid tribute to the efforts that ILEA was making to teach them English and to help them become literate in their mother tongue. Both aspects of that teaching are extremely valuable if these children are to become full and more valuable members of our society.

About half of the intake of the secondary school that my children have attended are children of Bangladeshi parents. They are not a liability. They are our children. It is our duty to look after them, to bring out the best in them and help them to become the enormous asset that they can be to our country. We can only do our duty by them and the people who try to teach, encourage and help them if they have the resources.

In the formulae of this ridiculous measure there is a key provision that would provide more money to help education authorities to pay for the forthcoming teachers' pay increase. Everybody recognises that ILEA has problems—indeed, I have outlined some of the cuts that it faces—but in this measure it is proposed that ILEA will not get a cent towards paying for the teachers' pay increase.

At present, young people in the capital city are facing the lowest and worst job prospects in its history. We face all sorts of villainy and crime outside our schools, as well as record levels of heroin addiction and all the problems that come with that. The people who work in the schools are doing their best to give our children a decent start. They are denied the necessary additional resources, and this measure would further reduce those resources.

If the Government claim to be the Government of law and order and would like London to be a decent, orderly and civilised place in the future, they had better find more money to look after all those children because if they do not they will rue the day.

9 pm

**Mr. Roger Stott** (Wigan): I am grateful to you, Sir Paul, for allowing me to intervene.

My hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw), moved the amendments as they were selected by Mr. Speaker. However, in this group of amendments there are a number which are related to specific issues. Certainly the debate has been wide-ranging and interesting. Unfortunately, it is rather distressing that so few Conservative Members are present for this debate— *[Interruption.]* Before the hon. Member for Nottingham, South (Mr. Brandon-Bravo) becomes too agitated I shall confirm his presence on the record. I recognise that he has been present throughout the whole of the debate. I see another Member on the Conservative Benches whose constituency I do not know—and I am sure he will enjoy the debate.

When the hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) spoke to one of the amendments I had hoped that he would be supported by his hon. Friend the Member for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock) but we have not had the pleasure of her company this evening. Perhaps the hon. Lady considers that the amendment she has put her name to is insignificant. That is entirely up to her.

**Mr. Meadowcroft** *rose*——

**Mr. Stott:** I shall give way in a moment.

I have listened to the contributions of my hon. Friends and the one Conservative Member on a number of issues that are concerned not just with local government. My hon. Friends the Members for Blackburn and Bootle (Mr. Roberts) spelt out the consequences of this legislation for local government. My hon. Friends the Members for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) and Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) spelt out the consequences for education. No doubt my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd), if he catches your eye, Sir Paul, will elaborate on the difficulties of the fire services.

The legislation impinges upon very important issues in terms of education, the fire services, local government and transport—which I shall speak about in a moment. I believe that it is a disservice to this Committee to see the Minister for Local Government in his place without the presence of a Minister from the Home Office or the Department of Transport. They should be here to listen to what my hon. Friends have had to say about the way in which the legislation will impinge upon those services.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** The hon. Gentleman has referred to the absence of the hon. Member for Batley and Spen (Mrs. Peacock). I believe that his comments were unfair because when amendments are tabled—this happens on the Labour Benches—a number of names are put to those amendments but not all Members are necessarily present when they are debated. It is normal practice for names to be put down from particular groups of people in support of those amendments. Surely the crucial thing is whether the hon. Lady, together with her hon. Friends, is in the Division Lobby. That is what matters at the end of the day.

**Mr. Stott:** I regret that I gave way to the hon. Gentleman for that somewhat pedantic point. Whether one is here or not may not be important to him, but it is to me. The name of the hon. Member for Batley and Spen was on the Amendment Paper in support of the amendment tabled by the hon. Member for Halifax. We shall be interested to see whether the hon. Lady goes into the Lobby with us when the amendments are put to the test.

I wish to talk about amendment No. 127, which concerns transport. It is designed to safeguard the financial interests of the Greater Manchester passenger transport authority by introducing into the formula a factor that will ensure the determination of a maximum precept consistent with the authority's application for redetermination. The debate is about redetermination, whether we are talking about the fire service or the transport service. These services had been endeavouring to redetermine their budgets with the various Secretaries of State, when all of a sudden the Secretary of State for the Environment came along and moved the goalposts 15 yards further on and left everybody in limbo.

The Secretary of State has said that the standard uplift is designed to take account of the individual circumstances of PTAs and the information presented to Ministers in the now discontinued exercise of redetermination. My authority, and I suspect others, following the advice of counsel whom it employed, wrote to the Department of Transport asking how this could be achieved by a standard uplift. As far as I am aware, no answer to this specific point has been obtained, unless the letter from the Minister responsible for public transport that I received this evening is a letter to that point.

The original pronouncements from the Departments that the formula would reflect the requirement of individual authorities have now been replaced by a statement that Ministers are confident that the formula included in the Bill is appropriate in the light of their policies. This was a statement in a letter to the clerk of the Greater Manchester PTA from the Department, written on 14 January.

**Mr. Alfred Morris** (Manchester, Wythenshawe): My hon. Friend is on a very important point. Is he aware that in the recent letter, the Secretary of State for Transport said he expected the Government's proposals—to inflict a shortfall of £11·4 million on the Greater Manchester PTA—to be subjected to close parliamentary scrutiny in these proceedings? What possible opportunity is there for close scrutiny? As my hon. Friend knows, not only bus services but the concessionary support scheme will be very badly damaged. In view of the Secretary of State's letter, are not these proceedings a parliamentary outrage?

**Mr. Stott:** My right hon. Friend is right. As he and other hon. Members—not just Manchester Members but others such as my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn), and Members from

*[Mr. Stott]*

Yorkshire—know, we have been endeavouring to draw this to the attention of the Secretary of State for Transport who, I suspect, like the Home Secretary on the fire service, has been caught out by the Bill. We were almost there in the redetermination of those budgets. Incidentally, the Secretary of State for the Environment was a former Secretary of State for Transport who was taken to court on more occasions than the Kray brothers, and he has introduced a Bill to make the whole procedure judge-proof.

My right hon. Friend is right. Those negotiations were taking place in a climate of understanding, in which a redetermination was possible. Now, the Secretary of State for the Environment is moving the goalposts and disallowing all that went on before. He is leaving not just the transport services but the fire services far short of the budget requirements that they need to perform their duties. I am just about to come to the figure of £11·4 million to which my right hon. Friend referred.

It is an outrage that we are not able to discuss this matter properly. Here we are, on a guillotined Bill that is being railroaded through, determining the levels of expenditure for PTAs and fire services in a debate lasting an hour and a half. What is more, Ministers from neither the Home Office nor the Department of Transport have come to the Chamber to listen to our recommendations, speeches or amendments.

The total expenditure level notified by the Department last year to Greater Manchester was £74·1 million. The authority requested a redetermination of £84·6 million. Under the arrangements proposed in schedule 2, paragraph 2(5) of the Bill, the authority will receive only £75·16 million. Additional costs recently identified increase this shortfall in resources to £11·4 million, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) has already said.

Therefore, three options are open to the Greater Manchester passenger transport authority and I suspect that those options are open to other authorities. Let us look at those options. How can that money be saved, how can the Greater Manchester passenger transport authority ensure that the £11·40 million is forthcoming either from balances or from savings? I am the first to agree that scope always exists to effect relatively small savings in organisational expenditure plans. A reduction of over 13 per cent. in less than a few months leaves only a few options open, and these do not extend to rail support. Rail support in Greater Manchester is £19·2 million, one of the highest levels of rate support in the United Kingdom.

Under section 20 of the Transport Act 1968 the Greater Manchester transport authority has to give at least 12 months' notice before it can withdraw any support from British Rail. Therefore, that is not an option at this time. That leaves two other areas in which savings could be made. One is of £12 million in the subsidised network and the other is in the concessionary fare agreements. The subsidised network tendering process is extremely difficult because of deregulation. The authority has little room to manoeuvre or to make significant savings in that direction. I am a resident of Greater Manchester and represent the people in the area and I do not want to see the authority undermining the current network. It is worse than it was before deregulation.

If any savings are to be made, I submit to the Minister of State that they ought not to come from the subsidised network. The only other option open to my local transport authority, and, I suspect, to other transport authorities, is the subsidised network. That network is the one which provides transport for old-age pensioners. When the deregulation Bill was passing through the House the Minister accused me of frightening old ladies when I told him that the legislation we were discussing and which we finally enacted was bound to have an effect upon the subsidy which passenger transport authorities paid for subsidised fares for schoolchildren and old-age pensioners. I told the Minister at the time that I was not being alarmist, that it was his Government and the legislation that we were dealing with which were causing the problem.

If Greater Manchester is to make the savings required to make up the shortfall of £11 million and if those savings cannot come from the networks subsidised under the current legislation, they can only come from concessionary fares. Are the Government saying that, in order to make up the shortfall which passenger transport authorities have not been able to make up because they cannot have a redetermination of their budgets, they will have to make it up out of the concessionary fare scheme? If that is not the case, the only thing that the Minister of State can do is to accept the amendment that we have tabled. If he does not, we have little or no room to manoeuvre.

If the Minister were to concede the amendment, it would put us back to our redetermination position. If he does not concede—it is a shame that the Minister's colleagues from the Department of Transport are not sitting beside him—where are we going to find the £11·4 million for which there is a genuine, understandable and a recognised shortfall in my authority and in others? Are we to get the money from the subsidised network or from the concessionary fare schemes? Are we to say to the pensioners of Greater Manchester, "You now enjoy a concessionary fare scheme where you can travel throughout the county for 12p. However, because the miserable Government have introduced deregulation and because the crazy Secretary of State for the Environment has introduced a Bill that seeks to undermine the redetermination proposals, we shall have to increase old-age pensioner bus passes because we cannot find the money to run our transport system as we would like"? Those are stark questions and the stark realities we are facing.

9.15 pm

The Minister will no doubt receive advice from his officials as to how the amendment would impinge on the legislation that he is seeking to defend. I hope that his officials will advise him wisely because if he does not accept the amendment, I say in all candour, he must accept the responsibility that flows from not accepting it.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Amendment No. 107 translates the formula in schedule 2 into preliminary maximum limits rather than the final ones and prescribes a further procedure to be followed by the Secretary of State based closely on the rate-capping model. The purpose, as my hon. Friend the Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) has said, is to re-establish the redetermination procedure that was abandoned for 1987-88.

I remind the House that during the passage of the original Rates Act 1984 Ministers made great play of the redetermination machinery within it and encouraged all rate-capped authorities in the first year to talk to the Secretary of State to apply for redetermination. I do not recollect any of them going to the Secretary of State. I do not think that anybody went, because there was a genuine fear among Labour authorities that if they went, rather than make concessions, the Minister would just make things worse by imposing further penalties. When it was discussed in the subsequent year, the then Secretary of State—I do not remember which one because there have been so many—said that if people talked to him—he was obviously feeling lonely—he would not make things worse. He said that he might make things better. After that, some local authorities did go and speak to him.

Our local authority—my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) is in the Chamber—went to see the Secretary of State in order to apply for a limited redetermination as it was notified on 22 July that it was designated for selective rate limitation in 1987-88. Newham was notified that the expenditure level for 1987-88 on which the maximum rate would be set was £154·353 million. The expenditure level was based on the 1985-86 original budget plus 6 per cent. However, the original budget for 1985-86 is an unrealistic basis for any expenditure target or comparison unless it is adjusted for special accounting measures. We have raised that matter before. Newham applied for redetermination of its expenditure level to £175·540 million on the basis that, due to special accounting measures, the economies implied by the expenditure level determined by the Secretary of State were unachievable.

We met the Minister of State on 27 November 1986 and emphasised that Newham was not necessarily seeking an ability to increase rates but rather to have an equitable share of resources, and recognition of the borough's special needs. We have all agreed that the meeting was cordial. I should like to run through the justification for our plea, because I want it to be on the record. I hope that, that when the Bill goes through unamended by the Opposition, perhaps a sympathetic peer will cast an eye over this part of our proceedings.

Newham has the second highest level of urban deprivation in the country, according to the Department of the Environment's statistics. We have serious educational problems and, according to the Department of Education and Science, we have the highest level of social deprivation of the 96 local education authorities in England. We have a deepening housing crisis. We have the highest number of unsatisfactory dwellings which are unfit or lacking basic amenities and in need of substantial repair in the 32 London boroughs. We have acute housing stress and the fastest increasing homelessness in London. It has risen from 972 applicants in 1981 to an expected 1,900 this year. We have asked for extra resources to deal with the enormous homelessness problem, but our pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

Newham has a significant level of population growth — the second highest projected increase in the 32 London boroughs between 1986 and 1991. We have the third highest number of births of the 32 London boroughs and substantial increases in the number of under-fives. We have a projected 21 per cent. increase in the number of people aged over 85 between 1986 and 1991. We have a large and diverse ethnic minorities population and the fourth highest percentage in England and Wales of residents of new Commonwealth origin.

We have the third highest rate of children born to mothers of new Commonwealth origin in London and, like many other parts of the country, high unemployment —17·5 per cent. We have a male unemployment rate of 21·3 per cent.—the sixth highest in London. We have had a major reduction in local employment recently, due to the closure in 1980 of the royal docks and the decline of associated industries. We have the fourth highest number of unemployed 16-to-19-year olds.

According to the map, Newham is an outer-London borough, but it has inner-London characteristics. The severity of its problems, which require local expenditure, is greater than is found in many inner-London boroughs. Newham's expenditure per head is considerably lower than in inner-London boroughs and resources available from the Government are also considerably smaller.

We have often pleaded with Ministers here and in meetings for partnership status for the borough. The case is unanswerable, but we have not been able to convince the Government—in spite of the fact that they accept that we are not exaggerating the problems—that we need more resources rather than less. There can be no doubt about the strength of Newham's case. It appears to have been accepted by Ministers and their departmental officers.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): My hon. Friend knows that, if time permits, I hope to put forward a formula which would ameliorate the problems to which he has referred.

Will my hon. Friend confirm that, at the meeting when all this information was presented to the Minister, the Minister said that the arguments were put fairly, temperately and properly? As far as we know, none of the facts to which my hon. Friend has referred has been questioned by the Minister or anybody else.

**Mr. Banks:** I entirely agree with my hon. Friend. That is what makes this so frustrating for all three hon. Members who represent Newham. It is not as if we have been accused of exaggerating or as if Ministers have said that we are telling lies. We have always been told that our case is good. I know that there are other equally deserving cases in other parts of the country. We have never argued that Newham should get something that has been taken away from another deprived area of London. God knows, there are enough deprived areas in the east end of London and other inner cities.

All that we are saying is that the Tories do not seem to understand the depth of the problems in an area such as Newham. I realise, of course, that if one was being totally cynical, one could say that they look at a borough such as Newham, and realise that the Tories do not stand a snowball's chance in hell of winning an election there. Under those circumstances, what has the Tory Government got to gain, in terms of votes, by giving anything to Newham? That is being very cynical, but perhaps we have been refused because the Government realise that in cynical terms there is nothing for them from the ballot box. If that is the case, it is disgraceful.

As the leader of Newham borough council, councillor Jones, a very moderate man in his views and no wild extremist by anybody's definition, has made clear time and again, if we do not get the resources in Newham that we believe our case merits and justifies, the consequences will be appalling, primarily for the people of Newham but in the end for the Government as well.

**Mr. Caborn:** It is apt that I should follow my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) because the problems that we have in the city of Sheffield and in south Yorkshire are mirrored probably to an even greater extent than my hon. Friend suggested.

Probably one of the most despicable parts of redetermination rested on Sheffield's shoulders when we came down to meet the Minister on 17 December 1986. We sat at the Ministry and put the case for Sheffield because it was proposed to slash £41 million off the budget of Sheffield county council. We put the case to the Minister for redetermination, as did one of his hon. Friends, the Member for Sheffield, Hallam (Sir J. Osborn). We were told that he would take all the points on board that we were making about the serious situation of the inner-city seat, with a decline in its industrial base of steel and engineering. When we came back to the House of Commons the following day, we found that the Bill was going to be presented and put on the statute book and that the exercise that we had run through with the Minister was irrelevant because redetermination was not allowed.

Prior to that, for the first time in its history, the Sheffield chamber of commerce and the hon. Member for Hallam made representations about the state of Sheffield's finances after it had been taken into consultation with the local authority, and clearly stated to central Government that it was impossible to run the city of Sheffield on the expenditure levels that were being proposed by the Department of the Environment. The city council also made representations. That was because the city of Sheffield is suffering one of the worst industrial declines in its history, yet we are penalised by that reduction in expenditure levels.

On top of that, as several of my hon. Friends from south Yorkshire have said, the fire and civil defence budget has been reduced by £1 million and the transport budget has been reduced by about £12 million. The transport authority has also made representations for redetermination. Although my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) has been talking about the problems of Greater Manchester, if one compares them with what has been happening in south Yorkshire, with all due respect to my hon. Friend, they pale into insignificance, because as bad as the cuts in Greater Manchester are, they are 9 per cent., while south Yorkshire's support is being slashed by 21 per cent.

On local radio in Sheffield earlier today, the depth of the problems that some people are experiencing was clearly stated. One of the callers to the phone-in programme this morning on Radio Sheffield explained her plight. Her family has moved out to one of the outer reaches of Sheffield, to a new housing estate. That was partly because there is quite nice housing in the outskirts of Sheffield but also because there was a reasonable, sound, efficient and effective system of transport in operation. Unfortunately, her husband has had both legs removed. The couple have a youngster who is at technical college. It is now very difficult for the wife and the child to get around because of the reduction in the wages going into that household.

9.30 pm

In the past 18 months, we have suffered from increases in fares of over 225 per cent. There have been reductions in the transport infrastructure of about 10 per cent. The number of passengers carried has fallen by about 30 to 35 per cent., and that was before deregulation. Now, in addition, we have a further 6 per cent. increase in fares. We have lost thousands of jobs in transport, and there will be a further 800 redundancies because of the Government's expenditure levels.

Let us look at the Government's credibility. They are giving promises to people who think that they are sincere and honest when they are dealing with them. Again, for the financial year 1987-88, the south Yorkshire PTE will have to meet extra costs totalling £3·68 million arising from the scheme of transfer. That was a major point on redetermination raised by the south Yorkshire PTE and brought about by the Local Government Act 1985. The Secretary of State for Transport said that that would be seriously taken on board. It is £3·68 million out of total expenditure of £46·6 million. Clear indications were given that that would be included in the redetermination level. It was not. Like my hon. Friend the Member for Wigan, south Yorkshire PTE is saying: where does the money come from? Does it come out of the concessionary fares, which have been affected already? Where do we get the money from? It is an impossible task.

The whole of the city of Sheffield, including business, industry, commerce, the trade unions and the local papers, is saying that the Government are now putting constraints upon a fairly deprived area, the industrial base of which has been decimated by the lack of Government industrial policies. All the organisations that have made representations are saying, "You are giving us an impossible task. It cannot be done." Further deprivation and social unrest is inevitable. Then people such as the chairman of the Tory party will come to the Front Bench and castigate Sheffield for at least trying to protect those who can least protect themselves. What the Government have done is dishonourable, in view of the many representations by people in south Yorkshire.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** I should continue in the same vein, and refer to transport in our metropolitan areas. My hon. Friend the Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) spoke a little about Greater Manchester. I do not intend to go over the the same ground, but I should like to put a couple of points to the Minister.

The Minister has not been directly involved in the negotiations between Greater Manchester and the Department of Transport. It grieves us greatly that, having suffered in some ways more than other authorities—I take the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) about south Yorkshire—Greater Manchester has unique problems because of the restructuring that it had to undertake. That was recognised by the Transport Ministers, who, at one stage, described its proposals as "sensible". It sticks considerably in our throats when we hear those same Transport Ministers telling us that in Greater Manchester it is our own fault that services are being decimated while, even by the Government's own account, we read that Greater Manchester has suffered more loss of mileage and routes than any other metropolitan area in the process of deregulation.

On Friday I visited a scheme funded by the passenger transport authority and the Manpower Services Commission, which is close to the Government's heart, or at least close to the Government's rhetoric. It is a dial-a-ride scheme for the most vulnerable and those who have the greatest transport difficulties.

That is something that the Department of Transport claims that it wants to promote. It parallels the claims made by my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central about the difficulties experienced by people who have specific physical disabilities and who are unable to use the public transport system. The possibility of an extension of those schemes in Greater Manchester into an area such as my own—which has some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the whole of the Greater Manchester area—is non-existent.

Far from Greater Manchester passenger transport authority being able to extend that scheme, we are likely to see it cutting back on existing provision, and we are likely to see the concessionary fares go unless the Minister tells us tonight that he intends to accept the amendment or come up with another solution dealing with debt.

In Greater Manchester we went through the whole process of redetermination because we believed that the Government were sincere when they said that they accepted that each local authority would be able to argue its own individual case for redetermination. In terms of the transport and fire authorities, Greater Manchester went through the motions and spent many hours of officers' and authority members' time in beating a path down to London. That is no pleasant day out for people from the north-west; it is something that they do on behalf of the community they represent. However, we found that that process was a farce and that it had been ripped up by the Bill, which takes no account whatever of local circumstances.

The fire authority feels particularly bitter. It had a constructive meeting with Lord Caithness, who is responsible for fire services, and brought down an all-party delegation. It felt that it had managed to explain the peculiar circumstances of Greater Manchester, and left Whitehall feeling that its unique circumstances would be considered. It came as a slap in the face when Greater Manchester's fire authority found that it would be treated in exactly the same way as every other fire authority in the metropolitan areas.

I do not want to fight a case for, and even less against, fire authorities, but it is well recognised that Greater Manchester has done badly in this settlement. I congratulate the hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) whose authority, West Yorkshire, has been treated worse than any other. He has absented himself now but my hon. Friends will accept that he was the only Conservative Member who took the trouble to speak, not only about fire authorities and transport, but across the whole range of the debate. The rest of the Tory party has been silent on these particular issues.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** I wonder whether the hon. Gentleman will contemplate the possibility that the hon. Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) is outside trying to drum up support for his amendment amongst his colleagues.

**Mr. Lloyd:** I did not seek to criticise the hon. Member for Halifax, but the rest of his colleagues in the Conservative party, who cannot be bothered to take up the important issues affecting west Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, south Yorkshire, the west midlands and so on.

The fire authority in Greater Manchester faces a cut of £1 million unless the Bill is amended. The Government were certain, when they put forward the expenditure limits last July, that they had got things right, but conceded that they had got things wrong by considering the redetermination process. They conceded how wrong they were by allowing a 2·5 per cent. uplift, yet when representatives of Greater Manchester's fire authority spoke to the civil servants they were told, "We have only given you 2·5 per cent., but there may be £800,000 in additional clawback." Whitehall clearly accepts that Greater Manchester's fire authority needs the money that it requested. Whitehall is saying, in effect, that it will match exactly what Greater Manchester asked for, barring the odd £100,000 because it will be giving—on a nod and a wink—the extra money. Unfortunately, we in Greater Manchester are not gullible. The reality is that we do not know whether we shall get this extra money through additional clawback. But even if we did, the difficulty is that, while that might fund one year, it would not carry over to future years given the present structure of local government finance. That leaves Greater Manchester vulnerable. We have already had standstills in recruitment. Last year we lost a number of serving fire officers in the training pool. That is bad for those who must carry out essential emergency work in a large metropolitan area. Whatever happens, we shall lose even more money again this year.

Greater Manchester already has a high death rate from fires. There were 124 deaths in 1985. The Home Office recognises that Greater Manchester is probably the most efficient of the metropolitan authorities. That can be proved by statistics. If we reduce financial provision even further we shall effectively be undermining and sabotaging the job done by firemen out on the tenders and by the fire authority in general. Ultimately, we shall be doing that at the expense of the lives and property of the people of Greater Manchester. If that is what the Government intend, so be it. The public will make up their own mind. But if the Government want to wriggle out of that, let the Minister stand up and say how they intend to make up that financial shortfall.

**Mr. Walter Harrison** (Wakefield): It has taken me two or three weeks and quite a few days sitting in this Chamber to draw someone's attention to the fact that I wanted to have a little word about my concern over local government finance. I have put on all sorts of little demonstrations. When I look round the Chamber, as a simple rural lad, the first place that I look is the Press Gallery. The Lobby members usually ask where the Members of Parliament are, but where are they? Not a single one is present to take any interest in this business, which concerns one of the biggest problems that we have ever had to face. They check us and now we are checking them. We have two *Hansard* writers. The public are interested. Seven members of the public are present and here we are fighting a dynamic battle about local government finance.

How many Conservative Back-Benchers are present? There are three in the proper positions, one Cross Bencher, and one lounging. There are more Members on the Opposition Front Bench.

I do not know how long I have got, but I have been trying to speak for a long time. When I started in local government — my father was a local government councillor before me — we had to account for every dustbin lid. We had to account for everything, whether for wooden rafters or rolled steel girders. We had to account for boundary fences. We had to go to the regional

*[Mr. Walter Harrison]*

committee to see whether we could spend over £15. We were accountable. I am worried about the accountability of the Government, local government and everything else.

I come to the crunch. Hon. Members know that at present I have a little bit of a running battle with one of the Ministers in the Department of the Environment. That is nothing new.

**Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse** (Pontefract and Castleford): Who is that?

**Mr. Harrison:** I reckon that my hon. Friends are looking at him, so I shall not name him.

I started out asking questions about accountability and I approached my hon. Friends on the Front Bench, who will be Ministers at the next election, and asked them which was the best point for me to talk about residuary bodies. They told me that such and such a point would be best. My hon. Friend, who I will not name because I cannot remember his constituency, told me that such and such a place would be best. He told me that when the guillotine fell I would be cut short. Therefore, I thought that it would be advisable for me to speak now. I thought that if I was to be chopped by the guillotine, it would be best, whether I was in order or out of order, to chance my luck now.

9.45 pm

I want to make a point about the accountability of local government finance. I started out as an urban district councillor and became a non-county borough councillor. I became a county councillor and then I came here. What a success! I had more success as an urban district councillor than I have had here. I could receive more answers in those days.

When I asked the town clerk or anyone else a question, he was accountable and he answered me. He did not give me distortions or fancy words, because he knew that I would see him again the next day.

I began to ask questions about what belonged to me as a ratepayer, as a constituent, and what belonged to my father before me. I found out that there was no accountability. When the Tory Government abolished the county councils, we discovered that there was no accountability. The Government did not elect the body to replace the councils; they selected it. I told one bloke, "You have got some real ones there. From the names that I have seen, the members of that residuary body would sell their grandmothers." The Secretary of State said to me, "Why do you think that we selected them?"

I am bothered about my property in Yorkshire. I do not have much property, just a little house with about three quarters of an acre, but I have a lot of vested interests.

**Mr. Caborn:** Castle Howard.

**Mr. Harrison:** No, it is not Castle Howard.

I am bothered about county hall and what my predecessors and my father paid into. I am worried about accountability and I am concerned about the residuary bodies which are non-elected and non-accountable. The residuary body was selected for its attitude. I notice that there is one more person in the Press Gallery. Welcome to the fold.

With all my vested interest through being a ratepayer, I wanted to see what accountability was available.

**Mr. Allen McKay:** Two minutes left.

**Mr. Harrison:** I have been told that I have only two minutes left. I have not spoken for 12 months. All I have done is to make interventions. I will finish in a few minutes, but I have a bit more to say yet.

I am concerned about the accountability of local government finance. Way back, I could account each year through the local authority. Now, however, no one can account for what is happening because councillors are not in charge. The Secretary of State is in charge, but he is not accountable.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** My right hon. Friend will be talking about the residuary bodies in some detail. Is he aware that the unelected chairman of the London residuary body receives more than £51,000 for dismantling London while the former leader of the Greater London council, Ken Livingstone, received only council expenses to a grand total of about £6,000?

**Mr. Harrison:** I asked those questions, but the Government could not tell me. I asked the Government what the chairmen of the residuary bodies receive annually, what emoluments they receive and what other jobs they do. That is a carve-up.

I am worried about west Yorkshire county hall. Look at the stack of questions I have asked—it is beautiful. Now the Government answer my questions in triplicate. They give the same answers to three questions because they are fed up. I asked the Secretary of State,

> "what was the estimated value of the West Yorkshire metropolitan county council . . . complex in Wood Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, at the time of the abolition."—[*Official Report*, 19 June 1986; Vol. 99, c. *635*.]

Did the Minister know? No; he told me to ask the residuary body.

I also asked the Secretary of State for the Environment,

> "what were the total capital assets of the West Yorkshire metropolitan county council on 31 March at the time of the abolition of that county council."

He replied:

> "Local authorities are not required to maintain a balance sheet."—[*Official Report*, 23 June 1986; Vol. 100, c. 9.]

I asked the Secretary of State for the Environment about the number of vacant properties formerly owned by the county council and their annual rental values.

The Minister replied:

> "I have no information on this matter". — [*Official Report*, 19 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. *753*.]

He said that it was a matter for the residuary body.

I asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he had given guidance to the residuary body on the disposal of properties, but he had no information. Then comes the triplicate one. I asked the Secretary of State about the individual units of property and land, whether he would make a statement on the percentage increase of rented properties and whether he would make a statement on the total receipts from the disposal and sale of property and land. The Minister replied:

> "I have no information on these matters." — [*Official Report*, 18 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. *679*.]

What marvellous accountability!

The accountability for local government finance has been removed from local councillors. It has gone to the Government, who are not accountable because they refer all matters to the residuary bodies.

That was a short version of what I wanted to say because my hon. Friends were barracking me. But I shall return to the subject and I hope that many of my hon. Friends will take it up. The only response that I get from the Department of the Environment is that the residuary body has the information. Its members are not elected; they were selected because they would sell their grandmothers.

**Dr. Boyson:** When I came into the House, I received a letter from a noted librarian called Ivy Hill. She said that she had served under seven chairmen of library committees. One of them was my father, who was an alderman in Haslingden. Another was the right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Harrison). She paid tribute to them as the two best chairmen under whom she had served in local government. It gives me pleasure to put that on the record tonight.

It is said that most people deplore the end of consensus in local government. However, one reason for the end of that is excessive spending by certain boroughs. The introduction of rate capping was the Government's response to the huge increase of expenditure——

**Mr. Tony Banks** *rose*——

**Dr. Boyson:** I shall give way in a minute; I have hardly started my speech. We shall be continuing the debate after the 10 o'clock motion.

We believe that if rates are too high they drive out residents and businesses, with the consequent risk of creating residential and industrial deserts.

Although I shall ask the House to reject the Opposition amendments, I must point out that one amendment being discussed in this group — No. 114 — is, in fact, a Government amendment, and I shall be asking the House to accept it.

Under redetermination, authorities were able to request a meeting with the appropriate Minister and a reassessment was then made. Until the necessity for this Bill was shown, there was every intention that redetermination should be available for the 1987-88 rating period from 1 April this year.

**Mr. Caborn** *rose*——

**Dr. Boyson:** There is a queue, and the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) is first in it. I shall give way in a moment.

Half of the authorities that were rate-capped this year asked for redetermination. However, the Government decided not to give individual redetermination, but to draft the Bill in two blocks—those authorities that were rate-capped last year and those that have been rate-capped for the first time this year. With the authorities that applied for redetermination, we did what we could by bringing in the formula alongside what we would have previously given——

**Mr. Tony Banks:** I do not under-estimate the significance of rates at the margin, but the Minister must accept that rates are one of the least important cost factors facing industry. Of far greater significance are interest rates, and the Government determine those. He cannot continue to attack local authorities and claim that high spending is all their fault — he knows that the Government's contribution to rate support grant has gone down from 61 per cent. in 1979 to 46 per cent. this year. That is a massive switch of taxation from central to local government. The Minister cannot pretend that that has not been a major factor in the spending policies of Labour and other local authorities.

**Dr. Boyson:** The level of interest rates applies equally throughout the country, so the geographical location of businesses is not affected by them. However, the level of rates varies between authorities. For a business that requires a great deal of space and many buildings, the level of rates in a particular area is a major determinant in whether it stays in that area or moves elsewere, or even in whether it can stay in business at all. I have visited businesses in the Wembley trading estate which within the past two years have moved elsewhere because of the level of rates in Brent. Rates are important. There is no need for Micawberism to accept that success or failure comes on the margin. It is on the margin that we all make our decisions.

10 pm

**Mr. Caborn:** The Minister has given a short explanation of why the Government introduced rate capping. The South Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority is the subject of minimum standards that should be met for the well-being of the people of south Yorkshire, yet the Department of the Environment is £1 million short of capital to meet the minimum standards that have been spent. If we are spending so much money in south Yorkshire that it is necessary to rate-cap the authority, how is it that the fire service is falling short of the minimum standards that have been set for it and a Government Department is saying that those standards should be achieved?

**Dr. Boyson:** I shall deal with the hon. Gentleman's question later. I have stopped using my prepared notes so that I can respond to all those who have participated in the debate so far. If I start to respond to interventions, I shall forget to reply to some of those who have spoken in the debate.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Answer the question.

**Dr. Boyson:** This happens to be my speech and I shall proceed with it in my way.

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): Will the Minister give way?

**Dr. Boyson:** Yes, I shall give way to the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Rogers:** When the Minister responded to a question posed by my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) he suggested that rates are an important factor in the location of industry. In the area that I represent, companies have the benefit of a substantial part of their rates bill being mitigated for perhaps the first five years, yet they still do not stay in the area and they do not come into the area in sufficient numbers to relieve unemployment. If the non-levying of rates is a factor, surely my area and others like it should be attracting more companies.

**Dr. Boyson:** Presumably rates were considered to be an important factor by a sufficient number, or the five-year provision would not have been introduced.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Dr. Boyson:** I must get on, because there are many hon. Members who want to move on to Third Reading. Many amendments remain undiscussed and there are certain ones——

**Mr. Straw:** It was the Government who imposed a guillotine.

**Dr. Boyson:** We did so to ensure that local authorities would have their money on 1 April. If they do not have their money on that date because the Bill has not been enacted, no one will thank those who delayed its passage through the House of Commons.

My hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) and the hon. Members for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) and for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) referred to the south Yorkshire fire service——

**Mr. Kevin Barron** (Rother Valley): Halifax is in west Yorkshire.

**Dr. Boyson:** Questions have been asked especially about south Yorkshire and I shall respond to them.

Effectively, spending this year will amount to an increase of 6·9 per cent. on last year's budget. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department is satisfied on present information that the expenditure level is adequate to maintain the existing level of service. He is of the view that it will enable the authority to maintain minimum standards of fire cover, but he has asked Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Services to report urgently on the operational implications of the intended pre-set limit. I can assure the Committee that my right hon. Friend will consider the chief inspector's report extremely carefully. I have heard that my noble Friend the Minister of State, Home Office has agreed to meet the authority to discuss the concerns which it has brought to our notice.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** The Minister has told us that the Minister of State, Home Office, the Earl of Caithness, will meet the fire authority, but what difference will that make when the Bill has passed through the House of Commons? At that stage everything will be cut and dried.

**Dr. Boyson:** That is obviously a valid point. On the other hand, help can be given to local authorities in many ways. The very fact that the agreement has been made for the Minister to meet that authority shows the concern that is felt by the Government on this matter.

**Mr. Straw:** The Minister said that help can be given in many ways. Will he spell out those ways? Will he accept, as my hon. Friend the Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd) has made clear, that once the Bill becomes an Act, the expenditure limits and rate limits are set in concrete and there is nothing that even the Secretary of State can do about them? He is putting into the Bill great inflexibility and forcing rate limits on authorities, even if he accepts the merits of their case.

**Dr. Boyson:** I cannot comment on what my hon. Friend the Minister will say when he meets the authority. I have just informed the House that he is prepared to meet the authority and discuss the situation.

The hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) mentioned the Merseyside police authority. The increase for that is over 7 per cent. Reference has been made to the transport authorities in two areas. I have the figures here. In 1987-88 there will be a £3 million increase for the Greater Manchester area, so the argument is not over cuts but over the level of increased expenditure. All of us would like more money if we could have it. We are dealing not with cuts but with arguments as to whether the percentages that I have given are enough.

**Mr. Stott** *rose*——

**Dr. Boyson:** I shall not give way because we must move on. I know that some hon. Members have been here all the time, while others have only just come in.

The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) mentioned inner London and made a strong case on the need for further money for ILEA. However, I bring to the attention of the Committee the huge expenditure of ILEA. It is spending twice as much per pupil in its schools as the average for the whole country. The rest of the country can manage on that average with good results, while those of ILEA are not the best. I do not have the results with me, but I have seen reports. ILEA is the highest spending authority relative to GRE. It has budgeted to spend 78 per cent. more than GRE on education this year, and the next highest, Haringey, will spend only 31 per cent. more.

Similarly, ILEA employs twice as many non-teaching staff in schools relative to pupil numbers than the average authority. Its costs of administration per pupil are more than twice the average, even allowing for London weighting. Its refusal to manage its teacher force properly has led to overstaffing and very generous pupil teacher ratios. Last year, there were 500 supernumerary teachers without proper jobs in its schools, while there were shortages in many other authorities, even those in London. Even allowing for London weighting, ILEA spends 30 per cent. more per pupil than the inner city authorities of Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle, and almost 60 per cent. more than Birmingham. ILEA educates 4 per cent. of the children in the country but spends 8 per cent. of the money available. How anybody can ask for more money for ILEA with such a background, I do not know.

**Mr. Dobson:** Does the Minister recall that I pointed out that in secondary schools, ILEA spends about £1,900 per pupil, but Conservative Members, who say that ILEA should spend less, spend £3,000, £4,000 or £5,000 a year sending their children to public school? They do not represent London seats, but they come here to set aside the decisions of the democratically elected ILEA to spend what it thinks is needed to provide a decent education for the children of inner London.

**Dr. Boyson:** I would like the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) to listen most carefully. With regard to school spending in London a conclusion was reached by ILEA last week—presumably because of financial pressure this year — regarding its boarding school, Wolverstone Hall, which costs £8,350 per pupil, or 50 per cent. more than Eton. If the hon. Gentleman is talking about saving money, he should recall that the most expensive boarding school is run by ILEA. Thank goodness that ILEA only runs one boarding school, or it would be spending six times as much per head of the population. If that is the hon. Gentleman's best case for ILEA, I do not see anything wrong in sharing out the money across the length and breadth of the country.

I should also like to make reference to the existing rate-capped boroughs. The hon. Member for Sheffield,, Heeley (Mr. Michie) mentioned Sheffield, but the fact is that that council spent 20 per cent. more over allocated GRE. In April 1986, 953 properties owned by Sheffield council have been vacant for over a year. Let us consider the money that could have been brought in had they been let.

The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) spoke with his usual fire and enthusiasm — he enlivens the House with his speeches. Newham is spending 80 per cent. over GRE and the local rate is 66 per cent. above the class average. Rates have risen by 50 per cent. since 1982-83. Since 1983, rents have been down by 8p per house, which means that Newham has forgone an annual income of £3 million because of that reduction. The rates in Newham for 1986-87 were the highest in London. Some have objected to the fact that that borough will be rate-capped; one wonders whether rates would have to reach the height of Snowdonia or the Himalayas before someone would not object to the rate-capping of that borough.

I shall not say any more, because I do not wish to disturb Opposition Members. I know that they are keen to vote upon that issue. I would be astonished if there was a vote, considering the figures I have given. However, one cannot account for human nature.

The Government have sought to rate-cap to ensure that people are not driven out of boroughs and businesses do not go bankrupt. To protect those people we need the clauses in their entirety and on behalf of the Government I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends to oppose all the amendments, bar amendment No. 114 — it is an amendment produced on the home side and I recommend it—and to go into the Lobby to vote for the retention of the clauses.

*Question put,* That the amendment be made:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 177, Noes 252.

**Division No. 72]** **[10.15 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Wilson, Gordon
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ron Davies and
Mr. John McWilliam.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry

Dorrell, Stephen
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Favell, Anthony
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Hayes, J.
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Jackson, Robert
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Peter Lloyd and
Mr. David Lightbown.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

**Mr. David Clelland** (Tyne Bridge): I beg to move amendment No. 193, in page 6, line 16, leave out subsection (4) and insert—

> '(4) For the purposes of section 8 below the maximum limit in relation to a designated authority shall be such amount in the pound, expressed in pence, the effect of which shall be that the authority's relevant expenditure (as defined in section 3(1) of this Act) for the financial year beginning in 1987 shall not be less than the authority's relevant expenditure (as so defined) for the financial year beginning in 1986 as adjusted to take account of any increase in the Index of Retail Prices which may have occurred since the beginning of that financial year.'.

**The Second Deputy Chairman of Ways and Means (Sir Paul Dean):** With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 190, in page 6, line 17, leave out

'determined in accordance with Schedule 2 to this Act'

an insert—

> '*(a)* the limit determined in accordance with Schedule 2 to this Act, or
>
> *(b)* an amount in the pound equal to the actual rate made (exclusive of any excluded part) or precept issued by the authority for the financial year beginning in 1986 whichever shall be the higher.'.

No. 191, in clause 8, page 7, line 18, after 'section', insert 'and of section 7 above.'.

I gather that it is also for the convenience of the Committee to consider amendment No. 192, in clause 8, page 6, line 40, at end insert—

> '(2A) If a designated authority makes a rate, or issues a precept, whether before or after the passing of this Act but before a notice has been served on it and the amount in the pound of the rate (exclusive of any excluded part) or of the precept is lower than the maximum limit, the authority may, if it thinks fit, make a substituted rate or issue a substituted precept before the expiry of the permitted period.'.

**Mr. Clelland:** The Government want to control the national and the local contribution to local government finance. That has been their declared policy since they were elected, although I do not recall it being talked about too much before they were elected, and the Bill reaffirms that policy.

Whereas previously the concept of rate capping was assumed by most people to be a method of limiting rate rises, we find that in some cases it also means that the Secretary of State can force a rate reduction without also assuming responsibility for deciding whether and how services can be maintained at the same level on a lower income or, if not, which should suffer.

It is predictable that there are some people who welcome rate capping as a relief to ratepayers. They pay scant regard to the possible consequences of such remote control of local government affairs. I propose to use one local authority as an example, but there are many others which face similar problems to differing degrees.

The council which I intend to highlight is Gateshead metropolitan borough council, for which the Bill would mean a massive 9 per cent. reduction in rates, which translates into a £12·5 million reduction on what is needed to maintain services at current levels. I ask those people who welcome the prospect—local newspapers and the local business community in particular—to consider what their reaction would be if some politician or civil servant devised a formula which dictated that they must reduce their charges by 9 per cent., that they had three months' notice in which to do it, yet the reduction should have little or no effect on their services. I doubt very much whether they would be glad to hear such news, especially from people who are not directly affected by the consequences of such a reduction and who have little or no knowledge of the circumstances of the business concerned.

That, however, is what is being done to Gateshead. For what offence? Is Gateshead a high spending authority, whatever that means? The definition of high or overspending is at the discretion of the Secretary of State. On any method of comparison with relevant authorities, Gateshead cannot be described as a high spender.

Do the people of Gateshead suffer disproportionately high rate payments? If we compare average rate payments in Gateshead with those in other authorities, we find that that is not the case either. Of 107 comparable authorities —the metropolitan districts, shire counties and London boroughs—Gateshead comes 64th in the league table for rate payments; it comes 27th out of the 36 metropolitan districts; and it has the lowest average weekly rates among rate-capped authorities.

Gateshead has lower average weekly rates than every Conservative-controlled metropolitan district council, none of which, of course, is rate capped. The average rates in Gateshead are also lower than those in Buckinghamshire, Surrey, Berkshire, Westminster, Barnet, Kensington and Chelsea, Harrow, Hillingdon, Enfield, Sutton, Kingston-upon-Thames, Havering, Croydon, Merton, Bromley and Redbridge, all of which are Conservative-controlled and none of which is rate capped. There is no reason, based on any definition of justice, why Gateshead should be so badly treated.

10.30 pm

The treatment meted out under the Bill and by the Secretary of State is in sharp contrast to the other measures that recognise the council as having special needs and requiring special grant assistance, such as inner area partnership. The nonsense is that the £12·5 million reduction in the council's budget implied in the Bill is double the total annual Government grant through inner area partnership. How can the Secretary of State explain the ludicrous situation in which £6 million is given with one hand and £12 million is taken away with the other?

It is not as though any of that comes as a surprise to the Minister. On 24 November 1986, he met my hon. Friends the Members for Gateshead, East (Mr. Conlan) and for Blaydon (Mr. McWilliam), and myself, along with the leader, deputy leader, chief executive and director of finance from Gateshead. We pointed out to the Secretary of State that Gateshead had been rate-capped not because of any sudden lurch in spending on the part of the council, but purely because he had chosen, for no explained reason, to reduce the excess of expenditure over GRE from 20 per cent. to 12·5 per cent.

We explained that 81 per cent. of the current year's GRE was related to population and that, in contrast with an increase in population of 0·6 per cent. in England and Wales between 1976 and 1984, Gateshead's population fell by 6 per cent. Therefore, the distribution of resources on a pounds per head basis, implying that an authority can shed its costs in direct proportion to the fall in population, is grossly disadvantageous to Gateshead and is further aggravated by the comparatively rural nature of much of the borough. Hence, the council has lost about £8 million on GRE at current prices between 1981 and 1986, and it is estimated that that will increase to £11 million by 1990.

*[Mr. Clelland]*

Like many authorities, the council has endeavoured to minimise the effects of grant penalties on the ratepayers by the use of special accounting arrangements and funds to the best advantage. However, it is likely that such funds will be exhausted in the current year, further aggravating the comparison of expenditure to GRE.

Again, it was a change in practice by the Secretary of State, not by the authority, that put the council in a so-called overspending position. While, for instance, expenditure over GRE on the council's 1984-85 outturn amounted to to 9 per cent., expenditure over target, which was also set by Ministers and was used as a measurement of expenditure until 1985-86, was only 1 per cent. Surely, it is grossly unfair that the council should now be accused of being a high spender under one set of criteria, while under the other criteria, it would not have been.

All of that comes at a time when the Government are encouraging the council to spend money in certain directions. The Government initiated an enterprise zone, for example, the initial success of which has been in no small part due to the co-operation and participation of the council. There is also the inner area partnership that I mentioned earlier, which not only costs the council over £2 million per year, but adds to the strain on its finances as the projects reach the end of their period of Government support and have to be fully funded by the authority. The 1990 national garden festival, which will be held in the borough and which the Government approved will add further financial burdens, as the Secretary of State is well aware. There is also inflation at 6 per cent., which was allowed on 1985-86 budgets, not current budgets, so the adjusted figure represents a mere 3 per cent.

The considerable improvements in services, environment and status in the borough have been widely acknowledged. Various Audit Commission reports have demonstrated that Gateshead is an efficient authority. Indeed, at this very time, the council's plans for a review of the provision of secondary education in the light of falling school rolls is in the hands of the Secretary of State for Education and Science. Unfortunately, that is being delayed because of a judicial review of the council's consultation process by a group of parents pursuing what I believe to be a misguided and parochial motive. However, in the meantime, the council is subject to considerable grant penalty, as a result of the effects on GRE of falling school rolls, and the prospect of a much improved education system for Gateshead's young people is, of course, postponed.

As the council said to the Secretary of State for the Environment, the current regime of local government finance militates against effective long-term planning and takes no account of the many complexities inherent in local government service provision. That statement is true of the current system and will remain true if the Bill is passed.

At our meeting with the Secretary of State, we explained that the proposed expenditure level of £96 million implied cuts in the council's 1987-88 budget of £15 million, which would have had a horrendous effect on the budget. However, because of the criteria involved in the redetermination applications, the council applied for an increase in the proposed expenditure level of £10·5 million. We explained that the proposed expenditure limit had been underestimated by over £9 million because proper account had not been taken of the special accounting arrangements adopted by the late Tyne and Wear county council in its 1985-86 budget. All that, and more, was submitted in evidence of the council's just and proper case for a redetermined expenditure level.

**Mr. Bernard Conlan** (Gateshead, East): At that meeting with the Secretary of State, there was a great deal of hypocrisy. Although we put the council's case, it had already been decided that there was no validity in it because the introduction of the Bill had been predetermined.

**Mr. Clelland:** I could not agree more with my hon. Friend. The representations that we made to the Secretary of State on 24 November fell on deaf ears, because the right hon. Gentleman was aware when he spoke to us that the Bill was being prepared, and our representations came to naught.

Now that the Bill is before us, we find that all the newly rate-capped authorities — regardless of whether they applied for redetermination, the arguments and explanations, the individual circumstances, needs, demands and developments of the different areas — have been subjected to the same formula and given the same treatment. As a result, Gateshead's expenditure level, as proposed in the Bill, will be £98 million, leaving the council still £12·5 million short of its budget and £8 million short of its redetermination application.

Gateshead's position has now been compromised, not on the merits of its case, but because the Secretary of State had to avoid his Bill becoming hybrid. The only way that he could do that was to treat all the rate-capped authorities in the same way, regardless of their merits. That means that Gateshead, with the lowest average weekly rates of rate-capped authorities, excluding the non-metropolitan districts, has to reduce its rates while other authorities with far higher average rates are allowed to increase rates. What nonsense that is.

Let me take an example, in which there is by no means any implied criticism of the authority concerned. Indeed, I am well aware that the Bill has serious implications for that council also. Just to show how barmy the system proposed is, let me compare North Tyneside metropolitan borough council with Gateshead metropolitan borough council. At the moment North Tyneside's rates are within about 5p in the pound of Gateshead's. Gateshead's current rates are 251·25p in the pound and North Tyneside's are about 247p. Yet, under the Bill, North Tyneside will be allowed to increase its rates to around 266p in the pound and Gateshead will have to reduce its rates to about 228p in the pound. Thus, instead of Gateshead being 5p more than North Tyneside, the latter's rates will be 28p ahead of Gatehead's. Where is the sense or reason in a Bill that creates such a situation?

The purpose of amendment No. 193 is in some measure to retrieve the situation, but by no means to the total of the £12·5 million that Gateshead is set to lose. I recognise that the Secretary of State would be unlikely to accede to that. If the prime intention of the rate-capping legislation is to prevent large increases in rates, that is one thing. The amendment takes account of that and recognises that the Government will not be moved from that position. But what it does is to prevent the nonsensical forcing of reductions in rates on councils that are by no means profligate and it at least protects their rate income in real terms. I hope that the Secretary of State will concede the arguments that I have advanced on Gateshead's behalf and accept the amendment.

**Dr. Boyson:** As I have said on previous amendments, rate capping applies to the authorities that have the highest GRE in order to bring them under control. The fact that we have had to do it in the Bill this year has meant that they have had to be put into two groups—those that have been rate-capped before and those that are rate-capped for the first time.

We cannot accept the amendments. Gateshead is spending 14 per cent. over GRE, and total expenditure has increased by 11 per cent. since 1985-86. The local rates in Gateshead are now 27 per cent. higher than they were in 1985-86, and no attempt has been made, by competitive tendering or in any other way, to reduce the cost of those services.

**Mr. Clelland:** Is the Minister saying that every authority in Britain whose expenditure has increased by 11 per cent. over that period has been rate-capped?

**Dr. Boyson:** No. My right hon. Friend was not saying that; he was illustrating the increase in expenditure. The hon. Gentleman put forward an articulate argument as to what consideration should be given to Gateshead; I was quoting the figures as they exist. The question related to the level of expenditure over GRE, on which the decision was made. If expenditure is 14 per cent. over GRE and local rates are up by 27 per cent. since 1985, I do not think that the country will bleed in sympathy when the borough of Gateshead is rate-capped.

The Government cannot accept the amendment. I suggest to my right hon. and hon. Friends that we should vote against the amendment if it is pressed to a Division.

*Amendment negatived.*

*Amendment made:* No. 114, in page 6, line 28, after 'lists', insert

', and the other information relating to hereditaments and rateable values.'.—*[Dr. Boyson.]*

**Mr. Roland Boyes** (Houghton and Washington): I beg to move amendment No. 116, in page 6, line 30, at end add—

'*(d)* the amount of the variable X for that authority (another component of the maximum limit)'.

**The Second Deputy Chairman:** With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 121, in schedule 2, page 11, line 39, at end insert—

'+ X'.

No. 123, in schedule 2, page 11, line 45, at end insert—

'+ X'

No. 124, in schedule 2, page 12, line 3, at end insert—

'+ X'

No. 125, in schedule 2, page 12, line 7, at end insert—

'+ X'

No. 128, in schedule 2, page 12, line 12, at end insert—

'+ X'

No. 131, in schedule 2, page 12, line 16, at end insert—

'+ X'

No. 136, in schedule 2, page 12, line 45, at end insert—

'(6A) "X" is the variable amount for each authority (which shall be not less than zero) which the Secretary of State shall determine for that authority having regard to its individual circumstances.

(6B) A determination under this sub-paragraph shall have regard to any factor relating to the expenditure of a local authority or its financing which is drawn to the attention of the Secretary of State by the local authority or its statutory consultees.

(6C) A determination under this sub-paragraph may be revised upwards not downwards.

**Mr. Boyes:** With permission, I should also like to discuss amendment No. 132, in schedule 2, page 12, leave out lines 19 to 21 and insert—

'(1) EL is:—

*(a)* In the case of an authority whose maximum limit is determined by reference to paragraph 2(2) above, the higher of

(*i*) The level for the authority's total expenditure in the relevant financial year which before the passing of this Act was determined and notified to the authority under section 3(1) and (3) of the 1984 Act.

or

(*ii*) its GRE for the financial year 1987-88 plus 10 per cent.

Where GRE is the amount shown as the grant related expenditure in relation to the authority in the Rate Support Grant Report for England for the financial year beginning in 1987.

*(b)* In the case of all other designated authorities the level for the authority's total expenditure in the relevant financial year which before the passing of this Act was determined and notified to the authority under Section 3(1) and (3) of the 1984 Act,

Due to my mathematical and statistical background I shall be happier discussing the algebraic formulae in schedule 2 than some of the highly technical legal implications of the Bill. I shall make a few remarks on the formulae.

Anyone who has worked regularly with mathematical formulae will have recognised the flaw, or perhaps the deliberate omission of an important variable in the formulae in schedule 2. As the formulae stand, with the variable X which we propose, any reader would assume that the environments to which the formulae were being applied were all the same. Clearly they are not, and therefore variable X must be added. The addition of this variable does not make the situation satisfactory, but it is a big advance on the present formulae. One wishes to keep the algebra to a minimum. However, to take the many differences between the authorities into consideration, a much more advanced model is needed.

10.45 pm

We define the variable X in amendment No. 136. Basically, it is the amount, which is different for each authority, which has to be added to their formulae in schedule 2. The additional figure shall be determined by the Secretary of State either by agreement with local authorities or in an order subject to the approval of both Houses, but shall only be so determined after consideration of any relevant matter brought to his attention by the authority concerned.

The formulae in the Bill would, therefore, serve as a working basis for discussion and further consideration, The amendments would operate within the overall framework of the Bill but have the following features. First, they would prevent the blanket application of formulae regardless of local need. Secondly, they would substitute a proper opportunity for Parliament to reach a decision on the limits to be applied after the full details of a particular case are known, not before. Thirdly, they would give a proper right to be heard to statutory consultees, such as local ratepayers and businesses. Fourthly, they would allow authorities to make proper representations on the effects of the formulae on balances and proper financing arrangements. There is no reason why that procedure should be a lengthy one.

*[Mr. Boyes]*

The amendments provide in particular that regard should be had by the Secretary of State to any representations from statutory consultees and to representations on, first, the practicality of meeting his proposed spending restrictions within the very short time scale before the beginning of the new financial year, and, secondly, the need for proper and prudent local authority financing in the maintenance of balances, contingencies, and so on.

The point on restricted time scale is of particular relevance to those boroughs and districts which are education authorities, such as the one of which my constituency is a part, Sunderland borough, and to the ILEA. The September-July basis of a school year means that the opportunity to change spending levels is not available for a full financial year. I have discussed that matter with the treasurer of the Sunderland borough council and that matter concerns him greatly.

Decisions relating to the period 1987-88 up to September have in many cases already been taken. Only two thirds of the year is available to such authorities to match their plans to spending restrictions, and those authorities may wish to make representations in that regard.

I want to illustrate the consequences of applying the formulae in schedule 2 to the Tyne and Wear passenger transport authority without the addition of the variable X. The members of the passenger transport authority are extremely concerned about the Bill's implications and the formulae in particular. In a letter to Members of Parliament, Mr. G. N. Cook, the clerk to the passenger transport authority, argues that the use of the standard formulae for the assessment of maximum precepts for classes of authorities means that the particular merits of any individual authority's redetermination bid has been given little consideration.

For example, the 2 per cent. standard uplift for the expenditure limits of passenger transport authorities is significantly lower than the redetermination bids of the five passenger transport authorities that made the redetermination bids. Those vary between 10 per cent. and 22 per cent.

The Tyne and Wear passenger transport authority expresses particular concern about the expected loss of its right of appeal against the maximum precept set of 1987-88 which currently exists under the terms of the Rates Act 1984. Further, the Government's use of rateable value in the formulae rather than the penny rate product for calculating the maximum precept for 1987-88 means that the Tyne and Wear passenger transport authority will be faced with a significant shortfall of some £389,000 between the uplifted expenditure limit and the resources of block grant and income based on the maximum precept.

It is for all those reasons that Opposition Members, and, in general, those who have to administer its consequences, are against the Bill.

**Mr. Spearing:** I am grateful to you, Sir Paul, for calling me, because amendment No. 132 applies in particular to the needs of the London borough of Newham. I use the word "needs" specifically because, under the previous formula—"means and needs"—there was more equity in respect of formulae. The formula in schedule 2 particularly hits the London borough of Newham.

The needs of Newham are very great. On a national level, Newham is the second most deprived urban borough in the country. Among 96 education authorities, it is the top of the list of the most deprived according to the Government's figures. As everyone knows, education accounts for half of local authority expenditure. Newham is fourth in respect of the proportion of population with a new Commonwealth background. There is 17·5 per cent. unemployment and 21 per cent. male unemployment in Newham and that is the sixth highest level in London.

The borough applied for partnership status and was recognised as being statistically well inside the required margin, but for a number of years it has been refused that status. Although the borough has been given programme status, I understand from the council that that has meant that we have received less support than we would have received had we not been a programmed borough.

In respect of housing, no fewer than 46,000 houses in Newham are in an unsatisfactory state of repair. Newham has the highest number of statutory unfit houses among the London boroughs. Homeless cases increased from 1,000 in 1981 to an estimated 1,900 in 1987, and that figure is rising. There are 1,000 empty dwellings in tower blocks, including the now dismantled Ronan Point, which have caused the housing lists applications and the number of homeless cases to rise. The results of the scientific tests on the eight blocks that remain will not be known for some time.

Newham has one third of its area under the domain of the London Docklands Development Corporation although 94 per cent. of the population live outside that area. However, the criterion for regeneration adopted by the LDDC is not that of regenerating the borough as a whole. It is a process of regeneration along the lines of the LDDC and we therefore do not get any succour in that direction. Indeed, there is more expenditure in the borough on the services to cater for the number of people coming into that new area.

There is a legitimate argument therefore over how much is to be spent. There were exchanges earlier between the Minister and my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) about what would be an appropriate figure to spend. The Minister takes exception to the £167 million in the current Newham revenue account. The Government said that Newham should only spend £149 million in relation to its needs. We were therefore short of £18 million. However, as the Minister knows, but as many people in London do not, that meant that in order to get the £18 million Newham would have to raise about £36 million because of the clawback.

When the Minister says that the rates are too high, he must acknowledge that part of the reason is that to get that money in, the borough is, in effect, paying a tax on rates. By my calculations and those of the borough, the tax on rates in the current year is no less than £18 million. Ratepayers are paying £18 million more than they need because of the clawback provision. That amounts to about 20 per cent. of the rate itself. When the Minister says that Newham is spending too much on the rates, part of the reason for that lies in the clawback provision — the taxation on rates — which is part of the Government's present proposals.

I do not wish to be too controversial about what is coming next. Although I detest what the Minister did until that point, I wish to discuss the position after the publication of the Bill. We came to see him on 27 November and put forward a clear, cool and compelling case. I hope that the rest of my speech will be in a similar vein. We did the same with the Under-Secretary of State when he saw him the day after the Bill was published. We did not talk about the Bill on that occasion; we talked about Newham's needs and how the Government would meet them.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** It did not get us anywhere.

**Mr. Spearing:** The problem with the schedule 2 formula is that it is unfair. Like all formalae, it has a fixed base. This formula is based upon expenditure in 1985-86, which we claim was not typical. It is unfair to use it because it distorts the calculations. Full details have been supplied by the officers of Newham to the Department of the Environment, and it is generally accepted—it was in the conversations that I mentioned — that the formula distorts the result.

**Mr. Ron Leighton** (Newham, North-East): Does my hon. Friend agree that the common formula which was cobbled together in haste to rescue the Government from a legal fiasco is freakishly harsh on Newham and has led to grotesque consequences? Normally, we would have the right of appeal and the right to redetermination, which we attempted to exercise with the Minister of State. But because of the Government's haste, we shall not be allowed to appeal or have a redetermination. Indeed, we cannot even have a proper debate tonight. It will be truncated by the guillotine, and Newham's needs will not be properly considered. Does my hon. Friend agree that this is another reason for their Lordships giving careful consideration to the borough of Newham?

**Mr. Spearing:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I hope that what the Minister says in reply will give us some inkling that there might be further discussion on the facts that I shall put before him. My hon. Friend mentioned the importance of judicial retrospective action. As I understand it, the Bill locks everything up in the words "taking into account". We must accept that the Minister has taken something into account if he says so, and no court can challenge it. In contrast with redetermination, once the Minister says that he has taken something into account, that is that. Once he sends a letter to the court saying that, the court can do nothing. Until now, there has been at least some flexibility.

Another thing that is agreed is the table that was produced by the London borough of Newham and presented to the Minister during the Second Reading debate, on which he kindly replied in a letter to me on 19 January. In the table, we showed in order, from the most advantageous position in Basildon to the most disadvantageous in Newham, the limits of expenditure over GRE. Taking into account the plus 2 per cent., but not the teachers' uplift, which we are all discounting, we showed that Newham's expenditure limit was only 3·6 per cent. above GRE. That was pretty ludicrous considering that our expenditure in the current year is 18 per cent. above GRE. Yet Basildon, which is not far away from Newham, has an expenditure limit of 70 per cent. over GRE. Tower Hamlets stands at 19·3 per cent. and Haringey stands at 17 per cent.

The Minister in his letter, for which I thank him for his courtesy, said:

> "You asked whether the table of figures given to Nicholas Ridley on Monday showing expenditure levels in relation to grant related expenditure for each of the 20 rate limited authorities is broadly correct. It is, but the extent to which the expenditure level for 1987-88 exceeds GRE is related to the starting position in 1986-87."

Of course it is correct, because that is part of the formula. When people use the word "but" it sounds as if it is a restricting or qualifying phrase but, in this case, the skill of the Sir Humphreys in the Department have added something which is an uncontrovertible fact, so it is not as heady as it sounds.

11 pm

The formula has hit Newham hard for reasons that the Minister knows and I suggest that, in justice and even to fulfil his own objectives, there should be some adjustment in the formula to enable hard cases like ours to increase our GRE to somewhere around — I put this in the amendment—10 per cent. That would only bring us up to about 14th in this pecking order of one to 20. It would not fulfil Newham's concerns because, on our calculation, we will need about another £33 million in the coming year to make up the gap.

I said in a letter to the Minister that, on the borough's calculations, we would have a deficit or an unfillable gap of £33 million in the financial year 1987-88 or 15 per cent. of the borough's current expenditure. The Minister says that is not the case. He says that it will not be as big a gap as that. He says that it will be only a 5·8 per cent. reduction of the current 1986-87 expenditure.

I put it to the Minister that a 5·8 per cent. reduction next year on this year's expenditure—bearing in mind first of all inflation and secondly greater needs, not least in respect of the homeless and other difficulties—means that there will be a considerable gap next year.

We may argue whether it is £33 million, as I and the borough think, or whether it is rather less, as the Minister thinks, but I put it to him that, in terms of actual cash expenditure, it cannot be much less than £20 million. If that is the case—I am coming down a long way from £33 million to £20 million—that means that the pro rata reduction in expenditure on each service within the borough will be great indeed. Education, as I said, takes up half the revenue, so there will be a cut of roughly £6 million from somewhere in that — £2·5 million for housing, perhaps £2 million for social services. These are not hard figures; they are pro rata to existing expenditure. Of course that is only illustrative, but it is illustrative of the almost sheer impossibility of achieving these figures. The Minister knows only too well, especially in respect of education, that one cannot do that if one tries it mathematically with redundancy payments and all the rest of it.

What about the voluntary services which Conservative Members praise and laud? We do a lot for voluntary services in Newham. It is not much in terms of expenditure in proportion to the total; nor indeed are the activities to which Conservative Members may take some exception. They are minor in terms of the global total, but if one must cut money and there is no way out, then of course it is those very important things, the oil in the social structure, which can be cut and which come first and cause the sort of social damage that the Minister knows will occur in our multiracial community.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** My hon. Friend well knows that the figure that Newham spends in terms of the voluntary

*[Mr. Tony Banks]*

sector is about £5 million. The impact of the services and the community of Newham of wiping out the voluntary sector in one go, which will have to be done because that is the only obvious area to go to immediately, would be absolutely dire. Would my hon. Friend care to comment on that?

**Mr. Spearing:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that figure, because it illustrates the problem of boroughs like Newham. If there is a legal straitjacket, a procrustean formula into which the borough is forced without any legal redress or any redress in justice whatsoever, and we go to the court, the court may say that there is no contractual relationship for those culpable things. There may be no liability for redundancy: there may be no redundancy agreements or whatever because the voluntary organisations are the last sort of organisations to be able to carry those. Where do they get the money anyway? There must be some flexibility in the formula in schedule 2.

I and my hon. Friends have tabled a flexible formula in the form of amendment No. 132. It stands almost in its own right — I am glad to see the Minister nodding — although it may not be a perfect legal formula. Some consequential adjustment may be required to the definition of block grant. As block grant is related to expenditure limits, if we change those limits in the formula, some adjustment must be made to block grant.

The amendment had to be tabled some time ago, which is an example of the difficulties being caused by the time scale of the Bill. Therefore, we are not saying that this, holus bolus, is the formula that we want. We have drafted an alternative formula that would, at least, give a GREA for the financial year 1987-88 plus 10 per cent.

The table that the Minister kindly said was broadly correct would move Newham from GREA plus 3·7 per cent. to GREA plus 10 per cent. That is a modest request, although the Minister might not think so and may wish to substitute another figure. However, in principle there is an unassailable case for amendment No. 132. It does not move away from the formula; all it does — to use a phrase common in ministerial circles — is to state "whichever is the greater". One can follow one formula or another, but whichever is the greater and the more just is the one that is accepted. That is the basis of the structure of this rather complex amendment.

The Minister may want to think about that suggestion. He has not had a great deal of time to consider the amendments, because of all the other things that have happened. I ask you, Mr. Armstrong, to give us the opportunity to agree or negative the amendment should that be necessary. However, I hope that the Minister will agree to consider the matter and, at a later stage in another place, give his thoughts to others who will take up this theme. If he agreed to that, we might not then need to press the amendment.

**Mr. Bowen Wells** (Hertford and Stortford): I congratulate the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) on the way in which he so eloquently put his case for an increase in GREA. No one in my constituency denies the very real needs they perceive in Newham. However, I suggest that they are not related to the GREA. If they are, it means that Hertfordshire has to pay to Newham the additional money that Newham believes it needs. The rate support grant system is a total grant that is distributed according to GREA, or however it is distorted by whatever means Ministers find convenient to hand when they are considering it.

**Mr. Stuart Holland** (Vauxhall): Surely there is a limited premise here — the assumption that increased expenditure in one borough must come from another borough. Why does not the hon. Gentleman press the Government Front Bench to do something about effective corporation tax and actually get some tax into the Exchequer from companies that are making thousands of millions pounds, or put a tax on the speculative profits made in the City of London? Then we would get that recycled into housing, health, education and social services, which the country desperately needs. The hon. Gentleman should be attacking the Government Front Bench and not seeking to restrain expenditure in other boroughs.

**Mr. Wells:** The hon. Gentleman is advancing arguments that I shall not take up, if he will excuse me. I want to make a limited contribution on GREA and the unfairness that the system inflicts on Newham, Vauxhall and Hertfordshire.

Hertfordshire has had a continuous reduction in its rate support grant settlement. That is because the system equates rateable value with low needs or high needs, whatever the case may be. Hertfordshire has seen a series of new towns and other developments, and these have come mainly since 1945. Thus it has a high rateable value and is assumed to have low needs. The system is so distorted that, although Hertfordshire is considered to have low needs—its income over the national average is only 13 per cent. — the way in which the RSG system and GREA work mean that it is considered to have an income that is 45 per cent. over the national needs calculation.

In this year's settlement my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Minister of State inserted certain safeguards such as rate caps and safety nets. My right hon. Friend and my hon. Friend did not want to do that, but they did so because they recognised the unfairness that was being inflicted upon Hertfordshire, which was reflected in the services given to Hertfordshire people.

Like my hon. Friend the Member for Hertfordshire, South-West (Mr. Page), who made his plea on Second Reading, as I did, I have urged that an end should be brought to the current argument, which if not interrupted will continue indefinitely, as the hon. Member for Newham, South has illustrated. Let us freeze the present system so that it is not changed next year or the year after that, until we inyroduce a new system that will not have the serious implications that the GREA formula has for Newham, South and the new town of Basildon, for example. The hon. Member for Newham, South will know that the new towns have a particular problem when it comes to GREA because they are more expensive to run than other towns. For example, Stevenage has no rate support grant because of the way in which it impacts upon that town and Hertfordshire generally. Basildon is a similar example.

The GREA and the entire system of calculating RSG is thoroughly unfair to Newham, South and Hertfordshire. Having arrived at a settlement this year, my hon. Friend the Minister of State has striven over this issue and I am deeply grateful to him for taking into account my complaints and those of others, courteously, if not productively, including those of the hon. Member for Newham, South. I ask him for an assurance that he will leave the system alone. Let us freeze it with the rate caps and the safety nets that have been introduced this year. That means that it will be equally unfair next year as this to Newham, South and Hertfordshire, but at least we shall not have the appalling arguments and tensions that we have had this year and for the past 15 years. We have argued picayune points about the way in which the system impacts upon various factors in the RSG formula.

I earnestly ask my hon. Friend the Minister to give serious consideration to my plea. Let us leave the grant in Hertfordshire as it is so that people can predict what will happen. We may have a system that is unfair, but let us make it clear that that system will not change and that people must live with it until we introduce something better. If things continue to change Hertfordshire will probably not receive any RSG assistance, especially if the Minister listens to the arguments advanced by the hon. Member for Newham, South.

11.15 pm

**Mr. Stuart Holland:** I support this group of amendments and I draw particular attention to amendment No. 136 in schedule 2, page 12, line 45, at end insert—

> '(6A) "X" is the variable amount for each authority (which shall be not less than zero) which the Secretary of State shall determine for that authority having regard to its individual circumstances'.

I also wish to echo the views of my hon. Friends and to draw attention to the problems and deprivations in Lambeth. In a key range of indicators only one other authority in the country, Hackney, has a higher incidence of deprivation than Lambeth. In five of the eight indicators used by the Department of Environment Lambeth comes in the top dozen authorities. With regard to the indicators that directly relate to housing deprivation, Lambeth ranks ninth in the indicator on overcrowded households and eleventh in the indicator of households that lack the exclusive use of amenities. It ranks second highest for the proportion of one-parent families and is sixth in the indicator relating to the proportion of the ethnic population in local authorities.

The widespread nature of urban deprivation in Lambeth causes great concern. The council needs to adopt a wider base of programmes and policies even to begin to alleviate its problems. The ending of the strategic housing role of the Greater London council has meant slamming the door on inner boroughs such as Lambeth. Families cannot now be moved out of the borough. Thus it is increasingly difficult for the council to deal with the housing crisis.

There has been much criticism about housing benefit from the Conservative Benches. The hon. Member for Streatham (Mr. Shelton) made certain allegations about the difficulties that Lambeth has in collecting rents, earlier in the debate but has now decided to quit the Chamber.

It is extremely difficult for a borough such as Lambeth to collect rents from certain categories of people who are on the margins of survival. For example a recent survey carried out in Lambeth in 1986 showed that over 40 per cent. of the residents have an income of less than £5,200 a year and two thirds of those people were in council housing. When such families face delays in payments in security benefits — there is a backlog of some 13,000 unrelated claims in at last two social security offices in my constituency — they are literally faced with having to decide whether to feed their children or pay their rent.

The Government have failed to put resources into social services and they have also cut the housing investment programme for Lambeth in the manner that I illustrated earlier today. When 40 per cent. of council tenants are in receipt of housing benefit and therefore supplementary benefit it represents a major problem for the borough. It is compounded by the fact—I do not believe that it has been stressed in the debate so far—that 36 statutory instruments have been introduced by the Government that affect the payment of housing benefit. There were nine in 1982, eight in 1983, 10 in 1984, six in 1985 and three in 1986.

It is virtually impossible for any local authority to undertake computerisation or other programmes to ensure an effective payment of housing benefit when there are so many changes in regulations introduced by the Government. Housing benefit has been thrown on to councils. Previously rent rebates were paid by the social security offices. But with the soaring rate of unemployment, now averaging 25 per cent. In my constituency, the Government have shifted the responsibility for those payments from the DHSS to the local boroughs. They cannot cope with the complexities.

I have one further reservation. The X formula is excellent in principle, but I am not sure how it will be applied in practice under the Government. I suspect that they will think of a number, divide it by two, subtract X and still impose cuts on Labour boroughs. But we could make X an effective calculation I therefore support the amendments.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I represent a Lambeth seat, and Lambeth is a rate-capped borough. The one small measure of mercy for us is the ability to have our expenditure limit redetermined, and rightly so. In December 1985, as a result of the borough taking legal proceedings against the Department of the Environment, an approach was made by the Department to Lambeth, and eventually there was an agreed redetermination, to avoid a court case, which came to almost exactly the same figure as the expenditure limits suggested by the borough for that financial year. In the current financial year, the Department threw out some pretty broad hints that if Lambeth applied for a limited redetermination, it would be given a redefined expenditure limit. The consequence of the Bill is that the opportunity for the Department to admit that it was wrong in setting the limit will be thrown away.

Redetermination means an admission that the limit was set too low. I wish that we could find a more simple vocabulary for local government expressions. I used to sit in on the finance consultative council and listen to it talk about things such as regression annalysis, which I translated as repeating in the future the mistakes that had been made in the past. There was exemplification, which was a method of showing how a national disaster was translated into a local disaster. Now there is redetermination, which is a method of admitting that the initial calculation was wrong.

There must be the opportunity to go back, which the Bill denies, and take into account local and special factors. One or two of these factors need to be accounted for. The first is the growth in equalising. A recent survey carried out

*[Mr. John Fraser]*

by an independent body, the Centre for Environmental Studies, shows that between 1979 and 1984, the average income of families in Lambeth decreased by 5 per cent., whereas in the country as a whole incomes rose by 4 per cent. before tax and about 1 per cent. after tax.

However, the survey also shows something that is at the root of social tensions—that the average is not shared by all people. It found that since 1979, the poorest 25 per cent. of households experienced a 10 per cent. decline in their income before tax. The group with the largest drop in income—single parent family households—experienced a drop in income both before and after tax of between 17 and 18 per cent. One cannot make judgments about the extent of need in such communities on the basis of a desiccated calculating machine in Marsham street. I know that Visa used to advertise that it took the waiting out of wanting. The Department of the Environment, with its computer and formulae and algebra in schedule 2, is taking the caring out of calculating. We want the X factor, which puts it back in again.

A second example of what needs to be taken into account is the level of unemployment. Today, Lambeth has provided me with figures that show that on the official statistics there is almost 26 per cent male unemployment, and over 13 per cent. female unemployment. Those are the statistics from the Department of Employment. However, the unofficial, and probably more reliable, statistics provided by Lambeth show male unemployment at 30 per cent. and female unemployment at 17 per cent. In the riot epicentre of Brixton unemployment is 32 per cent. The formulae fail to take into account the social strains that result from that degree of deprivation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) and I are lucky enough to be so close to our constituencies that we can visit them during the course of debates. I was able to attend the opening of a social centre by Lord Scarman. That centre was opened partly as a result of Lord Scarman's 1981 inquiry report. The Scarman report was about what happens when a Government ignore the needs of ordinary people. On two occasions in Brixton we have seen the consequences of ignoring the needs and demands of ordinary working people. I hope that the Government will accept factor X, because it can put caring back into calculating.

**Mr. George Park** (Coventry, North-East): The introduction of an X factor into the formula would allow the different situations of the various transport authorities to be taken into account. Put briefly, in the west midlands there is a shortfall of £4·5 million. That poses for the public transport authorities some unpalatable choices. One of them is to reconsider the concessionary fare scheme, and that would be highly unpopular as well as unjust.

Section 93 of the Transport Act 1985 allows district councils to fund a concessionary travel scheme. Responsibility could be shifted from the public transport authority to the district councils. Unfortunately, every district in the west midlands will be in a penalty situation in 1987-88 with a negative marginal rate for grant ranging from minus 54p in Coventry to minus 96p in Birmingham for spending below threshold. Therefore, unless there is a degree of flexibility, which the application of an X factor would allow, some of our forebodings about schemes, such as concessionary fares, are likely to come true. For that reason, the amendment should be supported by all hon. Members.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** I shall be brief. The formula laid down for the rate support grant will have devastating effects on many local authorities. Looking at the amount allowed for assistance to local government to cover claims under the Housing Defects Act 1984 — the miserly sum of £50 million this financial year and £14 million next financial year — we see that the formula is tight. Many local authorities will not attract grant. Many authorities like the Wakefield metropolitan council in my area, will find themselves unable to meet their statutory obligations. On the one hand, the Governent produce an Act to cover people in defective houses and, on the other hand, do not provide the money to enable local authorities to meet their statutory obligations.

Tenants on the Townville estate in Castleford, owned by British Coal, are in defective houses. An improvement scheme has been accepted by the Secretary of State, but the local authority cannot find the money to meet that obligation. The owners cannot purchase the houses in accordance with the Act, nor can they get them improved. The houses are completely blighted and unsaleable. What will the Minister do to assist local authorities in situations like that? The Government have produced the Act, but they cannot possibly expect local government to fulfil its statutory obligations if they do not assist with grants. The only course open to the owners is to go the courts and take on the local authorities, but the local authorities are not guilty.

11.30 pm

**Mr. Tony Banks:** I should like to speak in support of amendment No. 132 in the name of the three Newham Members.

In an earlier debate the Minister talked about the level of rates in Newham. As a Newham ratepayer, I can assure the Minster that I do not like paying such heavy rates. However, I know why I have to pay those rates even though I do not particularly welcome them.

The Minster mentioned the problems attached to rent arrears and the fact that rents have not gone up as fast as he felt they should in the borough of Newham. I should remind the Minister of a recent survey of residents in the borough which showed that in 1985 only 13 per cent. of Newham's residents had gross household incomes in excess of £13,000. In terms of our council housing 63 per cent. of all households receive housing benefit. In the private sector, 29 per cent. of all households receive housing benefit. That is the scale of the poverty in the London borough of Newham. It is not surprising that people get themselves into problems with rent arrears. That is why it is ludicrous for us to continue pushing up the rents in Newham when we know that the people in the borough will not be able to afford them. The problems will shift to another area because more and more will be claiming housing benefit.

Newham is being told that in 1987-88 it can spend £157·4 million. That is £37 million less than we need and £10 million less than the borough is spending during the current year. It is impossible for the London borough of Newham to make cuts of the order of £10 million. I cannot believe that the Government seriously expect the borough to make such cuts knowing the problems and poverty there. If they are expecting us to do that, they have no heart, no compassion and no decency. That is a telling indictment of the Government.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope):** Before I answer the points that have been made on this group of amendments I should say something in response to a matter raised earlier by the right hon. Member for Wakefield (Mr. Harrison) about the residuary bodies and on the point he raised at an earlier stage in the proceedings of the Committee when I suggested that the Opposition were reluctant to divide on their amendments for fear that they did not have all their troops in place. The Division that followed that suggestion proved that is always wise not to underestimate the ability of the Opposition Whips to rally their forces in such circumstances. Although we have had the better of the Opposition in the Divisions, and I have no doubt that we have won the arguments, if I did cast a slur on the determination of the Opposition and their Whips I did not intend to do so and I am happy to confirm that I withdraw any slur that the right hon. Member for Wakefield thought that I had cast.

**Mr. Harrison:** I thank the Minister for giving way. I have had to wait a long time, five days, and four hours, but it has been worth it. I was dismayed at the time because, as an ex-Chief Whip — I was given that acknowledgement by the Minister — I knew that our troops were around. I knew that our amendments were worthy of consideration and I knew that we were doing what we have always done, which is follow a code of conduct that exists in this place because of this type of Bill, with all its problems. Our Front Bench spokesmen were marvellous as were our Whips. I did not like it, but they consulted the Government Whips and the Bill was proceeding beautiful. The Minister gummed it up. I am pleased that he has had the guts to come to the Dispatch Box and, although they are belated, I accept his apologies.

Shall I tell the Committee something about the Whips? I am the guy who can. I shall not be long, Mr. Armstrong. Just a little indulgence. You know that I do not do it much. Our Whips whipped against me better than they whipped against the Government. Quite unsolicited, I had 171 who supported me. That was without consulting anyone. It was great; I had done the right thing. When the Wapping picket took place on our Lobby, however, only 10 came through. I was told that it was better than Wapping. Our Whips whipped better for the Government than they whipped for me. I had only 10.

I appreciate the Minister coming to the Dispatch Box. It is a little lesson that we can all learn. I am very pleased that the Minister has had the guts to do it, although it has taken a little time. I thank him very much.

**Mr. Chope:** I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman. I have a lot to learn about the whipping system, compared with the right hon. Gentleman.

The residuary bodies have an administrative task. If the right hon. Gentleman wants to write to the chairman of a residuary body, I am sure that he can expect a speedy answer.

**Mr. Harrison:** I have done all that.

**Mr. Chope:** The hon. Members for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) and for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), who are strong advocates of their borough, argued in favour of amendment No. 132. I have listened to the arguments, but I am not persuaded that we should accept the amendment. I shall not explain again the process by which the formulae were derived as it is now well known. Representations that the hon. Gentlemen and local representatives made when they met my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government were not ignored. They may not like the result of our consideration, but we considered all that they had to say.

It is true that Newham gets less grant than if it spends at a lower level, but it is wrong to see that as a tax on rates. It is the direct consequence of the council's decision to spend up. We have constructed the settlements in this way to keep pressure on high spending authorities. My hon. Friend the Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) put his finger on the point. We could make further concessions to high-spending authorities only at the expense, under the present grant distribution system, of authorities such as Hertfordshire. Newham is spending 18 per cent. above its GRE while Hertfordshire is spending only 2·2 per cent. above its GRE this year.

**Mr. Spearing:** I am grateful to the Minister for giving way. Will he say now, or later if he does not have time now, which of the facts that I presented are incorrect or, if they are correct, where he departs from their logic so as to enable him not to accept the amendment? He said that we are spending 18 per cent. above GRE, but does he think that that justifies a cut to 3·7 per cent above GRE, especially when his penalising clauses of clawback operate only when we get to 10 per cent.?

**Mr. Chope:** I do not think that I have time to go into all of the facts about Newham. I am far from satisfied, however, that it is doing all that it can to help itself. A £1·5 million Manpower Services Commission scheme for the borough's long-term unemployed was turned down as cheap labour, according to the *Newham Recorder* in October 1986, although it would have provided 300 places. We hear from Labour Members about Newham, but it shows that the people and the council in Newham are not doing all that they can to help themselves. When one hears of a firm in Newham with a turnover of £3 million that is paying £500,000 a year in rates, one realises that there is a strong case for some system of rate capping.

I should like to refer briefly to the comments made by the hon. Members representing seats in Lambeth — the hon. Members for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) and for Norwood (Mr. Fraser). Lambeth is a vastly overspending authority. I am amazed that those hon. Members come to the Committee and pronounce an apologia for what has been happening in Lambeth. Later this week I hope that they will be among the first to go out and purchase copies of the Audit Commission report on what has been happening in our inner boroughs. Perhaps they will be able to get them free. I hope that they will read and inwardly digest what is said in those documents, because then they might be able to make more constructive comments about the problems of Lambeth and how the borough could do something to help itself.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall made considerable play about the housing benefit arrangements. However, I remind him of what the researcher from the Shelter Housing Aid Centre stated in June last year. Lambeth has an enormous housing benefits backlog of 64,000 unprocessed claims, 932 of which are three years old. The researcher stated:

*[Mr. Chope]*

"it's not the scheme which is at fault. Three years into the scheme you can't say that. The problem is much more to do with managerial and administrative methods".

The problem in Lambeth is a wilfulness to try to become as irresponsible and badly managed as possible.

I know that time is running short so, in the limited time available, I should like to mention the point made by the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Park), who spoke about the very real problems of defective housing. I am well aware of those problems because there are large numbers of defective houses in my constituency. However, I am bound to say that the Government have been extremely generous in bringing forward schemes for housing repairs. If a local authority can make a case for additional funds, it only has to put that case to my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction, and that will be considered. However, one of the tests will again be to what extent that local authority has done everything to help itself, from its own resources. That is one of the issues between the two sides of the Committee. I hope that it will reject the amendment.

*Amendment negatived.*

*Clause 7, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

### Schedule 2

### RATES: MAXIMUM LIMIT

*Amendment proposed:* No. 189, in page 12, line 8, leave out '1·025' and insert '1·04.'.—*[Mr. Galley.]*

*Question put,* That the amendment be made:—

*The Committee divided:* Ayes 166, Noes 232.

**Division No. 73]** **[11.45 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Haynes, Frank
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Ron Davies and
Mr. Derek Fatchett.

NOES

Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.

Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Favell, Anthony
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Howarth, Alan *(Straff'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Jackson, Robert
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclennan, Robert
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Pollock, Alexander
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Peter Lloyd and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

*Amendment proposed:* No. 135, in page 12, line 42, leave out '19th' and insert '20th'.—*[Dr. Boyson.]*

**Mr. John Fraser:** We would like some explanation as to why a Sunday has been substituted for a Saturday. The suspicion is that the Bill was published on 18 December and that one or two Tory authorities may have been helped by switching the date for the notification of information from a Saturday to a Sunday. We would be interested to know about those authorities which can manage to get some information to an unmanned Marsham street on a Sunday rather than a Saturday.

**Dr. Boyson:** We felt that the Bill was so important that we should give it the holiness of a Sunday being built into it. The better the day, the better the deed. The basis of the Bill is that local authorities should know what rates they will have to fix for 1 April. If the Bill were not enacted, we could not give rate support grant to local authorities for 1 April and that would cause uproar the length and breadth of Britain, including all Labour authorities. The rate-capped authorities now know that there can be no change. Similarly, other authorities will know what their grant should be so that they can fix their rate. Just as the good Lord rested on a Sunday, we too shall rest having done this for the good of local government through the length and breadth of Britain.

**Mr. Fraser:** We thought that it was only the chief constable of Manchester who had a message from the good Lord. We now realise that such is the state of the Department of the Environment that it has to rely upon not just temporal but divine inspiration to put together its legislation. But we do not regard that explanation as adequate. We want to know which authorities would be disadvantaged as a result of having Saturday 19 December in the Bill rather than Sunday 20 December. It is not enough simply to tell us that a kind of religious quality is now being imparted into local government legislation. That is too flippant an explanation. We want to know who gains by having Sunday instead of Saturday.

**Dr. Boyson:** When a tram first brought me to the House in 1961 there were three or four postal deliveries on a Saturday. I remember my amazement when, returning home with my children to Chingford in Essex, the area to which I had moved at that time, having been boating with them, I found that at five o'clock that afternoon there was a postal delivery. Now, if I get my post at some time on a Saturday morning I have to be grateful for it. The postmen are very nice when they come, but the deliveries are not reliable.

However, I can put the mind of the House and of the hon. Gentleman at rest, because one thing that we do know is that there is no postal delivery on a Sunday and, as far as I know, neither the Secretary of State nor I was in the Department of the Environment on that day. Nobody communicated with us on that day. If the hon.

*[Dr. Boyson]*

Gentleman thinks that there was some subterranean advantage in doing this, it just shows how suspicious he is.

The message that we must get to the country is that just as the date is a Sunday, not a Saturday, the guillotine will fall on a Monday at 12 pm and a cheer will go up the length and breadth of the country. As we pass the Bill to another place, local authorities will know where they stand on their rates and rate capping for this year with all certainty.

**Mr. Fraser:** That load of blather will not do. The Minister was asked why there was a change from a Saturday to a Sunday. We simply do not believe that kind of explanation. There must be some reason, some authority, perhaps some little favourite of the Department or the Welsh Office——

*It being Twelve O'clock,* THE FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN *proceeded, pursuant to the Order this day, to put forthwith the Question already proposed from the Chair.*

*Amendment agreed to.*

THE FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN *then proceeded successively to put forthwith the Questions necessary to bring the proceedings in Committee to a conclusion.*

*Amendments made:* No. 137, in page 12, line 47, leave out '19th' and insert '20th'.

No. 139, in page 13, line 9, leave out second 'the' and insert 'an'

No. 140, in page 13, line 10, after 'charges', insert

', or by way of provision for pay and price changes, or on school meals and milk,'.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

*Schedule 2, as amended, agreed to.*

### Clause 8

### SANCTIONS

*Amendment made:* No. 147, in page 7, line 26, at end add—

'(11) This section applies only in relation to rates for, and precepts in respect of, the financial year beginning in 1987.'. —*[Mr. Neubert.]*

*Clause 8, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

### Clause 9

### POWER OF SPECIFYING: GENERAL

*Amendments made:* No. 150, in page 7, line 29, leave out '(4), (5)' and insert '(1)'.

No. 152, in page 7, line 40, leave out '(4), (5)' and insert '(1)'.

No. 153, in page 7, line 41, leave out from 'principles' to 'all' in line 42 and insert 'to be applied to'.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

*Clause 9, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clause 10 and 11 disagreed to.*

*Clauses 12 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

### Schedule 3

### AMENDMENTS

*Amendments made:* No. 174, in page 13, line 40, at end insert—

'1A. In section 56(6) and (7) of the 1980 Act for "the total expenditure to be incurred by them during" there shall be substituted "their total expenditure in relation to".'.

No. 175, in page 13, leave out from beginning of line 41 to end of line 12 on page 14 and insert—

"*Information*

'2. The following shall be substituted for section 65 of the 1980 Act—

65. — (1) Each local authority shall submit to the Secretary of State in respect of each year, in such form and by such date as he may specify, such of the information mentioned in subsection (2) below as he may from time to time require for the purposes of this Part of this Act, section 8 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982, section 2 of the Rate Support Grants Act 1986 and sections 1 and 2 of the Local Government Finance Act 1987.

(2) The information is information as to the following matters—

*(a)* the expenditure incurred, or to be incurred, by the authority during the year,

*(b)* their relevant expenditure in relation to the year,

*(c)* their total expenditure in relation to the year, and

*(d)* their accounts for the year.

(3) The information required under subsection (1) above may include any of the following—

*(a)* what the authority calculate as the amount of expenditure incurred, or likely to be incurred, by them during the year,

*(b)* what the authority calculate as the amount, or likely amount, of their relevant expenditure in relation to the year,

*(c)* what the authority calculate as the amount, or likely amount, of their total expenditure in relation to the year,

*(d)* what the authority calculate as the amount of any addition or subtraction to be made in relation to the year by virtue of any specification under section 3(1) or (7) of the Local Government Finance Act 1987, and

*(e)* information about the items of account which are likely to be (as well as those which have been) debited or credited to the authority's accounts for the year.

(4) Where no or no sufficient information as to the matters mentioned in subsection (2) above has been submitted to the Secretary of State in respect of a year, whether under subsection (1) above or otherwise, he may for the purpose of making a supplementary report, an adjustment under section 62 above or an estimate under section 66(1) below make such assumptions as to those matters as he thinks appropriate.

(5) Where any information as to any of the matters mentioned in subsection (2) above is submitted to the Secretary of State under subsection (1) above after the date specified by him, or otherwise than under that subsection, he may for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (4) above disregard it if he considers that it is not reasonably practicable to take it into account for that purpose.'. —*[Mr. Neubert.]*

*Schedule 3, as amended, agreed to.*

### Schedule 4

### REPEALS

*Amendments made:* No. 182, in page 15, column 3, leave out line 34 and insert—

'In section 9, subsections (2) and (3)
In Schedule 2, paragraphs 3 and 9'.

No. 183, in page 15, line 38, at end insert—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| '1986 c. 54. | Rate Support Grants Act 1986. | In Schedule 1, paragraph 13'. |

*Schedule 4, as amended, agreed to.*

## Clause 13

### INTERPRETATION

*Amendment made:* No. 187, in page 9, line 25, at end insert—

'(2A) In relation to an intermediate year beginning in 1983, 1984 or 1985, "local authority" in this Part of this Act also includes the Greater London Council but does not include a joint authority.'.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

*Clause 13, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

*Clauses 14 to 17 ordered to stand part of the Bill.*

## New Clause 4

### SPECIAL PROVISIONS AS TO RATE SUPPORT GRANT

'Schedule *(Rate support grant: special provisions)* to this Act (which contains special provisions as to rate support grant) shall have effect.'.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

*Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.*

## New Schedule

### RATE SUPPORT GRANT: SPECIAL PROVISIONS

*Consultation*

1. —(1) Sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) below apply as regards the Rate Support Grant Report for England for the year beginning in 1987 and the Rate Support Grant Report for Wales for that year.

(2) If the Secretary of State proposes to include in such a Report any specification under section 1(6), 2(4) or 3(1), (7) or (8) of this Act in respect of that year, section 60(5) of the 1980 Act shall not require consultation to be made (as regards that Report) as to any matter relating to such a specification.

(3) The requirements of section 60(5) of the 1980 Act may be satisfied (as regards such a Report) by consultation before the passing of this Act.

(4) Sub-paragraphs (5) and (6) below apply as regards—

*(a)* the first supplementary report proposed to be made after the passing of this Act for England for the year beginning in 1985,

*(b)* the first supplementary report proposed to be so made for England for the year beginning in 1986, and

*(c)* the first supplementary report proposed to be made for Wales for the year beginning in 1986.

(5) If the Secretary of State proposes to include in such a report any specification under section 1(6), 2(4) or 3(1), (7) or (8) of this Act in respect of the year concerned, section 60(5) of the 1980 Act (as applied by section 61(2)) shall not require consultation to be made (as regards that report) as to any matter relating to such a specification.

(6) The requirements of section 60(5) of the 1980 Act (as applied by section 61(2)) may be satisfied (as regards such a report) by consultation before the passing of this Act.

(7) Sub-paragraphs (2) and (3) above also apply as regards any Report proposed to be made in substitution (directly or indirectly) for any Report mentioned in sub-paragraph (1) above.

Sub-paragraphs (5) and (6) above also apply as regards any report proposed to be made in substitution (directly or indirectly) for—

*(a)* the first supplementary report made after the passing of this Act for England for the year beginning in 1985,

*(b)* the first supplementary report so made for England for the year beginning in 1986, or

*(c)* the first supplementary report so made for Wales for the year beginning in 1986.

(9) In a case where sub-paragraph (2) or (5) above applies, section 9(4) of this Act shall not apply in relation to the exercise of the power to specify.

*Certain matters to be disregarded*

2.—(1) In making any determination or doing any other thing (other than making an excepted specification) after the passing of this Act for the purposes of any relevant report, the Secretary of State shall leave out of account information and representations received by him on or after the relevant date.

(2) Part VI of the 1980 Act shall have effect subject to this paragraph.

(3) In this paragraph "relevant report" means any report as regards which paragraph 1(2) and (3) above or 1(5) and (6) above apply.

(4) In this paragraph "the relevant date" means 20th December 1986 in the case of—

*(a)* the Rate Support Grant Report for England for the year beginning in 1987.

*(b)* any Report proposed to be made in substitution (directly or indirectly) for the Report mentioned in paragraph *(a)* above.

*(c)* the report mentioned in paragraph 1(4)*(b)* above, or

*(d)* any report proposed to be made in substitution (directly or indirectly) for the report mentioned in paragraph 1(8)*(b)* above.

(5) In this paragraph "the relevant date" means 11th December 1986 in the case of—

*(a)* the report mentioned in paragraph 1(4)*(b)* above, or

*(b)* any report proposed to be made in substitution (directly or indirectly) for the report mentioned in paragraph 1(8)*(a)* above.

(6) In this paragraph "the relevant date" means 4th December 1986 in the case of—

*(a)* the Rate Support Grant Report for Wales for the year beginning in 1987,

*(b)* any Report proposed to be made in substitution (directly or indirectly) for the Report mentioned in paragraph *(a)* above,

*(c)* the report mentioned in paragraph 1(4)*(c)* above, or

*(d)* any report proposed to be made in substitution (directly or indirectly) for the report mentioned in paragraph 1(8)*(c)* above.

(7) In this paragraph "an excepted specification" means a specification made under section 1(6), 2(4) or 3(1), (7) or (8) of this Act.

*Submissions as to total expenditure*

3.—(1) Sub-paragraph (2) below applies where before the relevant date a local authority submitted to the Secretary of State an amount which it estimates as its total expenditure in relation to any relevant year.

(2) In doing any of the acts mentioned in sub-paragraph (3) below the Secretary of State shall treat the amount submitted as the amount of the authority's total expenditure in relation to the year.

(3) The acts are—

*(a)* making any determination or doing any other thing after the passing of this Act for the pruposes of any relevant report, and

*(b)* making under section 66(1) of the 1980 Act the first estimate and notification to be made after the passing of this Act as regards the authority concerned for the year for which the amount was submitted.

(4) Part VI of the 1980 Act shall have effect subject to this paragraph.

(5) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (2) above—

*(a)* if the authority and the Secretary of State agreed before the relevant date an amount to replace any amount submitted, the amount submitted shall be taken to be the amount agreed, and

*(b)* subject to paragraph *(a)* above, if more than one amount was submitted before the relevant date, the amount submitted shall be taken to be the latest to be so submitted.

(6) For the purposes of this paragraph years beginning in 1985 and 1986 are relevant years as regards England, and the year beginning in 1986 is a relevant year as regards Wales.

(7) In this paragraph "relevant report" means any report as regards which paragraph 1(5) and (6) above apply.

(8) In this paragraph "the relevant date" means—

*(a)* 20th December 1986, in the case of an amount submitted by an English authority for the year beginning in 1986,

*[Mr. Fraser]*

*(b)* 11th December 1986, in the case of an amount submitted by an English authority for the year beginning in 1985, or

*(c)* 4th December 1986, in the case of an amount submitted by a Welsh authority for the year beginning in 1986.

*Teachers' remuneration*

4.—(1) In making any determination or doing any other thing after the passing of this Act for the purposes of any Report as regards which paragraph 1(2) and (3) above apply, the Secretary of State shall leave out of account the matters mentioned in sub-paragraph (2) below.

(2) The matters are scales and allowances which relate to the remuneration of school teachers and provide for remuneration greater than the aggregate of—

*(a)* the remuneration in payment on 19th December 1986, and

*(b)* 3·75 per cent. of the remuneration mentioned in paragraph *(a)* above (3·75 per cent. being the approximate increase in the GDP deflator for 1987-88, as predicted in the Autumn Statement 1986 presented to Parliament by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in November 1986).

(3) In making any determination or doing any other thing after the passing of this Act for the purposes of—

*(a)* the report mentioned in paragraph 1(4)*(b)* above or that mentioned in paragraph 1(4)*(c)* above, or

*(b)* any report proposed to be made in substitution (directly or indirectly) for the report mentioned in paragraph 1(8)*(b)* above or that mentioned in paragraph 1(8)*(c)* above,

the Secretary of State shall leave out of account the matters mentioned in sub-paragraph (4) below.

(4) The matters are scales and allowances which relate to the remuneration of school-teachers and provide for remuneration greater than the remuneration in payment on 19th December 1986.

(5) Part VI of the 1980 Act and paragraph 3 above shall have effect subject to this paragraph.

(6) In this paragraph "school-teacher" means—

*(a)* a teacher in a primary or secondary school maintained by a local education authority, or

*(b)* a person employed by a local education authority as a teacher in the provision of primary or secondary education, other than a person employed as a teacher in an establishment maintained by a local authority in the exercise of a social services function.'.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

*Brought up, read the First and Second time, and added to the Bill.*

*Bill reported, with amendments; as amended, considered.*

*Question proposed,* That the Bill be now read the Third time:—

12.3 am

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In Committee, amendment No. 189 was moved and put to a vote. Both the movers of the amendment probably either voted against the amendment or abstained. That kind of precedent is unusual and would have been debated on Report. However, we have been denied a Report stage. Will it be possible to ensure that the other place debates that amendment and the significance of hon. Members tabling amendments and then voting against them, so that Halifax and Batley and Spen can know what is happening?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong):** There was nothing out of order in the proceedings.

*Question put:—*

*The House divided:* Ayes 233, Noes 165.

**Division No. 74]** **[12.05 am**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Eggar, Tim
Evennett, David
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Harris, David
Hayes, J.
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Jackson, Robert
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Sir Carol
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith

Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Bowen *(Hertford)*
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Francis Maude and
Mr. David Lightbown.

### NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Ray Powell.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Bill read the Third time, and passed.*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

*Motion made, and Question proposed,*

That, at the sitting on Tuesday 27th January, Mr. Speaker shall put any Questions necessary to dispose of the Motion in the name of the Prime Minister relating to Mr. Speaker's decision of 22nd January and of any Amendments thereto which have been selected by him and which may then be moved at Seven o'clock, or not later than three hours after the Motion has been entered upon, whichever is the later.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

**Hon. Members:** Object.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong):** Objection taken.

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith, pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments &c.)*

### URBAN DEVELOPMENT

That the Trafford Park Development Corporation (Area and Constitution) Order 1986, dated 8th December 1986, a copy of which was laid before this House on 15th December, be approved.

### TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

That the draft Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) (Amendment) Regulations 1986, which were laid before this House on 10th December, be approved.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

*Question agreed to.*

## Forestry (Scotland)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

12.16 am

**Mr. Michael Forsyth** (Stirling) : I am grateful for the opportunity to raise the question of afforestation in Scotland. Some 90 per cent. of forestry activity in the whole of the United Kingdom takes place in Scotland, and an increasingly rapid scale. During the past 10 years alone, an additional 750 sq miles of trees have been planted in Scotland, of which almost 99 per cent. have consisted of sitka spruce and lodgepole pine, which are conifers not native to Scotland. Indeed, in some parts of Scotland, such as the world famous—I hesitate to say this, but it is true —flow country, more than one third is under forestry ownership.

In Scotland, unlike in England, there is no protection of environmental interests arising from the national parks. The environmental damage has been pointed out by the Nature Conservancy Council, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Countryside Commission, all of which have expressed concern at blanket afforestation.

There is also widespread concern among the fishing interests — for example, about the damage to salmon beds, which may interest my hon. Friend the Minister, and the damage caused through the increased acidification of ground water.

However, the nub of the argument is that ecologically important wild land is being destroyed. If the environmental argument was all that it was necessary to consider, that would be sufficient in itself. However, the National Audit Office studied the issue and has produced a report, which was presented to the House on 4 December.

**Mr. John Home Robertson** (East Lothian): It is a very good report.

**Mr. Forsyth:** I agree with the hon. Gentleman. The NAO commissioned Peider to consider the economic effects of forestry and to review the impact of afforestation —the first major review for some time. It made some startling conclusions. First, it strongly questioned the value of planting trees on poor land. It also questioned the value of planting trees for externalities—the social costs, whether there is a benefit to rural employment, whether there is a balance of payments argument, whether there is a strategic benefit, and so on. I should be surprised if my hon. Friend the Minister rehearsed any of those arguments in the light of the conclusions in the report.

The report also concludes that afforestation would be of greater worth to the nation if it were carried out on better land. That is hardly surprising, and it is worth explaining exactly what is happening in Scotland. Land is bought at £100 an acre by a private forestry company on behalf of an individual who is paying tax at 60 per cent. He pays the company fees of about £400 a year to cover the management for the first six years. He receives a grant of £100 an acre. The £300 net is set against tax, which means a net cost to the investor of £120. After 10 years the crop is sold to the institutions, which now own half of the forestry land in Scotland. Capital gains tax has to be paid only on the land, not on the trees. Taxable income has been converted into untaxed capital. In the flow country, the cost of afforestation is about £1,100 per hectare. A grant of £240 per hectare is available, and 60 per cent. of the remaining costs are covered by schedule D. In the flow country alone, the public subsidy has been 68 per cent. of the total sum invested, amounting to £12·2 million.

Mountain forestry has about 40 staff. The employment losses in other activities are not known, but the cost to public funds is about £305,000 per job. My hon. Friend the Minister will doubtless argue that the jobs will last for a period. If we are to be charitable and say that they will last for five years, that is still a cost of £61,000 per job. On the figures of the Highland board, which is hardly the most frugal of spenders, the costs are £2,000 to £6,000 per job. That means that we are talking of a cost per job that is 10 times that which applies to the most costly jobs to be created by the Highland board. Even with the next generation of bulk tree planting, there will be a further subsidy paid by the taxpayer of £11,000 per job. It is hardly surprising that the National Audit Offices report concluded that it was unclear whether the Exchequer costs of tax incentives estimated at £10 million a year in grants to private forestry

> "were matched by commensurate economic benefits in national economic terms."

If the system were merely wasteful and did not damage the environment, it might be worthy of consideration, but, because tax relief is given regardless of where the trees are planted, investors look for cheap land. That is the only part of the transaction on which they do not have a tax shelter. This means that they look for the most environmentally sensitive, most remote and wildest country in Scotland, and the least productive in terms of tree planting. There are few farmers, certainly in my constituency, who pay tax at 60 per cent., yet the subsidy to encourage the planting of trees is available only to higher rate taxpayers. The effect is to exclude farmers and local people from the business of planting trees and to bring in a new generation and class of absentee landlords, consisting of pop stars, snooker players and others who are anxious to convert high marginal tax income into a tax-free capital gain.

The scheme means that the forestry companies, which make their money on the management charges in the first six years, are interested only in the first few years of the plantation's life. They are not interested in long-term management because the plantations are sold off to the institutions. Permission to plant merely involves agreement to provide a grant. Tax relief is given for planting whether or not it has been approved by the Forestry Commission. Investors can plant in areas against the wishes of the community and with the strong disapproval of the commission, and all they sacrifice is the planting grant. They still get the tax relief. That is why a number of owners have gone ahead, to considerable public consternation.

The grant of £100 per acre is payable regardless of the size of the plantation. This creates an enormous incentive to produce blanket afforestation. The fact that the tax device depends on the institutions buying after 10 years or so from the initial investor means that there is a tendency to produce large plantations, because the institutions wish to deal in large parcels with a value of about £250,000. There is an urgent need for control of this activity and some sort of strategy to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places. It is wholly disingenuous for the forestry companies and others who have strong interests in these matters to try to represent those of us who are concerned about what is happening as being anti trees. On the contrary, we want trees to be planted where they will do best. We do not believe that the system should be operated in the interests of a tax shelter.

The regional advisory committees, responsible for making recommendations, should consist of wider interests. At the moment they are dominated by the forestry interests. The tax relief that is available should be conditional on approval. The Minister should review whether tax relief is an appropriate mechanism by which to subsidise tree planting and that when tax subsidies are provided they are justified. The National Audit Office report suggests otherwise.

No doubt the Minister will have considered the arguments about job creation advanced by the forestry companies. As regards job creation, one should consider tourism, which is the major creator of employment in Scotland at the present time. The Forestry Commission employs almost the same number of employees as it did in 1935—3,000 square miles of plantation later. My hon. Friend the Minister and his colleagues in the Scottish Office scored a notable victory this week with the news that a new paper mill is to be established at Irvine.

The import substitution argument has a long way to go. Private forestry companies tell us that we are importing £4 billion worth of timber and that we need to grow our own to avoid such imports. They do not tell us that two thirds of those imports are in finished products—chipboard and paper. They do not tell us that the tropical growth rate of trees is five times quicker than it is in Scotland. They do not tell us about the impact of imports from the developing countries.

The Minister may grumble, but perhaps I should read these words:

> "It is by no means clear that import saving has any special merit. Participation in international trade gives the opportunity for a country to achieve an overall higher level of economic welfare by allowing production resources to be concentrated in activities to which the country is best suited. The resulting output can then be traded for goods which can be produced more cheaply in other countries."

Is that a quotation from Adam Smith or some Right-wing economist? It is a quotation from the Forestry Commission published in "Wood Production Outlook 1977." I agree with the Forestry Commission, but it is strange that it does not heed its own advice.

One of my constituents announced to the local press that hill farming had had its day and that trees were the answer to the problems of the rural areas. If this present system is allowed to continue, hill farming will have had its day. Hill farmers will be forced out of business. They will sell out because of the inflated land values that result from the capitalised benefit of the subsidies.

When the Minister replies, I hope he will give some figures. What is the difference in cost to the taxpayer between traditional hill farming and forestry? I understand —no doubt my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) will correct me if I am wrong—that land that would support 200 ewes over six years would get a total subsidy of £14,400. I understand that that is broadly equivalent to 500 acres of the type of land used for forestry, and that same ground would receive a public subsidy of £140,000 over six years—10 tiimes as much. I know that there are problems of overproduction, but they are greatest in the lowlands, in the more fertile areas. If we

*[Mr. Forsyth]*

are concerned about that, we should be planting trees there, saving far more, and leaving the hill farmers and the traditional patterns of Scotland as they are.

**Mr. Home Robertson:** Surprisingly, I agree with practically everything that the hon. Gentleman is saying, and it applies in my constituency. I strongly agree that there is a case for reviewing the tax incentives that are being used. Is there not a case for some kind of planning controls to prevent undesirable planting, such as that about which he has been talking.

**Mr. Forsyth:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for his support. I am concerned about what is happening in my constituency, and that must be evident from the fact of this debate. I find it difficult to imagine that Stirling district council coming on the scene would improve matters, and I am not certain that the planning process is the right way to deal with this matter. It does not cope with the nub of the problem — the system of subsidies and grants, which is driving planting and production into the wrong areas. The matter needs a far more radical overlook than the hon. Gentleman has suggested.

Each generation is simply the trustee for the next. We in Scotland have a comparative advantage in our uplands in one thing — the marvellous native scenery, with its opportunities for tourism and sporting and leisure activities. It would be perverse for this Government, of all Governments, aided by our financial institutions, to subsidise their destruction.

12.31 am

**Sir Hector Monro** (Dumfries): I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) has had the chance to raise the subject of forestry in this short debate, because, despite the need for one, we have not had a major debate on forestry for a long time. This need is made more apparent by the many excellent reports that we have had in the past 12 months, from the Forestry Industry Committee of Great Britain, the National Audit Office, the Nature Conservancy Council, the Countryside Commission, the Foresty Commission, the new Verney report for the Country Landowners Association and that from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. All are asking important questions, and all are worthy of a major debate. I hope that we shall have one soon. They all want to know where we are going in forestry.

My hon. Friend has raised the issue of import saving and we need to ask whether it is more economic. Are we producing more jobs through the Forestry Commission or through private forestry? In my part of the world, the most afforested region in Britain, I doubt whether we have as many jobs in the forests as we used to have when the same ground was in agriculture. Would the cash flow from the new idea of substitution of agriculture by planting trees be effective in the long run were a tax incentive not an important point to the average farmer?

I wish to highlight the point made by my hon. Friend about the environment. I am a member of the NCC and we are concerned about the planting of sites of special scientific interest. The examples of the Caithness flows, and of Islay, which my hon. Friend mentioned, are important. Can we afford the management agreements that are necessary to conserve these sensitive areas from afforestation? I support what my hon. Friend said about tourism and the scenic beauty of Scotland. The more that I drive about Scotland, the more infuriated I get at seeing some of our more beautiful areas becoming a blanket of foresty. This will be to the detriment of the tourist trade that we require in the years ahead.

I support the many private forests that have been planted on existing estates. I am more concerned about the major planting by private forestry groups that my hon. Friend mentioned. Unless we look carefully at where planting should take place, my hon. Friend will be only too right about the problems that will occur now that the controls that we used to have through grants are a failure, and the private forestry groups can go ahead without grants and still receive sufficient income through tax relief. Clearly we must look at that in future if we are to get the right planting of the right trees in the right place. We need broadleaf planting as well as the conifers that are presently being planted. I share the view of my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling that we should have a major debate on forestry to enable us to look at all these issues. I hope that the Minister will tell us that he will pass our views to the Leader of the House.

12.35 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. John MacKay):** I have listened with interest to my hon. Friends the Members for Stirling (Mr. Forsyth) and for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro). It will come as no surprise to my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling when I say that I do not entirely agree with everything that he said. I find it difficult to reconcile some of my hon. Friend's comments and his pessimistic assessment of the worth of forestry, with the stimulating news that came only days ago that the internationally renowned Kymmene-Stromberg corporation of Finland, better known at Kaukas, has decided to go ahead with the building of a new pulp and paper mill at Irvine in Ayrshire.

That mill is a £200 million-plus project. It is a major addition to Scotland's industrial base and to the nation's forest products industry. Indeed, it is the largest ever single inward investment to Scotland. In full production, the mill will use 200,000 tonnes per year of Scottish timber. That timber will come from trees planted many years ago by people who had faith in forestry and in the jobs which would one day be realised. The timber may be spruce. I know that some people criticise spruce and, if I have time, I will come back to that. As hon. Members know, that species is grown extensively precisely because it meets the need of the market.

About 1,000 jobs will be created or protected by this development in Irvine, many of them in areas suffering at present from high unemployment. The jobs will not just be in Irvine but, I suspect, in constituencies like those of my hon. Friends and certainly in constituencies like mine where I expect to see jobs in the forests and in the haulage industry as a result of this project coming to Irvine.

This mill is part of an ever-increasing payoff of the policy of forest expansion, a policy that has consistently been supported by successive Governments, but with notable success by the present Government. The decision to invest in the mill was taken by hard-headed business men who looked in depth at the forest industry in Britain. I compliment the Forestry Commission on the work that it has done to get this project to Scotland. The leading parts were played by my right hon. and learned Friend the

Secretary of State for Scotland, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, my hon. Friend the Member for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Mr. Lang), and my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) when he was Industry Minister at the Scottish Office.

**Mr. Forsyth:** Does my hon. Friend agree that if the timber was planted in the lowlands rather than in the uplands the quality available to the pulp mill would be considerably better?

**Mr. MacKay:** I shall deal with that in a moment. My hon. Friend the Member for Stirling tended to suggest in his speech and has just said in his intervention that afforestation is taking place on the wrong land. I heard criticism that the timber is of the wrong species, that the planting is being carried out by the wrong people and, in any case, it is a waste of public money.

To a certain extent much of the campaign against forestry has come about in recent months because of problems in an area known as the flow country in the north of Scotland. My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries spoke about that. This controversy arises from a fear that much of this extraordinarily large area is about to disapper under a blanket of conifers planted in a totally uncontrolled way. No planting there has taken place without being carefully considered and cleared through the consultation procedures of the Forestry Commission. Only about 17 per cent. of the area has been planted or has been given approval for planting. On the other hand, large parts of the area have already been designated as sites of special scientific interest with more designations to come, and, with much of the land unsuitable or unavailable for forestry, the scope for further planting is limited. There is, therefore, no question of most of this area being covered by forests.

Because of the concern expressed by conservation interests, my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland has set up a working group, including the Nature Conservancy Council to look at future land use patterns in this area with the aim of identifying a reasonable balance between forestry, conservation and other land uses. Conservation interests need to define their requirements and develop with other land use interests the best strategy to meet conservation and social and economic needs. This process will be greatly assisted by a major research project being undertaken by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds into the effect of existing plantations on bird habitats. This project is being funded by the Forestry Commission and Fountain forestry, the company that is carrying out much of the planting in the area. I read with interest that the hon. Member for Caithness and Sutherland (Mr. Maclennan) opened the local office of Fountain Forestry in Laid at the end of last week.

I understand the need for forestry planting to think not just about the birds and the butterflies but about the view. Nobody appreciates the value of tourism more than I do, representing as I do an area that accounts for one tenth of the total bed nights passed in Scotland. The tourists like the forests. They provide nice walks and a nice habitat. As the forests mature they will improve. For a variety of reasons we are seeing forests that are very much all one age. If one goes to some of the continental countries and looks at forests such as those in Finland and the Black forest in Germany, not that I have ever been there but I am sure it is similar, one sees a range of things. I am amazed that the conservationists are all in favour of the Black forest in Germany but do not seem keen that we should create forests of a similar type in Britain.

The Forestry Commission has a statutory duty to seek a reasonable balance between the needs of forestry and the environment. It has updated its conservation policy to stress the need to increase the environmental value of its whole estate. It has drawn up conservation plans for each of its forests, set up local consultative panels involving the voluntary bodies to seek advice on the environmental aspects of managing those forests and shown its willingness to make conservation a major feature of its management.

The private sector has not been slow to respond. In November 1985 Timber Growers United Kingdom published its booklet, "Forestry and Woodland Code", designed to encourage the highest standards—including environmental standards — in forest design and management.

Part of my hon. Friend the Member for Stirling's case against forestry is the assertion that much of the poor quality and insensitive forestry is a direct result of the present forestry tax relief. The fiscal arrangements for private sector planting do not determine the type of planting that takes place. That is influenced by practical forestry considerations such as the availability of land and its price and the future needs of the market place. The deicions reached on planting proposals under the commission's consultation procedure are not affected by the financial standing or the tax position of the owner of the land.

As my hon. Friend pointed out, there have been two cases where planting has gone on when the commission refused to give grants. As I have said many times from the Dispatch Box, we do not like that but it is only two cases among innumerable cases of forestry planting applications over the years. We should not be so obsessed with those two cases that we try to devise an enormous system to prevent such things happening. If the incidence was to increase, as I have always made clear, we would then look at it. However, two cases against the number of forestry grant applications we have had over the years, does not justify setting up considerable procedures other than those already in operation.

My hon. Friend referred to the National Audit Office report. He will not be surprised when I say that taxation matters are primarily the concern of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the NAO report will be considered by the Public Accounts Committee of the House. The House will appreciate therefore, that I am not in a position to offer a specific response to the points raised in the report, but tax reliefs for forestry have a very long history, and have been seen by successive Governments as a legitimate and effective means of encouraging investment in forestry. Anyone investing in forestry has a long time to wait to get his return, and that investment will simply not take place without the right incentives.

What the report has to say about the low economic returns from investing in the planting of poorer land is not new. That has always been recognised. But forestry has been deliberately confined, by successive Government policies, to the relatively poor and inhospitable sites in the uplands, because of the overriding priorities accorded to food production and by reason of the contribution that

*[Mr. MacKay]*

forestry can make to socially fragile areas. As my hon. Friend said the situation is changing as a result of the problem of agricultural surpluses. The establishment of forestry on better quality land will provide a promising alternative use, and the NAO report indicates that on better land there are opportunities for achieving financial rates of return significantly higher than 5 per cent. The argument for sitka spruce will still be there because it grows well in our climate and it is what the market wants. That is what the new plant at Irvine will want. It does not want any other species.

In return for the public investment in forestry we have a productive estate of about 2 million hectares that provides enough timber to meet 12 per cent. of our needs and which will meet 20 per cent. by the turn of the century. That is significant. Downstream, we have seen about £500 million of private investment going into the timber-using industries since 1980. We have created a modern timber industry that currently provides or supports some 40,000 jobs in Britain and more than 12,000 jobs in Scotland. That is important for the rural areas and it is important for the places that the timber using industries set up.

*The Question having been proposed after Ten o'clock on Monday evening, and the debate having continued for half an hour,* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

*Adjourned at fourteen minutes to One o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Tuesday 27 January 1987*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

BEXLEY LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL

CITY OF WESTMINSTER BILL

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL
*Orders for Second Reading read.*
*To be read a Second time tomorrow.*

ADVOCATES' WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL
*Read a Second time and committed.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## DEFENCE

### RAF Vehicle (Accident)

1. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now publish the findings of the board of inquiry into the accident in Wiltshire on Saturday 10 January involving a Royal Air Force vehicle; and if he will make a statement.

13. **Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to change emergency procedures, following the accident to the military convoy in Wiltshire on 10 January; and if he will make a statement.

**The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. John Stanley):** For details of the accident I refer the hon. Members to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on 19 January. The report of the board of inquiry has not yet been submitted to Ministers, but I understand that it is classified and will not therefore be published. The requirement for changes in procedures will be assessed in the light of careful consideration of the board's findings.

**Mr. Hughes:** Does this incident not illustrate the paradox that the very existence of weapons which it is claimed will never be used, yet are for the defence of Britain, places the population in jeopardy?

**Mr. Stanley:** As the hon. Gentleman is aware, I cannot comment on the particular consignment involved in this convoy. However, I can assure him and the House that there was never any hazard to the public from the accident at any time. With regard to the wider defence paradox to which he referred, it has been the policy of successive Governments, until now adopted by the official Opposition, that it is in the interests of our defence and security that we have nuclear weapons which are there to deter, and are there not to be used.

**Mr. Cohen:** Can the Minister confirm that this juggernaut, which lay on its side for 18 hours, was carrying nuclear depth-charges? What was the risk of an explosion or nuclear leak? Did not the accident put at risk not just soldiers but the civilian population? Is it not time for a thorough review of the emergency procedures, involving the civilian authorities? In the meantime, should not the Government issue new guidelines covering the width of roads that such vehicles should use and the weather conditions in which they should be allowed to travel?

**Mr. Stanley:** All the earlier parts of the hon. Gentleman's question were answered when I replied to the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes), who asked the first question. I assure the hon. Gentleman that we shall study very carefully the findings of the board of inquiry which has been set up following the accident. If there is a need to make changes in procedures or practices, we will consider that most carefully.

**Mr. Key:** Will my right hon. Friend accept that while it is perfectly clear that a mistake was made with regard to the accident, my constituents and I would rather that he took his time over the board of inquiry and came to correct conclusions, which would include consideration of the emergency procedures to be adopted in those circumstances? Will he also accept that a far greater danger to my constituents comes from the antics of members of CND and Cruisewatch, who can get close to the vehicles, cut brake pipes and attack the people and vehicles, and those vehicle convoys should be far better protected from such activists?

**Mr. Stanley:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for what he has said. I assure him that we will give a considered response to the board of inquiry report. I fully endorse his latter point and I join him in deploring the irresponsibility of those who seek to obstruct the proper movement of military vehicles on the public highway.

**Mr. Adley:** Would my right hon. Friend care to speculate on what might happen in the Soviet Union if Soviet citizens decided to behave in this way? Does he believe that the authorities there would view with equanimity people behaving in such a way that could only give comfort to the nation's enemies? Does he think that the mythical hon. Member for Vladivostok, North-West would be able to stand up in the Kremlin, or wherever, and defend the actions of his constituents?

**Mr. Stanley:** My hon. Friend makes an entirely pertinent point. The freedoms which, happily, we in Britain enjoy are certainly not enjoyed in the East. The rationale of our defence policy is that we continue to enjoy those fundamental freedoms. The Opposition are happy to take advantage of those freedoms, but are not prepared to devote sufficient resources to their defence policy to ensure that they are maintained.

**Mr. Cartwright:** While it clearly makes sense not to reveal details about the essential character of nuclear warheads in Britain, why does the Ministry of Defence not follow the example of the civil nuclear industry and be much more open about its safety procedures? Does the Minister accept that that sort of frankness would do much more to allay public anxiety than these continued bland assurances that nothing can go wrong?

**Mr. Stanley:** I think that the hon. Gentleman is somewhat mistaken, because, as we have made clear in previous parliamentary answers, detailed precautions are taken. The precautions that we take over military nuclear materials are at least as stringent as the precautions applied in the movement of civil nuclear materials, and those were set out in full in the *Official Report* of 25 July 1983, at column 1291.

**Mr. Couchman:** Can my right hon. Friend say whether this is the sort of vehicle which would be used to transport nuclear waste from Devonport to Gillingham, if present reports are correct that my right hon. Friend plans such a movement of nuclear waste to the former naval dockyard in my constituency?

**Mr. Stanley:** I regret that I cannot comment on the method of transporting nuclear materials of this sort.

**Mr. McNamara:** Will the Minister confirm that one of the freedoms which our American allies happily enjoy, but which we do not, is the Freedom of Information Act? As a result of that, a report was published in 1984 informing United States citizens, but not the citizens of the United Kingdom, of exercises Sharp Foil Senator and Franchise, which were joint exercises between the United States and British military forces on the safe transporting of nuclear weapons in the United Kingdom and in Europe. Will he confirm that the nuclear accident response units in Britain and in Europe were described in that report as lagging behind the national capability of the United States? Can he also confirm that at least we are on that level in trying to deal with these terrible accidents?

**Mr. Stanley:** It is no secret that we regularly practise the safety aspects of the movement of nuclear materials. It is right for us to do so, and that has been done by successive Governments. When the hon. Gentleman draws a parallel with the United States, I must remind him that the United States takes exactly the same position as successive British Governments have taken. The United States' position is the same as our own. We neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons, and we do not comment on their method of transportation.

### Procurement Projects

2. **Mr. Wainwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what procurement projects over £20 million are running three months behind delivery schedules; and if he will make a statement.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Archie Hamilton):** There are great problems of definition raised in this question and it would involve disproportionate cost to define and collect the data.

**Mr. Wainwright:** If that is too difficult a question for the Minister, will he tell the House how many cases there are of project delivery and completion dates being postponed and re-set, thus reducing the apparent delay? Further, will he tell the House how far these delays are condoned by his Department in order to accommodate the rising costs associated with the Trident missile?

**Mr. Hamilton:** The answer to the hon. Gentleman's question is that I do not know about condoning such reprogramming of projects. In reply to the first question, we cannot put our hands on the information in the form that the hon. Gentleman needs it.

**Mr. Robert Atkins:** Does my hon. Friend recognise that there is considerable anxiety in defence fields about the delay in the Foxhunter radar for the Tornado F3? Does he agree that this rather makes nonsense of the airborne early warning debates if we cannot fit the appropriate radar to the aeroplane that is supposed to defend us in the event of hostilities?

**Mr. Hamilton:** There have been delays on the Foxhunter radar. However, deliveries are well under way. We are discussing with GEC Avionics the basis on which to resolve the problems associated with the current radar sets and to achieve an early demonstration of acceptable performance. I cannot comment further while discussions with GEC are in progress.

**Mr. Mason:** Late deliveries will result in underspend by the Ministry of Defence. Although the Minister cannot give the information that the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Wainwright) has called for, will he tell the House what was the underspend by the Ministry of Defence during 1985-86 due to either the inefficiency of the firms or industrial disputes, and what is the estimated underspend by the Ministry of Defence during the current year?

**Mr. Hamilton:** It is too early to estimate what the underspend for this year will be. I shall write to the right hon. Gentleman with the information on the previous year.

**Sir John Farr:** Can my hon. Friend say to what extent late delivey by manufacturers has occurred because of frequent, and probably unnecessary, alterations of specification by the Ministry of Defence?

**Mr. Hamilton:** The alteration of specification has been a difficulty in the past. This is why the more that we can move on to fixed-price contracts, the more will Ministry of Defence specifications as well as price and delivery be tied down. That is why we are moving towards that as much as we can.

**Mr. Carter-Jones:** Will the Minister bear in mind that although it is advantageous to have a fixed-price contract, sometimes if one is too rigid about that one loses the advantage of advancing technology? Will he consider having slight flexibility in fixed-price contracts?

**Mr. Hamilton:** One must accept that there are occasionally quantum leaps in technology which make it necessary to revise a specification. There may be change in the perceived threat, which would mean that one would have to change the specification as well.

### Falkland Islands

3. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his recent visit to the Falkland Islands.

**The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger):** My recent visit to the Falkland Islands was most interesting and informative and it gave me the opportunity to review the garrison before it completes its move to the Mount Pleasant complex. I was also able to talk to many members of the armed forces and the islanders at all levels.

**Mr. Chapman**: I thank my right hon. Friend for that statement and welcome the opening of the new Mount Pleasant airport complex the weekend before last. Does my right hon. Friend agree that that project means that the defence of the islands can be secured more effectively, more quickly and more economically? If that is my right hon. Friend's interpretation of it, does he hold out the prospect of the islands being adequately defended with fewer armed services personnel there than hitherto?

**Mr. Younger**: Yes, my hon. Friend is correct in that. The successful completion of the new Mount Pleasant complex will enable us to have adequate defence for the islands at all times and to do this with fewer forces than would otherwise have been needed, because we now have the ability to reinforce quickly and efficiently.

**Mr. Dalyell**: What professional advice came from senior Royal Air Force commanders about the adequacy of air cover, and particularly the Phantoms?

**Mr. Younger**: Our advice from all our military advisers, including those in the RAF, is that the present provision for air defence is adequate with the likely threat in mind.

**Sir Antony Buck**: Does my right hon. Friend agree that while it costs a lot of money to garrison the Falklands, there are none the less considerable advantages in continuing with that, in that battalions that have served there go down as good battalions and come back as crack battalions because of the way in which they can train out there and operate military equipment?

**Mr. Younger**: I very much agree with my hon. and learned Friend. Apart from the undoubtedly high training value of what the forces do there, it is immensely impressive to see what they achieve when they are all there for a total period of four months each. They look extremely professional and they are very professional in what they do.

**Mr. Foulkes**: Does the Secretary of State recall that in his honeymoon period as Secretary of State for Defence, before he was gagged by the Ministry of Defence spokesman, he said that it was his intention to reduce the garrison on the Falklands to 1,000 men? Will he break free from the shackles of the MOD and tell the House whether that is still his intention?

**Mr. Younger**: I did not know that I had had a honeymoon, but I am not sure that I would choose to spend it with the hon. Gentleman. As the hon. Gentleman knows, we never give details of particular force levels at any time, but they are fully adequate to deal with any threat.

### Trident

4. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of the Trident programme.

9. **Mrs. Shields** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the latest estimated cost of the Trident missile system; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Younger**: The revised estimate for Trident at average 1986-87 prices is £9,265 million. In line with established conventions adopted for the recosting of the defence programme, the estimate is based on the average exchange rate applicable in June 1986, namely, £1 = $1·50. The United Kingdom share of the revised estimate is 62 per cent.—its highest recorded level. After allowing for the effects of inflation and exchange rate variations, this represents a real reduction in estimate over last year of some £546 million.

It is now assessed that on average the programme will provide some 7,500 direct and 6,000 indirect jobs over the procurement period, with the figures rising to 15,000 direct and 12,000 indirect in the peak years.

The Select Committee on Defence previously asked that when announcing the annual revised estimate I should report on the state of the project as a whole. I am pleased to report that the project remains on programme to enter service as planned in the mid-1990s. There has been no slippage in the in-service date since the decision to proceed with Trident II was announced in March 1982. I am, as last year, sending to the Chairmen of the Select Committee on Defence and of the Public Accounts Committee a more detailed report covering the points on which the Select Committee on Defence sought advice. I am also placing a copy of the report in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Spencer**: Will my right hon. Friend confirm that if we accepted the advice of the Labour party and spent the money on conventional weapons rather than on Trident, all we would get is 1·1 armoured divisions, which would still leave the Soviets with a massive 2:1 superiority?

**Mr. Younger**: My hon. and learned Friend is correct. I am not sure whether it is 1·1 armoured divisions, or 1. In any case, it is wholly inconsistent with the theory that by producing such an extra division we would in any way outweigh the loss of the Trident deterrent, which is a vital part of our defence.

**Mrs. Shields**: In the event of possible cuts in ballistic missile stocks by the United States and the Soviet Union, do the Government plan to continue British escalation of the arms race in the face of superpower de-escalation?

**Mr. Younger**: We have always made it clear that if there were to be large reductions in ballistic missile systems we would regard it as right that we should be prepared to consider whether we could make a further contribution. I hope that the hon. Lady and her colleagues will be able to confirm that, having allegedly come to an agreement with the SDP on defence, the Liberal party has abandoned its links with the CND, because it would be a great reassurance if that could be made clear.

**Mr. Bill Walker**: Does not escalation depend on the number of missiles and warheads? Is not the Government's position that we have a minimum deterrent and will continue to retain it? Is that not what is happening, thereby giving us a flexibility that did not exist when we had to bring in Chevaline?

**Mr. Younger**: My hon. Friend is right. Our present deterrent, the Polaris system, is a minimum deterrent, and our proposed future deterrent, the Trident system, will also be a minimum deterrent, in the context of the defences that it will have to breach in the mid-1990s and onwards. Trident is still a minimum deterrent.

**Mr. Douglas**: Will the Secretary of State give the House an indication of the share of the naval procurement that is engaged by Trident? Will he explain the impact of that on the conventional fleet and his intention or otherwise of ordering three frigates a year?

**Mr. Younger:** This has no direct effect on either of those points. As I think the hon. Gentleman knows, the expected cost of the Trident system over its life will average out at 3 per cent. of the defence budget, or 6 per cent. of the procurement budget. Even at its peak it will be only about 13 per cent. of the procurement budget in total. Today's announcement of lower costs for Trident makes that position even better.

**Mr. Leigh:** Would it be a fair summary to say that while the SDP and Liberal party are agreed in their opposition to Trident, the SDP believes in obsolete weapons and the Liberals do not know what their mind is? Was not what we saw yesterday less a launch of a successful defence policy and more a relaunch into political obscurity?

**Mr. Younger:** I am not sure how it is possible — although, no doubt we shall discover — to relaunch a non-policy. As an extra twist, the Liberal party has made it clear that it does not have the information to be able to decide what should replace the Trident system, but it seems to be equally certain, in spite of that lack of information, that whatever it is it is not Trident.

**Mr. Denzil Davies:** I am sure the Secretary of State will agree that the reduction in cost, or most of it, is because, happily for him, at least temporarily, the exchange rate of the pound against the dollar is fairly favourable. Does he agree that he has no control over that, and of course exchange rates can go the other way? Does he agree that the cost of Trident, be it £9 billion or £10 billion at the end of the day, will be borne by our non-nuclear defence forces? That cost will be borne by the cost of equipment for the Army, Navy and Royal Air Force. What on earth is the point of spending money on what is called, chillingly, a weapon of the last resort when we will not have enough money to buy weapons of the first resort to prevent war in Europe becoming a nuclear war?

**Mr. Younger:** First of all, I am sorry if I did not make it clear earlier that the figure I have quoted of £546 million real saving on the programme is after taking account of the exchange rate variations. Therefore, that figure is a real reduction in the real cost of the Trident programme.

With regard to whether it is right to spend money on the programme, I must say to the right hon. Gentleman that there is no way in which the expenditure of an equivalent sum of money on conventional weapons could begin to replace the deterrent effect of the Trident system. That is the absolute justification for the expenditure on the programme. As regards the comparison that has been made, I am not sure why the right hon. Gentleman is so keen to protect the rest of the budget by abolishing the Trident system, because the Tornado programme is a larger programme and I have not heard the right hon. Gentleman calling for that to be abandoned in order to save the budget.

### Defence-Related Industries (Jobs)

5. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will estimate the number of United Kingdom jobs in defence-related industries, giving a separate figure for jobs related to the Polaris and Trident programmes.

8. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the latest estimate of jobs created by the Trident programme.

**Mr. Younger:** Nearly 400,000 United Kingdom jobs were sustained by the Ministry of Defence's equipment expenditure in 1984-85, the latest year for which figures are available. Exports of defence equipment accounted for a further 120,000 jobs. As regards the Polaris programme, an estimated 11,600 Ministry of Defence civilians are employed in maintaining the nuclear deterrent. Finally, I refer my hon. Friends to the answer that I gave a few moments ago on estimated jobs created as a result of the Trident programme.

**Mr. Hayes:** I am sure my right hon. Friend is delighted that 1986 was a record year for defence exports, with sales totalling over £5 billion. Therefore, is he not dismayed at the Labour party policy, which was ratified at the 1986 conference, which would abolish the defence export sales organisation and put thousands of British jobs at risk?

**Mr. Younger:** My hon. Friend makes an extremely valid point. I have noted that the Labour party proposes to disband the defence export sales organisation, and it admits that its policies will

> "lead inevitably to a major reduction in Britain's current arms sales".

That will come as shocking news to those who depend on defence exports for a job, and I hope that the Labour party has noted that.

**Mr. Thurnham:** In the unlikely event of a Labour Government being elected, Trident being scrapped and American bases being removed from this country, can my right hon. Friend say how many United Kingdom jobs would be lost?

**Mr. Younger:** I estimate that United States forces in the United Kingdom at present provide, directly and indirectly, about 30,000 jobs for British citizens. If Labour party policy is to remove all United States nuclear bases from the United Kingdom, those jobs would clearly be put at risk, quite apart from the damage that that policy would do to NATO's defences.

**Mr. Nellist:** Why should the House of Commons or working people in the country as a whole believe a word that the Secretary of State for Defence and other Tory Members say with their synthetic sympathy about the number of jobs at risk in the defence industries when 4·5 million unemployed people in Britain now get no sympathy from Tory Members? If the Secretary of State thinks that Trident is such a popular programme, why does he not transfer the £9·25 billion into the health and housing expenditure of the Government and hold a flag day for Trident?

**Mr. Younger:** I am dubious about the hon. Gentleman's claim to speak for the working people of this country. I cannot understand how even he imagines that the unemployment problem would be assisted by deliberately destroying 30,000 British jobs by the removal of United States bases. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will make representations to his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition to abandon that policy forthwith.

**Mr. James Lamond:** Is the Secretary of State aware that there is nothing to be proud of in the export of arms to the rest of the world, especially the Third world, which is very much more in need of socially useful goods? If the money that is spent on arms, exported or otherwise, was spent on socially useful goods we would live in a much better and more moral country.

**Mr. Younger:** A great deal of money is spent, and successful exports are carried out, by this country in many matters that have nothing to do with arms sales. The hon. Gentleman has to face the fact that there are many thousands of jobs in this country directly dependent upon the defence industry and if he proposes to destroy it he will answer for it.

**Mr. Franks:** Is my right hon. Friend aware of a random survey conducted by the North-Western *Evening Mail* in Barrow, published last Friday, in which people were asked,

> "Do you believe that the country needs an independent nuclear deterrent?"

Is he further aware that 91 per cent. said yes?

**Mr. Younger:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right to draw attention to that fact. On every occasion that the British people have been asked to pronounce on that matter they have made their views very clear. As my hon. Friend knows only too well, the Trident programme will provide employment over the next few years for 4,000 in Barrow, where the submarines are built, and about 2,500 construction jobs on the Clyde while the facilities there are being made.

**Mr. Denzil Davies:** The less the Secretary of State says about jobs, the better. There are far fewer people employed in the defence industry now than in 1979 when the Government took office. Jobs have been lost in the ordnance factories, in the dockyards at Chatham, Devonport, Rosyth and in many other establishments. Is he aware that of the 400,000 jobs he mentioned, at least 95 per cent. of them are concerned with non-nuclear defence equipment? If, as we believe, there will be cuts in non-nuclear defence equipment to pay for Trident, a substantial proportion of those jobs will be put at risk by the Government's policies.

**Mr. Younger:** I admire the right hon. Gentleman's courage in raising the question of defence expenditure when it is over 20 per cent. higher in real terms than it was when the Labour party was last in government. I can understand that he wishes to keep off the subject of the effect on jobs of the Labour party's policy to cancel Trident. It is no exaggeration to say that it would not only devastate the economy of a place such as Barrow but would have devastating effects on the west and east of Scotland at Rosyth and Faslane. The Labour party will have to answer to many people for those destructive policies.

### Electronic Data Systems

6. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on current work being undertaken for his Department by Electronic Data Systems.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** A subsidiary of Electronic Data Systems used to have a small contract to provide computer bureau services to the Royal Air Force. However, this work has now been transferred to another company with which we have no reason to believe EDS has any interest.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Do Defence Ministers accept the documentary evidence that I have sent to the Home Secretary and the Minister of State, Treasury, to the effect that EDS attempted to abuse the immigration rules of this country? In that light, may we have an assurance that the Ministry of Defence will not consider EDS for major data contracts, which could ultimately have a value greater than that of AWACS?

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** It is for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department to decide whether an offence has been committed and we shall await advice from the Home Office. In the meantime, EDS will remain on our list of potential contractors.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** Further to the question of the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), what are the implications for the use of high technology in British defences of the determination of the United States Government to enforce their laws extra-territorially, well beyond the agreement of COCON, which was supinely accepted by his colleagues in the Department of Trade and Industry?

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I am confused as to what that has to do with EDS. We are having discussion with the United States Government on extra-territoriality and hope to reach agreement soon.

### Procurement Expenditure

7. **Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the projected outturn for defence procurement expenditure for 1986-87.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The defence procurement Vote provides for expenditure in the current year of £8,762 million.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** In so far as the outturn figure includes expenditure on the Zircon project, and not wishing to push the Minister on any aspect of that matter which is classified, may I ask him to tell us how much has been spent on that project to date?

**Mr. Hamilton:** The House will not expect me to comment on that project. Any question that the hon. Gentleman wishes to ask would be better put in writing to my right hon. Friend.

**Mr. Con[illegible]y:** Will my right hon. Friend tell me, in the light of his Department's contracts with Shrewsbury companies and their importance to our local economy and job provision, whether the Opposition have advised him of the so-called socially useful purposes to which the main battle tank engine production line at Perkins in Shrewsbury would be put, together with the DROPS ammunition project at Multilift — each of which provides a considerable number of jobs and much local income — if the Labour party's policy were put into operation?

**Mr. Hamilton:** My hon. Friend has put his finger on a difficult problem. I do not see how people involved in high technology industries will be able to switch to making relatively low technology products for the Third world.

**Mr. Nicholas Brown:** Does the Ministry intend to procure three frigates and one AOR next year?

**Mr. Hamilton:** We are permanently keeping our future purchases of ships under review.

**Mr. Gale:** Does my hon. Friend agree that, in seeking to save money by trying to replace Trident with

Tomahawk, which appears to be one of the options that the alliance is dithering over at the moment, it would be replacing a proven system with an inadequate one, which would be both dangerous and disturbing to the NATO Alliance? Does he further agree that the time has come for the alliance leaders to own up and admit that they belong to a unilateralist party?

**Mr. Hamilton:** I could not agree more with my hon. Friend. Submarine-launched cruise missiles have grave difficulties, one of which is that they have to operate in shallow water. If they become detectable, they are less of a deterrent than something that has a larger area of ocean in which to operate.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas:** Is the Minister concerned about the regional balance of the procurement budget, and will he confirm that 50 per cent. of the budget is spent in the south-east of England, including London, and only 2 per cent. in Wales and 6 per cent. in Scotland?

**Mr. Hamilton:** I have to accept that there is a regional imbalance in defence expenditure. We are always looking at ways of righting that imbalance.

**Mr. Robert B. Jones:** Is my hon. Friend fully satisfied that that proportion of this outturn that is attributable to the Nimrod programme was spent on Nimrod and was not siphoned off to spend on other projects by GEC?

**Mr. Hamilton:** I would need notice to answer such a question and I invite my hon. Friend to put it in writing.

**Mr. McNamara:** As the Government's White Paper on expenditure forecasts a cut in defence expenditure of £1 billion over the next three years, will the Minister tell us which part of the equipment programme will be hit by that cut?

**Mr. Hamilton:** The procurement programme is always under review.

**Mr. Forman:** Does my hon. Friend's Department still estimate that there is a sizeable relative price effect which influences defence expenditure in the Ministry of Defence, and to what extent have his improved managerial systems within the Department led to some discernible economy?

**Mr. Hamilton:** We have been able to get a much larger percentage of our contracts on to a fixed price arrangement and this has led to great savings, which we estimate are not less than 5 per cent., and may be as much as 10 per cent., of the overall procurement budget. That goes some way towards offsetting the inevitable inflationary increases in defence equipment which are above the general level of inflation.

### Soviet Nuclear Forces (Attack)

10. **Mr. Caborn** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether Her Majesty's Government have assessed the likelihood of an attack on Britain by Soviet short-range intermediate nuclear forces.

**Mr. Stanley:** That threat is under continuous assessment.

**Mr. Caborn:** As the Reykjavik summit raised many expectations about the possibility of removing nuclear weapons from Europe, will there be a United Kingdom initiative through NATO to set up negotiations for a freeze on short-range nuclear weapons, even if there is no progress on long-range intermediate nuclear weapons?

**Mr. Stanley:** As the House has been told on many occasions, we are more interested in obtaining reductions than in producing a freeze. A freeze in that area would simply freeze a massive Soviet superiority. On short-range systems, in Europe the Warsaw Pact has a 9:1 advantage in missiles in the 150 km to 1,000 km range and an 8:1 advantage in missiles with a range below 150 km. It would make no sense at all to freeze that degree of Soviet superiority.

**Mr. Churchill:** Will my right hon. Friend make it clear that so long as Britain has as an effective independent nuclear deterrent, as she has today and will have if the Government are returned in future with the Trident system, and so long as we remain a strong member of the NATO Alliance, with American nuclear weapons based in Britain, there will never be a serious nuclear threat to Britain? However, if the Labour party's policies were ever to be implemented that risk would increase enormously.

**Mr. Stanley:** I agree with my hon. Friend. Provided that we maintain the policies that have stood us so well for the past 40 years we shall continue to enjoy our peace with freedom. If we follow the policies advocated by the official Opposition, we could begin to jeopardise that.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd:** Will the Minister return to the question that was put to him? Will he confirm that if the British Government were to support the proposal of the Socialist parties in West and East Germany for a 150 km nuclear-free corridor, it would save Britain from attack by short-range nuclear weapons?

**Mr. Stanley:** The hon. Gentleman should refer to the remarks that I made on that in the recent debate on the Army. If he consults the *Official Report* he will see that the proposal for a 150 km nuclear-free zone in the central front makes no sense at all because every square inch of that zone can be successfully targeted by battlefield nuclear weapons possessed by the Warsaw Pact.

**Mr. Jim Spicer:** How long would the British Corps in Germany, which is really an extension of the United Kingdom, survive a Russian attack without being able to call upon at least battlefield nuclear weapons?

**Mr. Stanley:** I agree with my hon. Friend that it would make no sense at all to move the tactical nuclear capability of 1st British Corps. As we have made clear on many occasions, if the role of 1st British Corps were reduced to a conventional role only, its position on the central front would be completely non-sustainable.

**Mr. Cartwright:** Will the Minister assure the House that, in responding to the threat of Soviet conventionally armed tactical ballistic missiles, priority will be given to improving passive defences such as target hardening and dispersal, rather than being tempted down the road of exotic and expensive technologies involved in a European star wars system?

**Mr. Stanley:** I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the Government attach great importance to passive defences and the hardening programme to which he refers.

**Mr. Cormack:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that if the Labour party's policy were adopted the Soviets would not need to bother attacking? *[Interruption.]*

**Ms. Clare Short:** Yes!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Interruptions take up time.

**Mr. Stanley:** I entirely agree with my hon. Friend that for 40 years Britain has not had a serious threat of being subjected to nuclear blackmail. The policies that the Labour party wishes to follow could well expose Britain to nuclear blackmail.

**Mr. Denzil Davies:** The Minister referred to battlefield nuclear weapons and 1st British Corps. Will he confirm that 1st British Corps does not have any nuclear weapons and that the nuclear weapons are American-owned and controlled? Will he confirm also what General Rogers said the other day in an interview — that every member of NATO, except France and Iceland, has to agree to unleash battlefield nuclear weapons? If General Rogers is correct, does that mean that any country in NATO, apart from France and Iceland, could veto the unleashing of those weapons?

**Mr. Stanley:** I do not know what criticism the right hon. Gentleman is making, because the arrangements for the nuclear weapons of 1st British Corps are exactly the same as those enjoyed by previous Labour Governments.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

**Mr. Thurnham:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that those who serve the most vulnerable in our society—the disabled, the sick and the elderly — should remember that the telephone is a lifeline, as should Opposition Members who support the bully tactics of striking militants?

**The Prime Minister:** I share my hon. Friend's concern about the industrial action and its effects on businesses, jobs, the old and the sick. Having expressed that concern, it is right that we should also thank those employees of British Telecom who are keeping the telephone network going, and those who are maintaining the emergency services in spite of working under difficult circumstances at times.

**Mr. Kinnock:** It is now publicly clear from the Prime Minister's answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) that the Government knew in October of the intention to include specific material on a secret defence project in a BBC programme. Can the Prime Minister explain the contrast between four months of complacency and four days of activity last week, of seeking injunctions, sending Treasury Solicitor's letters, threatening newspaper editors and sending the police into magazine offices? Why so casual for so long and so frenzied so late?

**The Prime Minister:** As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, in October 1986 the Government learnt of the BBC's intention to show specific material on a secret defence project. Discussions took place between the Government and the BBC, which subsequently decided, as a result of those discussions, not to show the material on the project. Therefore, the discussions were successful.

**Mr. Kinnock:** Does the Prime Minister really hope to convince the country that a chat with the BBC is a sufficient way in which to safeguard national security? Does she agree — *[Interruption.]* — that if a national security secret is worth having it is worth keeping, and that it required proper action in October to see that it was kept? Does she agree that her actions, subsequent to last week, have been produced by lateness, clumsiness and vindictiveness?

**The Prime Minister:** The discussions with the BBC were successful. The BBC decided not to show the film. I am advised that no injunction would have been obtained without evidence against the *New Statesman* that would have satisfied the judge that there was a significant risk of the *New Statesman* publishing material on the project. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman should direct his strictures against the *New Statesman* and Duncan Campbell.

**Mr. Kinnock:** The *New Statesman* would not have come into it had the Prime Minister acted when she knew that there was likely to be material that would jeopardise national security, as she defined it. Will the Prime Minister now tell us why there was complacency and inactivity for four months and such frenzy for four days?

**The Prime Minister:** I have already said that, as a result of the action which the Government took——

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** The right hon. Lady failed to act.

**The Prime Minister:** —the BBC did not show that film. I have already said that, with regard to the *New Statesman,* I am advised that no injunction would have been obtained without evidence that would have satisfied the judge that there was a significant risk of the *New Statesman* publishing material on the project. Again I suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that I think he should direct his strictures at Left-wing organs such as the *New Statesman,* which have, in spite of the fact that the BBC refused to show the film, deliberately attempted to release material which is contrary to national security.

**Sir Marcus Fox:** Will my right hon. Friend reconsider the practice of consulting the Leader of the Opposition on matters of security, bearing in mind that Mr. Duncan Campbell, an adviser to the Labour party on security and defence matters, already has one conviction for breaking the Official Secrets Act? [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"]

**The Prime Minister:** That is not a matter for me.

**Mr. Steel:** Is the Prime Minister concerned — *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This noise takes up a lot of time.

**Mr. Steel:** Is the Prime Minister concerned at the damage done to British-Irish relations by the disclosure of the interception of communications with the Irish embassy? Is it the Government's policy to monitor communications of members of the European Community in this way? Is this not another example of the case for a senior parliamentary committee to oversee the intelligence services?

**The Prime Minister:** As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, there is a long-established practice that Governments do not comment on matters of this kind. That was the practice of the Government whom the right hon. Gentleman's party kept in power too.

Q2. **Mr. Budgen** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Budgen:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that the educational policies of Brent have now spread to Wolverhampton where, at the Colton Hills school, white and West Indian pupils have been forced to attend Punjabi lessons without the consent of their parents and without proper consultation? Is my right hon. Friend further aware that when the parents objected to this piece of social engineering they were treated with abuse and arrogance? Is it not clear that the Tory manifesto ought to contain a clear commitment to reducing the power of politicians and to increasing the power of parents?

**The Prime Minister:** I am aware of my hon. Friend's concern on this matter and of the fact that he has already had an Adjournment debate in the House on it. As he knows, the new Education Act gives parents stronger representation on governing bodies, and the first annual meeting for parents must be held before the end of this year's summer term.

With regard to the wider matter, we are anxious that parents should be given a stronger voice in the education of their children and that they should have greater freedom to choose the school which best suits their child.

Q3. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Haynes:** Is the Prime Minister aware that the House and the nation are watching the Government farce on Zircon—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Noise takes up a lot of time.

**Mr. Haynes:** Who arranged the initial botching and who then arranged the bullying?

**The Prime Minister:** I think that people outside the House are very critical of those who choose to use national defence secrets for their own personal gain.

**Mr. Sims:** Has my right hon. Friend noticed that President Reagan has now signed orders which will come into effect this weekend and which will increase substantially duties on gin and other EEC products? Will she use her best endeavours to persuade the Americans to approach these negotiations over trade problems with the EEC in a reasonable frame of mind and avoid a trade war, which can only harm all the parties concerned?

**The Prime Minister:** We are greatly concerned about the matter which my hon. Friend has raised. We take the view that the enlargement of the European Community is something that benefits the United States as well, and is rather more than a trade matter. So we have protested very vigorously against the measures that the United States proposes and will continue to negotiate with it on this and other trading matters. I agree with my hon. Friend that if we go into a measure of protectionism now there is no telling where it may end.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** Has the Prime Minister been notified that yesterday police removed correspondence to Duncan Campbell from a senior member of her Government? Has she been further advised that the correspondence makes it clear that the senior member of her Government supplied information for the series "The Secret Society", met Duncan Campbell to discuss it and was willing to appear in one of the programmes? In view of her strictures against Duncan Campbell and the *New Statesman*, does she not think that the House is entitled to know the name of that senior member of her Government, who only last autumn took such a markedly different attitude to both of them?

**The Prime Minister:** The police have used powers which they have under the appropriate and proper authorities. Any information that they have obtained is a matter for them and for any prosecuting authorities.

**Mr. Galley:** Will my right hon. Friend ask her right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment to lay a report before Parliament setting out the likely employment consequences if Her Majesty's Government were to adopt a policy of a minimum national wage of £80 a week, control of inward investment and other policies espoused by the Labour party? Will she confirm that the likely outcome would be a million more jobs lost?

**The Prime Minister:** If these policies were to be followed, and if we added to them the phasing out of all civilian nuclear power and the removal of all American nuclear bases, the result would be very much higher unemployment in this country than we now have.

Q4. **Mr. George** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. George:** In the light of the regrettable lapses as regards security and the intelligence services, is this not the wrong time for the Government to be considering booting out the Ministry of Defence policemen guarding MI5 and MI6 headquarters? Is this not the ultimate idiocy in privatisation? Will the Prime Minister call for the files and see if these proposals can be conveniently shelved?

**The Prime Minister:** As the hon. Gentleman is aware, we do not discuss these matters in the House.

Q6. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Hayes:** Will my right hon. Friend advise Her Majesty to arrange an urgent and important meeting with the Leader of the Opposition so that he can explain his recent eccentric behaviour in saying on one day that he would not talk to Sinn Fein and, on the next, sending his Northern Ireland spokesman to speak to them? Does this not smell of hypocrisy?

**The Prime Minister:** As my hon. Friend is aware, we take the view that Ministers do not talk to Sinn Fein. What the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition does is a matter for him.

Q8. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Boyes:** Is it not a fact that the Government bungled the matter last week? Is *The Guardian* not correct in its editorial when it suggests that the Prime Minister is now trying to cover her embarrassment

"by increasingly dubious and reckless means"?

Is that not a ridiculous way for the Government to behave? Would the Prime Minister like to comment on the increasing press and media criticism of her reckless, dubious, bungling ways?

**The Prime Minister:** The action of the Government prevented the showing of the film, or the BBC agreed not to show the film. The trouble has arisen because of Left-wing organs like the *New Statesman* and people anxious to ferret out the secrets of national security in order to sell them either for personal gain or some kind of personal notoriety.

Q11. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27th January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Lady to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mrs. Clwyd:** In view of the detailed information on satellites in a book entitled *The Ties That Bind*, published in 1985 by Allen and Unwin — far more detailed information than anything Mr. Duncan Campbell revealed either in his film or articles — why has the Prime Minister decided not to prosecute the authors of this book?

**The Prime Minister:** Matters of prosecution are for the prosecuting authorities, not for politicians. They never have been and never are. With regard to the recent matter, may I add to what was said in the House the other day. One breach or threatened breach will not justify a further breach.

**Mr. Bruce:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Arising out of questions?

**Mr. Bruce:** It will be.

**Mr. Speaker:** It must be a point of order that I can answer, not a continuation of Question Time.

**Mr. George:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The role of the Ministry of Defence police is apparently not to be discussed in this House. Can the Prime Minister tell me where the debate on the Ministry of Defence——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Prime Minister's Questions are at an end.

**Mr. Nicholls:** On a point of order arising out of questions last Thursday.

**Mr. Speaker:** I cannot take that now.

**Mr. Madden:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, on an intervention that occurred yesterday.

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall take it later on.

**Mr. Caborn:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Arising out of questions today?

**Mr. Caborn:** Yes. Can you inform the House, in the light of the Prime Minister's earlier answers, whether debate will be ruled out of order on proceedings on the Ministry of Defence Police Bill *[Lords]*, on Wednesday, because that was the question raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George)? If so, that will therefore be ruled out of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman can raise what he likes in debate, but the Prime Minister's Question Time is at an end.

## Royal Dockyards

3.34 pm

**The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. George Younger):** With permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a statement about the Royal dockyards. As the House will recall, I announced on 4 December that I was satisfied that there now existed the basis for an advantageous contract to be placed for the future operation of Rosyth dockyard with Babcock Thorn Ltd.

I made that announcement some 21 months after my right hon. Friend the former Secretary of State for Defence first published his consultative document outlining plans for the future operation of the dockyards. Throughout that time we have provided this House and the trade unions representing the dockyard work force with a great deal of information on our proposals, including material on the options for the future management of the dockyards and on our preferred contractors. My noble and hon. Friends and I have been personally involved in discussions with the unions most concerned.

The trade unions continue to favour the option involving minimum change, with the dockyards remaining in the Civil Service under a system of trading funds. I have considered very carefully what the unions have said and I have explained to them why, in the Government's view, a dockyard trading fund is unlikely to secure either the improvements in efficiency we seek for the Royal Navy and the dockyards, or to compete as successfully as a commercial company for commercial and naval work.

I am, of course, fully aware of my obligations under the Dockyard Services Act 1986 to inform and consult the trade unions. I have always said that I would take final decisions only when I was satisfied that I had complied with such duties as the Act imposed on me. I am satisfied that I can take a final decision in respect of Rosyth dockyard and have today authorised the signature of a term contract for the future operation of that dockyard from 6 April 1987, with Babcock Thorn Ltd.; I have in addition authorised the signature of a service contract with Babcock Thorn Ltd. to cover its operations in the dockyard from now until vestng day; during this period, the management of the dockyard will remain the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence.

As the House knows, I announced on 20 January that Devonport Management Limited was our preferred contractor for Devonport dockyard. I have invited the trade unions to meet me on 13 February, so that I may hear their views on this. Only when I have carefully considered any such views will I take a final decision on the future operation of Devonport dockyard.

**Mr. Martin J. O'Neill** (Clackmannan): The Secretary of State will be aware that his statement comes as no surprise to us, because since 1985 we have had a series of statements indicating preferred options and so far none of them has been changed as a result of consultations with the trade unions. Furthermore, the statement's dismissal of trading funds is a gross oversimplification of the unions' case for this option. Is not the Secretary of State aware that they are prepared for a wide-ranging set of changes and that they seek to co-operate with management to secure increases in efficiency and cost savings?

However, the Secretary of State will also be aware that there is evidence of indecent haste on his part in the manner that he is now rushing into signing a service contract to get Babcock Thorn into the yard as quickly as possible. In regard to the further contract starting on 6 April, can the Secretary of State tell us how long it is for? Is it to be for seven years, as was originally thought? He did not mention that in the statement. Does he agree that his decision, with the sham consultation, will only serve to exacerbate the resentment that is felt by the work force in Rosyth at the proposed loss of at least 1,200 jobs in the near future? In the eyes of the unions, this is simply an alien management coming in to do the Government's dirty work.

In his further discussions with the work force at Plymouth, Devonport, will the right hon. Gentleman examine seriously the revelations that have been appearing in *The Independent* and the *Western Morning Post* about the links of Brown and Root with Libya, which were such an embarrassment to the American Government that they required the company to remove that part of its operation from the United States. Secondly, in respect of Brown and Root, will the right hon. Gentleman examine the revelations that have come to light concerning the penalties it has had to pay because of poor quality work in some major contracts?

Will the right hon. Gentleman also bear in mind that in the view of my right hon. and hon. Friends these contracts can be severed by legislation, and that they will be as soon as there is a change of Government so that we can secure happy and harmonious service from these workpeople to the nation and to the fleet, as happened for centuries in the past?

**Mr. Younger:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for one thing, that in his opening remarks he made it clear that this was no surprise to him, and to the House, I suppose. That I take as a clear recognition, that, whatever else is right, the consultation process must have been extremely effective. Secondly, it certainly is the case that the trade unions have made it clear that there is quite a considerable area of agreement between ourselves and them. For instance, they agree thoroughly that the present system has to be changed and they are prepared to co-operate in discussing what changes are best. As I said in my statement, they still maintain their view that a trading fund would be the best option.

I was puzzled by the hon. Gentleman's reference to indecent haste, considering that I was in a position, and made it clear that I was as long ago as 4 December, to sign a contract with Babcock Thorn for Rosyth but deliberately held that back in order to ensure that the maximum opportunity was given for all concerned to consult me about it before making such a decision.

I do not think that indecent haste has any relevance to that.

I confirm that the contract that we are signing today will be for seven years, as suggested. The hon. Gentleman mentioned Devonport and I want to make it clear that the suggestion of Brown and Root being involved is under consideration. I have made no final decision on that. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that Brown and Root has made it clear that there will be no connection whatever between its operation in Libya and that in Devonport, should the company receive the contract. The company has made it clear that there will be no connection of any kind in that regard.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the loss of jobs. I want to make it clear to the hon. Gentleman that I made it clear to the unions that I expect that, with commercial management, the likely loss of jobs will be no greater and will possibly be somewhat less than it would be under any other option. Under any form of organisation, even a trading fund or a Government owned public limited company, there is no altering the fact that the likely work load of the dockyard in years to come will mean some loss of jobs. We hope to make that the minumum loss of jobs, and we believe that commercial management will ensure that it is the minimum.

I want to draw the hon. Gentleman's attention, if this is necessary, to the fact that the only real threat to the substantial number of jobs in Rosyth dockyard would be the cancellation of the Trident programme, which would immediately put at risk at least 2,000 people employed at Rosyth. I know that the employees appreciate that.

**Miss Janet Fookes** (Plymouth, Drake): Would my right hon. Friend confirm that the project undertaken by Brown and Root in Libya was a humanitarian civil project to bring much-needed water from a desert area to the coastal project? I would have thought that that would be very interesting to those who support the Third world.

**Mr. Younger:** I agree with my hon. Friend that there is no connection whatever in that matter. I repeat that Brown and Root has confirmed that in no circumstances will any Libyan nationals be allowed access to the Colliers Wood offices from which the dockyard contract would be operated. Brown and Root has also confirmed that the Devonport dockyard and the Libyan irrigation projects will be dealt with entirely separately. I hope that that will reassure my hon. Friend.

**Dr. David Owen** (Plymouth, Devonport): Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that many people, especially those closely associated with the Navy, believe that the House will come to regret vesting in a private monopoly the safeguarding and refitting of this country's nuelear deterrent? Will the Secretary of State nevertheless, despite making this decision for agency management in Rosyth, which I and many others regret, at least express a readiness to consider the Government-owned option for Devonport dockyard? Will he realise that the trade unions, although preferring the other option, would far prefer a Government-owned plc for Devonport dockyard to agency management?

**Mr. Younger:** I fully appreciate the right hon. Gentleman's point. I can confirm that the trade unions and local representatives who saw me recently confirmed that, while they would prefer to have a trading fund, as a fallback position they would be prepared to work along with a Government-owned plc as an alternative. I can give an undertaking to the right hon. Gentleman that I do not intend to make a firm decision on this until I have had further information about the views of those concerned. At this stage, it remains open either for a Government-owned plc or for commercial management at Devonport.

**Mr. Bill Walker** (Tayside, North): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the companies concerned are highly respected in Scotland, that they are noted for their management skills and that they will be appreciated by the people working at Rosyth when they realise that they are being managed effectively? Does he also agree that in the days when the Vulcan and V force were deterrents, the aircraft were serviced in part by civil contractors? There is nothing new in that practice.

**Mr. Younger:** My hon. Friend is correct in his last point. There is nothing new in the practice of major defence equipment being provided under contract from private enterprise. The vast majority takes place in that way and is successfully carried out.

I also agree that Babcock's is an extremely well respected company in Scotland and enjoys very good relations with its work force. My consideration of this has always been to ensure that there is the best possible chance of the dockyard not only being well managed but having the best chance of receiving extra work from private sources to help the redundancy position. Today's decision makes that more likely rather than less.

**Mr. Gordon Brown** (Dunfermline, East): Will the Secretary of State confirm that this decision, which no other comparable country, including America, would contemplate, has been accurately described by one of his officials as the high-risk option for our national defences and national security? Will he further confirm that, as a result of his announcement, up to 1,000 jobs will be written off in Rosyth in Scotland? Will he explain why he will sacrifice any interest, whether it be the interest of the work force or the interests of Britain, in pursuit of the Government's privatisation dogma?

**Mr. Younger:** That all sounds very good, but it does not accord with the facts. The hon. Gentleman speaks about the axing of 1,000 jobs. I stress to him that that regrettable situation would arise under whatever form of management is chosen for the dockyard. Secondly, the hon. Gentleman is the representativ e of the Opposition and I remind him yet again that the only real threat is the 2,000-plus jobs that would go immediately if the Trident programme were to be destroyed by the Opposition. That is the matter that the people of Rosyth are most worried about, and they are right.

**Mr. Tony Speller** (Devon, North): Is my right hon. Friend convinced that, in time of emergency, let alone in time of war, the control exercised over a dockyard operation would in any sense be as efficient under a private company as it would be under the control of the Government?

**Mr. Younger:** In every respect it can be as efficient. There is nothing new about it, because it is done in many other spheres of defence procurement, both in war and in peace. I have every confidence that the control which we shall exercise over the contractors not only in the form of the Government's share and so on but in other ways will ensure that these facilities will remain available to the nation in times of need. The facilities will be as good as, and I hope better than, they have been in the past.

**Mr. Dick Douglas** (Dunfermline, West): Can we get some assurances from the Secretary of State about the new or projected management structure for Rosyth? Who will be in charge of the Rosyth dockyard? Will it be Mr. Smith of Babcock Thorn, or will it be Rear-Admiral Burgess? What assurances do we have about the technology for the new PWR that is likely to go into Rosyth in terms of an SSBN or an SSN? How can we ensure that that technology will not leak to Babcock Thorn, which might be highly interested in new developments in relation to Sizewell?

**Mr. Younger:** The hon. Gentleman asks about management. I can assure him that Babcock Thorn fully shares our concern that the skills and experience of those who are at present responsible for running the Rosyth dockyard should not be lost to its future operation. A measure of continuity over the period of change ahead must also be an important consideration in selecting senior managers to run the dockyard after vesting day. Although discussions between the contractor and existing senior management are not yet fully complete and the final management plot cannot therefore be made public, I am satisfied that the arrangements for the future will meet our requirements in this vital area. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that any secret matter in the Rosyth dockyard will be as secure in future as it is today.

**Mr. James Couchman** (Gillingham): Will my right hon. Friend say what plans he has for the storage and disposal of low and intermediate radioactive waste from the refuelling and refitting of SSNs at Devonport should commercial management take over there? Will he reassure my constituents in Gillingham that he has no intention of transferring such waste to the Royal Navy facility at the former naval dockyard in Chatham?

**Mr. Younger:** I appreciate my hon. Friend's concern about this matter, but, as he knows, we never comment upon the methods of transport of such materials. I can assure him that the greatest care is taken in all such matters and, in any case, the safety measures and the care taken will not in any way be adversely affected by the change that I have announced.

**Mr. Nicholas Brown** (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): What information and what commitments has the Secretary of State given the new management of the dockyards about a future work programme? Has he been more candid with the privatised dockyard management than the Government ever were with the new owners of the privatised warship yards?

**Mr. Younger:** As the hon. Gentleman knows, we have had discussions with the proposed contractors about the likely work load at the dockyard and they have made their calculations based on that. They hope that, under their management, it may not be necessary to have as many redundancies as were previously announced as likely some weeks ago. Although there can be no guarantee of that, it is a somewhat hopeful sign. I hope that that reassures the hon. Gentleman as about information on other contractors. We have been extremely free with giving information to Swan Hunter, which is the hon. Gentleman's constituency interest—and rightly, because it is a valued contractor.

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): The Secretary of State will already be aware of my coming inquiry, as during business questions last Thursday the Leader of the House gave an assurance that he would acquaint him with it. Therefore, he will be aware of my question. What truth is there in the reports that Brown and Root refused to accept responsibility for the irradiated materials stored at Devonport? Without disclosing any official secret, will the Secretary of State tell the House what broad arrangements will be made to take care of the material because of that refusal?

**Mr. Younger:** Again, I cannot comment directly on the precise methods or the routes for transporting such material. I make it clear that every possible safety measure has been taken up to now and will continue to be taken in the future under the new form of management at Rosyth dockyard. That is the reassurance that I think the hon. Gentleman seeks.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): What sort of arguments would convince the Secretary of State in favour of a Government-owned plc or trading fund at Devonport as against privatised management? Of what must he be convinced before he will change his mind in favour of the arguments being deployed by the unions, because they will have to deploy them at the meeting on the 13th.

**Mr. Younger:** I wish to have the fullest expression of the views of the unions and others involved before I come to a final decision, but what I hope and intend to take into account principally in making my final decision is which of these alternative methods is likely to bring the most outside work into the dockyards while allowing them to do an efficient job with the work they have. Any of these alternatives will be preferred, if I believe that it is the most likely to produce more work for those in the dockyard.

## Houses (Radon Levels)

3.51 pm

**The Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning (Mr. William Waldegrave):** With permission, Mr. Speaker I wish to make a statement about measures to deal with the problems of naturally occuring radon gas in houses in some areas of the country.

Radon 222, is a naturally occurring radioactive gas which comes out of the ground, particularly in and around areas of igneous rock such as granite. In the open air it is dispersed, but concentrations can build up in buildings. The gas decays into minute solid particles which, if breathed in, can be deposited on the surface of the lungs. It has been known for a long time that occupational exposure to radon in uranium mines is associated with an increased incidence of lung cancer. The potential problem of radon in houses was recognised in the 1970s, following research in Sweden. The issue was highlighted in the United Kingdom by the 10th report of the Royal Commission on environmental pollution in 1984.

In our response to that report, we stated that we would consider the need to take action once we had received advice from the National Radiological Protection Board based on work it already had in hand. The NRPB has now completed its work on the identification of areas of higher than average radon. The board has also considered the dose levels above which remedial action should be taken and has submitted its findings and recommendations. I have arranged for copies of its advice, along with copies of the advice which the Government have received from the Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment, to be placed in the Library of the House.

Both the NRPB and COMARE have advised that the available evidence strongly suggests that exposure to radon gas increases the risk of lung cancer. The risk increases the higher the level of radon and the longer the exposure continues. They therefore recommend that action should be taken to reduce the doses in existing dwellings with the greatest concentrations and to limit exposure in dwellings to be built in the future.

The NRPB and COMARE have made recommendations, which we accept, about levels of radon above which precautionary action is advisable. The figures are 20 mSv per annum as an action level in existing houses, with 5 mSv per annum as the design level for new houses. These levels will be kept under review in the light of any further evidence that emerges about the effects of radon on health, on which there will be further work.

The Government intend to tackle in three ways the problem of identifying houses where such action is needed. First, the NRPB estimates that there are some 20,000 existing houses with radon concentrations high enough to give rise to doses of 20 mSv or more and that remedial action should be taken on these in due course. Most are likely to be located in Devon and Cornwall. To identify the houses with the highest levels, the Government are funding a substantial survey by the NRPB. This survey will take about two years, as measurements are needed over a relatively long period to obtain an accurate estimate of radon concentration. Secondly, so that people who live where radon concentrations might be above or near the action level can find out the radon concentration in their houses even if they are not within the scope of the NRPB survey, the NRPB will be arranging a measurement service at no cost to those concerned. Thirdly, in the remainder of the country, we judge that there is no need for special action and measurements will be made only at the expense of those who demand them. My Department is producing a leaflet, which will be made widely available in areas likely to have high radon concentrations. This will give full details of this service and other relevant advice to householders.

I want to stress that the risks from radon are assessed in terms of life-time exposure. There is therefore no need for drastic immediate measures to reduce levels. It is a matter of record that, in Devon and Cornwall, where radon levels tend to be higher than average, the death rate from lung cancer is lower than in many other parts of the country. The first step is to obtain an accurate measurement of the situation, so that the need for any remedial measurements can be properly assessed. This may take up to a year per house.

The responsibility for remedial measures in houses must rest with the house owner or the landlord in the case of both public and private rented accommodation. The Government are prepared to consider offering financial assistance towards the costs of remedial work to the most needy owner-occupiers.

Research work has already been undertaken both in this country and elsewhere on the type of remedial measures that may be appropriate, but the movement of radon gas into and within buildings is complex. Considerable further work is required. The Government intend to fund a two-year research programme on remedial and preventive measures to be undertaken by the Building Research Establishment. During the course of this programme, BRE will produce guidance notes, and these will be added to as we learn more.

For the future, we will make changes to the building regulations aimed at preventing the problem from occurring in new houses. We propose to provide guidance on practical measures which builders in particular areas may need to take.

We shall remain in close touch with work done abroad on this problem. Meanwhile, the measures that I have outlined demonstrate that we are taking the necessary steps to identify the extent of the problem, and to ensure that people in affected areas know what to do about it.

**Dr. David Clark** (South Shields): The Minister has failed to outline the seriousness of the problem of radon, which was highlighted most recently in the report of the Royal Commission on environmental pollution in 1984, as the Minister said. As the House knows, radon is a colourless and odourless gas, which is particularly highly radioactive. For most people, radon presents a more serious risk than all other natural sources of radioactivity put together. It is so serious that the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States has estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 deaths per year due to lung cancer are caused by radon. It is the second largest cause of lung cancer in the United States, following smoking. That is the seriousness of the problem that we are facing.

The Minister has proposed some limits, such as the limit of 20 mSv for established dwellings and 5 mSv for new dwellings. Why did he come to those precise figures? What were the figures applicable in the United States, and what are the figures applicable in Sweden, where a great deal of the research work has been done? I emphasise the point, because it is crucial that the House realises that the

*[Dr. David Clark]*

figure of 20 mSv a year is 14 times the average dosage of a worker in a nuclear installation and 1,000 times the dosage of a chest X-ray. Why was the figure 20 mSv chosen, when I was led to understand that the figure of 16 mSv was much more acceptable?

The Minister referred almost entirely to domiciliary buildings. Has he any proposals for places of work or any intentions for the mining industry? He also referred to the survey by the National Radiological Protection Board of parts of Devon and Cornwall. What are the boundaries of that survey?

If I may take that a stage further, I understand that in the map compiled by the NRPB it showed other parts of the country as well as Devon and Cornwall which suffered from hot spots. Why has the Minister decided that the people who live in the Derbyshire and Yorkshire Pennines, which had a high measurement reading, should not be included in this survey? Do the people in the northern parts of the country not matter? [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh, no."] Conservative Members may moan, but it is a fact, as scientific evidence has shown, that there are hot spots in the Derbyshire and Yorkshire Pennines. If the limits and levels are to be adhered to in Devon and Cornwall, the same figures should apply to other parts of the country. The Minister owes the House an answer.

**Mr. Eric Forth** (Mid-Worcestershire): It is unbelievable.

**Dr. Clark:** The hon. Gentleman may well say that it is unbelievable, but this is a very serious matter.

The Minister referred to the levels of radar exposure and he outlined the cost of remedying this problem. As far as I can ascertain, the average cost will be £2,000 per house. Therefore, many householders in Devon and Corwall, on this suggestion, will have to find £2,000 per House. Has the Minister no plans to help the average householder? What are his plans to try to assist hard-pressed local authorities in Devon and Cornwall which are faced with this problem?

I think that the House has a right to expect answers to those simple questions because it is my contention that the Minister has played down the seriousness of this problem this afternoon.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** It seems to me that on this occasion the House has to walk a narrow tightrope. We have the information, but if it is wrongly deployed it will unnecessarily scare people.

It is possible for the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark), in seeking to show that I am at fault, to score points off me in the House by trying to scare people. It is not worthy of the hon. Gentleman to try to scare people in Derbyshire when it is perfectly clear in my statement —it is all in the leaflet that the hon. Gentleman can read—that in some parts of the country, geologically, it is likely that it may be worth conducting a survey. We said in the statement that we shall pay for those surveys and they will be pari passu with other areas.

The hon. Gentleman mentioned Sweden. At present, the limits in Sweden and Finland are higher than those that we are proposing. The hon. Gentleman said that we were, in some way, restricting the work of the NRPB. That is not true. The results of the scientific work done by the NRPB show that the "great majority" of the problem is concentrated in one area. The reason for that concentration is geological and no other. We have not restricted its work in any way.

The hon. Gentleman said that the cost would be £2,000 per annum. That must be wildly——

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): He did not say that.

**Hon. Members:** Yes, he did.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I will give him the benefit of the doubt. I do not believe that he meant per annum. It is not possible to say how much it will cost. In some cases, the cost will be less and in other cases more. We shall, within the next few months, have the advice of the BRE. Its work is already in hand, which will put the matter in its proper context.

The hon. Member for South Shields mentioned places of work and he will be aware that those areas are already controlled by regulations under the Health and Safety Executive.

I believe that this matter is worthy of the attention of the House; otherwise I would not be here today. I urge all hon. Members — they have always said that if the Government are wholly open with environmental data they will try to assess the data properly—to respond in a way that does not cause unnecessary panic. Work is in hand.

May I remind people and those hon. Members whose constituents are affected that the level of lung cancer in Devon and Cornwall is no higher than the national average and that indeed, in the south-west it is below national average.

**Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop** (Tiverton): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for the statement that he has made and the thoughtful way in which it was presented.

Will my hon. Friend bear in mind that, in terms of the granite substructures and granite buildings, a significant proportion in Devon fall within the planning authority of the Dartmoor national park rather than the district council? Therefore, it should be in close contact with the Government. The question arises of the conversion of old granite agricultural buildings into dwellings, where this problem may be encountered at an early stage. I ask him to remember, in consultation with his officials, that the national park committee is effectively the planning authority for a large proportion of Devon and of the area likely to be affected by this hazard on which the Government are taking action.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** My hon. Friend makes two fair points that I will take into account. Granite, as such, need not be the problem. Hon. Members may ask why the granite areas of Aberdeen, for example, are not mentioned in this statement. The reason is that the granite there is of a different geological type, being solid; it is fissured granite from which the gas may escape more easily.

**Mr. Ron Davies** (Caerphilly): I put it to the Minister that his statement was not particularly precise. The Minister mentioned only Devon and Cornwall. I resent his accusation that my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark) was attempting to score points when he was seeking further information. Will the Minister confirm that other areas, in addition to the Pennines mentioned by my hon. Friend, could be affected? I am thinking particularly of North Wales, Cumbria and parts of Scotland, where the geology is similar to the affected parts of Cornwall. Will the Minister give an undertaking that, when the survey is complete, he will make the findings public so that people will have a chance to evaluate the extent of the problem? Will he give an undertaking to review the statement and his comments about the cost? It seems grossly unfair that the people in Devon and Cornwall will have the cost of the survey met presumably by a central fund, whereas people living in the more marginal areas will have to meet the cost themselves?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I fear that I still have not got the point across. Where there is a prima facie case for saying that the geology of an area might give rise to problems, the survey will be free wherever one lives.

The Opposition spokesman, the hon. Member for South Shields, made a point to which I did not respond —about why we have come up with these limits. They are based on the unanimous advice of the two principal independent advisory bodies—NRPB and COMARE. It would be quite wrong for the hon. Gentleman or myself, as laymen, to invent new numbers to please ourselves.

**Mr. David Mudd** (Falmouth and Camborne): I appreciate my hon. Friend's candid statement. I do not wish to inflame the panic of those affected or exacerbate the fears of others—especially worried people in my constituency—who will have noted my hon. Friend's remarks about exposure to radon increasing the risk of lung cancer. I have taken that on board. But what good news can my hon. Friend give to a 55-year-old unemployed tin miner who, having had difficulty paying his mortgage for no reason in his control, finds himself living near Troon and Beacon, beside one of the identified houses? What assurance can my hon. Friend give that person, who has had a life time of exposure to radon gas? Will his welfare be protected and, above all, will he get some satisfaction that remedial action is on the way— not at the end of two years or, if he is lucky, at the end of a cut-price instant survey by the NRPB? What immediate steps will be taken to remove his fears and worries and his potential suffering, which is growing by the day?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The first thing is that my hon. Friend should join me in explaining this situation in as little emotive language as can be mustered.

It will make no difference whatsoever to the risks faced by the 55-year-old man who has always lived in the same place if the survey is delayed to ensure the action taken is correct? I urge my hon. Friend to advise his constituents —we will give all the help we can with all the resources of government to give such advice—that he does not go out of his way to tell people that they should take panic action when the additional risk is minimal. Many of his constituents will have lived there with lower chances of cancer, as the statistics show, than the rest of the country. That remains the fact.

**Mr. Michael Meadowcroft** (Leeds, West): I welcome the Minister's statement, especially in relation to the free measurement. Given that it occurs capriciously and not across the whole country, will he assist local authorities, as the public landlord, especially in areas where there is a higher incidence, such as in the constituency of my late colleague in Truro. I understand that in an area called Trerace in St. Stephen, pregnant women are advised to move out because of the risk of miscarriage. Will he continue the research into the subject? Will he look at Professor Emlin's assertion that radon can emanate from coal ash, thus suggesting a far wider incidence around the country than just from granite? Will he study Professor Stein's view that there is a possible way of prevention through chemical absorption? Will he maintain the research into that, which may well produce some results?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** On the latter point, I can assure the hon. Gentleman that there will be continuing research sponsored by the Department of the Environment, the DHSS and the NRPB. I am sure that we must discuss the scale of the problem and the cost of the remedial action with the local authorities. I must say to the hon. Gentleman and to my hon. Friend the Member for Falmouth and Camborne (Mr. Mudd) that we must emphasise to those who may be in real difficulty that we do not have a closed mind about bringing help to those in need who may have to spend money to deal with the matter in due course.

**Mr. David Harris** (St. Ives): I congratulate my hon. Friend on having the courage to make a statement to the House. Will he please guard against the obvious danger that unnecessary panic may be spread among people in Cornwall, especially—I am sorry to say this—in the light of the initial reaction from the Opposition? Will he bring as much inforation to the public as possible on a continuing basis? Will he make sure that those responsible press ahead with all speed with further monitoring? Will he warn people to be on their guard against unscrupulous contractors who might want to rush in and try to gull people into ordering all sorts of bogus equipment and carrying out all sorts of inefficient work to deal with the problem?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** My hon. Friend's points are absolutely right. I should like to endorse what he said about bogus contractors. He, I and others who will be trying to address the media in the south-west should get the message across clearly: if somebody turns up on the doorstep in the next few weeks saying, "Well, squire, I've got a way to cure the old radon problem," he should be sent packing. Anyone who has any doubt about this matter should get in touch with the NRPB. The address is in the leaflets that we will be distributing. They should get in touch with my Department or with the DHSS if there is further doubt. The advice will be there. We have started to deal with the problem on the principle of openness that we are trying to establish in the environmental area. That is the only way forward, and we will continue in that style.

**Mr. Allen McKay** (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Will the Minister confirm, allowing for the fact that it is the early stage of deliberations, that finance will be available to local government if necessary and to private tenants or owner-occupiers? On the distribution of information, will he take into account the fact that some of the cottages may be holiday cottages, either bought or intended to be sold, and that the information should be given out accordingly?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The last point is a sound one. However, if the cottages are not occupied throughout the year, the effective dose will be much lower. We have said that we will look at support for needy owner-occupiers and I have no doubt that the councils most affected will want to discuss their housing investment programme allocation to see whether there is a need for adjustment.

**Sir Trevor Skeet** (Bedfordshire, North): Will the Minister confirm that double glazing is inclined to increase the concentration of thoron and radon gas due to the absence of any leaks of air into the room? Will he give any figures that he might have as to the number of deaths in the United Kingdom that can be attributed to that source, and will he confirm that the amount of radiation emitted from nuclear power stations is quite small compared with the amount of radon radiation that occurs in extensive parts of the United Kingdom?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** On my hon. Friend's first point, I do not want to start giving ad hoc advice from the Dispatch Box today. It is better to await the systematic professional advice from the Building Research Establishment. My hon. Friend's second point was quite right. Eighty-seven per cent. of the average exposure of our citizens to radiation comes from natural sources, 32 per cent. comes from radon gas and 0·1 per cent. is from discharges from the nuclear industry. It is worth keeping those things in proportion.

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): I welcome the statement made by the Minister which is made with some justification. On 1 December 1986, I tabled early-day motion 211 which made specific reference to these matters.

*[That this House notes that, according to the National Radiological Protection Board, 32 per cent. of radiation exposure to the average United Kingdom citizen is due to naturally occurring radon gas; that radon levels vary widely between different parts of the United Kingdom; that concentrations of radon gas in some houses can give rise to radiation exposures in excess of the annual maximum permissible levels for a member of the public and that, in extreme cases, can lead to exposures that exceed occupational dose limits for radiation workers; notes also that any exposure to radiation will increase the risk of cancer, genetic damage and possibly other health effects to exposed people; that radiation protection requires that all radiation exposures are kept as low as reasonably practicable; and therefore calls on Her Majesty's Government to (a) set standards for maximum permissible radon gas concentrations in all United Kingdom buildings, (b) introduce building regulations to require that all new buildings prevent, as far as is possible, the entry of radon gas and (c) set up a national programme to reduce radon gas concentrations in all existing houses and public and private buildings to below this maximum permissible level.]*

The three things I called for in that early-day motion have been met in some measure today. In response to the comments about opposition from Labour Benches, I must say that the only people who signed that early-day motion were members of the parliamentary Labour party.

The Minister said that the standards in Finland and Sweden are, to use his word, higher. There can be confusion. In these regulations we are talking about 20 mSv for old dwellings and 5 mSv for new dwellings. Will the Minister give a figure for old and new dwellings in Finland and Sweden so that we know whether he means more than 20 mSv or less or more than 5 mSv or less?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman. I am sorry that convention prevented me from signing his early-day motion. I do not want to attach myself to them too closely, because I have no doubt that there may be revisions abroad, as there may be here if we learn more, but the present figures are 40 mSv for existing buildings and 10 mSv for new buildings. Those figures may be altered in the future.

**Mr. Robert Adley** (Christchurch): Does my hon. Friend recall the written answer he gave on 7 June 1985 about the levels of gamma radiation dose rates? Will he confirm that none of the counties mentioned by the Opposition spokesman, the hon. Member for South Shields (Dr. Clark), is listed in the 20 places with the highest levels in England and Wales? Therefore, it might be advantageous if, before he came to the House, he did a little more homework.

After my hon. Friend's written answer to me, my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow), who is as ever assiduously in his place, provided me with a further answer that compared statistically, from the NRPB figures, the level of existing radiation dose rates in establishments where there are nuclear installations in this country. Every one was way below the figures given for naturally existing radiation dose rates. Is he aware that at Sellafield there is about one third the level of Dartmoor and at Winfrith in Dorset about one eighth? Will he do everything he can to ensure that the anti-nuclear brigade do not try to spread alarm when there is no justification for linking the presence of radon gas with nuclear installations?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Even the most hardened campaigner would be hard put to blame Lord Marshall for the presence of radon gas in the crust of the earth, but someone may try. My hon. Friend accused me of not having done my homework——

**Mr. Adley:** Not you.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** My hon. Friend accused the hon. Member for South Shields of not doing his homework. My hon. Friend is entirely right. I was going to add a gloss by saying that we are interested in alpha radiation because, using the jargon, it is the daughters of radon, the decayed products of radon — solid particles that emit alpha radiation that can be ingested into the lungs—that cause the problems.

**Mr. Patrick Nicholls** (Teignbridge): If I understood my hon. Friend correctly, he referred to the risk being calculated on the basis of a lifetime's exposure. Bearing in mind that that would suggest that somebody would have to be living in a house from their birth to their death, rarely going out and living in a badly ventilated house, does that not put things in context and show how infinitesimal the risk is? Can my hon. Friend relate the degree of radioactivity that can be expected to the dose that might be received simply by watching a television set?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I do not have the television figure in my mind. However, in spite of the presence beside me of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, I have another dose figure in my mind; that is the comparison with the average smoker's increased risk of lung cancer. We are talking about levels in the affected areas of about fifty times less than the self-inflicted risks of the average smoker.

**Mr. Robert Hicks** (Cornwall, South-East): Can my hon. Friend give a straightforward assurance, both to the House and to the nation, that what he has said this afternoon should not have an adverse effect on the tourist industry of Devon and Cornwall, or any other individual who wishes to visit the west country?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I can give that assurance with absolute certainty. In terms of the comparative risk of increased radiation, for example, of going abroad in an aeroplane—one has a brief dose of radiation if one flies in an aeroplane — the risks are not worth worrying about for the tourist visitor to the south-west.

## British Telecom (Dispute)

4.23 pm

**Mr. Derek Conway** (Shrewsbury and Atcham): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, for the purpose of discussing under Standing Order No. 20, a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the British Telecom dispute and the maintenance of emergency communications."

The House will be aware that the British Telecom dispute with its employees has now spread to the 110,000 engineers and today to 34,000 clerical staff. The point of urging a debate upon the House is not to question the role of the general secretary of the National Communications Union—a former Labour Member of Parliament and adviser to the Leader of the Opposition—or to wonder at his statement to the press that there must be a big confrontation in this matter; more importantly, it is so that the House can examine that which it approved in the Telecommunications Act 1984 part I, section 3—the duties and responsibilities of the Secretary of State and the Director General of Telecommunications

"to secure . . . all reasonable demands for . . . emergency services".

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will be conscious of his duty to ensure that the emergency services prevail, so that the House will be assured that this is not a trade dispute within a private company, but has ramifications for the deliberations of the Chamber.

I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will accept that the acts of vandalism and sabotage which we read about at the weekend are not the acts of British Telecom employees. In my constituency, the exchange has been vandalised, but the local engineers are maintaining emergency services and are being co-operative with the management who are staffing the repair service centres. In London, 13 exchanges have had their locks glued and have had to be forcibly entered; telephones have been out of action in west Yorkshire, and cables have been cut in Newcastle upon Tyne. Those are not the acts of responsible trade unionists, but of Left-wing anarchists who tag on to trade disputes.

Parliament will wish to know what protection measures the Government plan for the centres of communication; whether any saboteurs have been arrested and charged by the police; and whether the Royal Signals Regiment is on standby should that ultimately be necessary.

Such a debate will give Her Majesty's Opposition an opportunity to denounce, with conviction, the Left-wing extremists who endanger the lives of the sick and elderly by their despicable and illegal sabotage of our vital communications system.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the British Telecom dispute and the maintenance of emergency communications."

As the hon. Gentleman knows, the only decision that I have to take is whether to give the matter precedence over the business set down for today or tomorrow. I regret that I do not consider the matter that he has raised as appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

## Mr. Bernard Ingham

4.26 pm

**Mr. Patrick Nicholls** (Teignbridge): On a point of order. Mr. Speaker. The point of order that I wish to put to you, Sir, arises out of an exchange at Question Time last Thursday, when the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) was questioning my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. In that exchange the hon. Gentleman referred to a telephone conversation which he alleged [illegible] taken place between Bernard Ingham and the office of [illegible] chairman of United Newspapers, which owns, among other newspapers, *The Star*. During the course of that exchange, the hon. Gentleman asked whether it was

> "a proper use of public funds for a civil servant such as Mr. Bernard Ingham to bribe, berate and blackmail that small section of the Fleet street press".

On a number of occasions, Mr. Speaker, you have said that hon. Members must be responsible for the remarks that they make in the House.

As I understand what is said in the 20th edition of "Erskine May", previous speakers have gone further than that in particular circumstances. Page 338 of the 20th edition says:

> "Where the facts are of sufficient moment the Speaker has required prima facie proof of their authenticity."

The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East is not given to inflammatory statements in the House, so the words that he used have more significance than they might normally have. It is inconceivable that one can imagine words more damaging than "bribe, berate and blackmail" about a civil servant and it would be difficult to imagine words that could be more dangerous and destructive when by implication, they have been applied to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

I ask you to say, Mr. Speaker, that these words are so gross and offensive that the hon. Gentleman should be asked to either substantiate them or withdraw them.

**Mr. Eric Forth** (Mid-Worcestershire): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will be aware that Mr. David Stevens who was alluded to by the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), explicitly denied that he had had any contact with Mr. Bernard Ingham or 10 Downing street.

What possibility does someone such as Mr. David Stevens have to clear his name, or implication in such a matter, when he is not a Member of the House? Is it not grossly unfair that someone of his standing in public life should be dragged into a matter such as this and not have the opportunity to deny it, except through a newspaper?

**Mr. Kenneth Hind** (Lancashire, West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Page 338 of the 20th edition of "Erskine May" says that responsibility is placed on a Member asking a question to establish its factual basis. In the circumstances, *The Star*, which is referred to as the newspaper in question, has printed a denial under the heading "Abuse of Privilege". It says that the allegations were completely untrue.

In those circumstances, I seek your guidance, Mr. Speaker, on whether the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) was abusing the privilege of the House in making the allegation that he did.

**Mr. Max Madden** (Bradford, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall deal with one point at a time.

The hon. Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) gave notice of his point of order, so I start by saying that every hon. Member must take personal responsibility for what he says here and for naming people outside the House who have no recourse under parliamentary privilege.

The hon. Member has correctly stated the rule governing questions, that if a fact cited by a Member as a basis for his question is "of sufficient moment" he may be asked to produce prima facie proof of its authenticity.

But this matter arose out of a supplementary question, and it would by laying a heavy burden upon Mr. Speaker to expect him to judge, in an oral exchange between Members and a Minister, whether a particular fact was of sufficient moment to require prima facie proof of authenticity. However, since the hon. Gentleman has drawn my attention to the matter and has asked me for a ruling, having read the exchanges in the *Official Report*, and having noted what the Prime Minister said on the question I do not regard the matter as one in which I needed to intervene.

## Business of the House

4.29 pm

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is there a time limit on the main business of the House? Many hon. Members are likely to to be involved because of the interests, rights and privileges that are at stake.

I have been informed that there is some talk of the debate ending at 7 pm. This is a House of Commons matter and I hope that it is clear that if hon. Members still wish to debate the matter at that time they will be able to do so because there should be no time limit to this most important debate.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman may know that there was a motion on the Order Paper last night which was objected to, so the debate today may continue until 10 pm.

## Hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds

4.29 pm

**Mr. Max Madden** (Bradford, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. My point of order concerns the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) and I have given him notice that I intend to refer to him. Yesterday, the hon. Gentleman referred to leaflets which expressed views that no hon. Member, and few people outside, would either espouse or condone. He said:

> "Will my right hon. Friend, with the support of the Opposition Front Bench, not beseech local authorities that are financing that sort of literature to stop handing out the ratepayers' money for that purpose?"—[*Official Report*, 26 January 1987; Vol. 109, c. 24.]

As the hon. Gentleman is the parliamentary adviser to the Police Federation, it might be assumed that that information had been passed to him by the Police Federation or that, in turn, his views were endorsed or supported by the Police Federation.

I should like you to confirm two things, Mr. Speaker. The Home Secretary advised the hon. Gentleman that if he had any literature or any other sort of evidence to pass it to the police inquiry. Will you confirm, Mr. Speaker, that you, and through you, the Table Office, will accept questions from Members about evidence submitted to the police inquiry from the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds and others? Secondly, if, after reflecting upon what he said, he wished to withdraw his serious allegations against local authorities, would you confirm that the best way for him to do that would be to make an early personal statement?

**Mr. Speaker:** What the hon. Member for Bradford, West (Mr. Madden) has said really follows what the hon. Member for Teignbridge (Mr. Nicholls) said earlier. It is impossible for the Speaker to make a judgment in the Chamber during a supplementary question as to whether what has been said is accurate. That cannot be a matter for me; it must be a matter for the hon. Member concerned. With regard to tabling questions, I cannot rule on what is plainly a hypothetical matter. The hon. Gentleman must approach the Table Office on that.

## Private Notice Questions

4.32 pm

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Can you help the House to clear up a conundrum? As you know, under Standing Order No. 17(3), the only questions that can be asked after 3.30 pm are those which have not appeared on the Order Paper but which are, in your opinion, of an urgent character and relate either to matters of public importance or the arrangement of business. Did you accept any such questions on the morning of 21 January and, if so, in whose name was it put down?

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not know what the hon. Gentleman is referring to; he is not being specific.

**Mr. Marlow:** I believe that on Wednesday morning something appeared on the annunciator to the effect that a private notice question had been accepted by your office. Can you say who put down that private notice question?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman knows that private notice questions appear on the annunciator if they have been granted, but a Minister can, if he wishes, make a statement instead of answering a private notice question, and that is exactly what happened on that particular day.

**Mr. Marlow:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** No. I do not think that I can add any more. That is a plain matter of fact.

**Mr. Marlow:** Who put down the private notice question which appeared on the annunciator?

**Mr. Speaker** Order. The hon. Gentleman should listen to what I said. It is for a Minister to make a statement in place of a private notice question if he so wishes.

**Mr. Marlow:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. There can be nothing further to it.

**Mr. Marlow** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order! There can be nothing further to it. I have stated the facts.

**Mr. Marlow:** You have not answered the question, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have answered the question.

## Pensioners' Right to Fuel and Communications

4.34 pm

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to ensure the supply of gas and electricity for pensioner households; to abolish standing charges for pensioner consumers for gas, electricity and water; and to abolish telephone rentals for pensioners.

This is the fourth time that I have introduced a Bill such as this, and a number of Bills on similar subjects have been introduced to the House by other hon. Members. On each occasion they have been opposed at a later stage or blocked by Conservative Members who do not have the guts to vote against such Bills at the first opportunity and who have been in correspondence with local pensioner organisations saying either that they agree with the Bill but cannot do anything about it, or that they profoundly disagree with the Bill but were not here when it was first proposed.

It is important to put the Bill in context. During the cold weather of the past few weeks the Government have given themselves enormous publicity by handing out £10 payments over two weeks to pensioner households to attempt to alleviate the severe hardship caused by the cold weather. However, every year every pensioner household has to pay four quarters of a gas standing charge of £8·90, and four quarters of an electricity standing charge of £8 Therefore, the £10 that has been paid to pensioner households is rather less than one sixth of standing charges taken over a year.

There is a great deal of evidence to show that, particularly since 1980, there has been a deliberate and steep increase in the price of gas, deliberately encouraged by the Government, partly to gain from the Gas Corporation levy, but also to make the Gas Corporation ready for privatisation — ready for the theft of that organisation from the public purse. That is one reason for those increases.

Anyone who thinks that those matters are trifling should note that since 1982 the Gas Corporation levy has been well over £2 billion. In 1982-83 it was £471 million; in 1983-84, £522 million; in 1984-85, £500 million, and the latest figure is £520 million. That levy is, in effect, a tax on everyone's gas bill. The same applies to electricity and water. We are seeing the pauperisation of so many people in order to make those industries ready for privatisation.

In the past, there have been rebate schemes for standing charges. It is estimated that 21 per cent. of gas consumers and 11 per cent. of electricity consumers received some benefit under those rebate schemes. However, the Government abolished those rebate schemes which meant that no one had to pay more than half his total bill as a standing charge. I have before me the bill of one of my constituents whose standing charge is about 95 per cent. of her bill for the summer quarter. We are witnessing taxation by poll tax methods of the lowest paid and smallest consumers in Britain. This is a prelude of what the Government intend to do in the future rates Bill for England and Wales. That is one reason why I strongly oppose a standing charge system.

The most serious matter is the treatment of Britain's elderly and their ability to warm their homes, cook their meals and live in some degree of decency. During the cold weather we saw the undoubted concern of millions of people in Britain for the plight of the elderly. The problem is that their plight remains the same throughout the year when they have to try to meet their bills, not just during times of extreme cold weather.

Many doctors are reluctant to ascribe death to hypothermia on a death certificate. They will often put down many other causes, but seldom hypothermia. Yet during the first half of 1985, of all deaths in England and Wales, 363 were directly due to hypothermia and 655 were due to related causes. During the first half of 1986 the figures were 355 and 673 respectively. If a clear direction were given by the DHSS to medical officers of health that when they believe hypothermia to be the cause of death they should say so, those figures would be far higher.

Other countries treat their elderly far better than we do and do not go through our annual hypothermia epidemics. The Bill would not solve all the problems of death through hypothermia, and it would not solve all the problems of those who are unable to pay for their gas, electricity and water bills, or indeed their telephone rental, but it would go some small way towards recognising the plight of the elderly by ensuring the supply of those vital commodities.

Secondly, the Bill would abolish standing charges for gas, electricity and water. Thirdly, it would abolish telephone rentals for the elderly, for whom communication is a necessity, not a luxury. More important, it would prevent the Secretary of State from allowing a unit cost rise to pay for those items and make him pay for them out of the taxation on the gas and electricity bills of everybody else.

In the past, Opposition Members have drawn attention to the likely profits of the corporations involved. In its first full year of privatisation British Gas is expecting to make a profit of £1 billion, much of it from pensioners. British Telecom's profit is expected to be over £2 billion.

The Bill is very important and merits a great deal of support. In the past, Conservative Members have not had the guts to vote against such Bills, although they have done everything possible to block them at a later stage. I hope that today those who oppose the Bill will have the courage to get up and say in public that they do not believe that pensioners should be better treated than the rest of the community as a way of combating the misery of death from hypothermia.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jeremy Corbyn, Miss Joan Maynard, Mr. Chris Smith, Miss Jo Richardson, Mr. Harry Cohen, Mr. Bob Clay, Mr. Tony Benn, Mr. Tony Banks, Mr. Dennis Skinner, Mr. Bill Michie and Mr. Robert N. Wareing.

## PENSIONERS' RIGHT TO FUEL AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jeremy Corbyn accordingly presented a Bill to ensure the supply of gas and electricity for pensioner households; to abolish standing charges for pensioner consumers for gas, electricity and water; and to abolish telephone rentals for pensioners: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 3 April and to be printed. [Bill 56.]

## High Court Injunction (Mr. Speaker's Order)

4.42 pm

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I raise this matter because it has been discussed by hon. Members on both sides of the House. Having read the Standing Orders and, bearing in mind that today your position has been thrust—unwittingly, no doubt—into the cauldron of the political climate in respect of the motion, it crossed our minds whether, from a purely academic point of view, as the motion is somewhat critical of your conduct in respect of matters last week, and as this is not covered by the Standing Orders, you should take the Chair during the debate. I ask that as a simple academic question and to establish the facts.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think that the House would judge that the motion is critical of the action that I took. Indeed, the motion confirms my action. It is now up to the House to decide the way in which it wishes to proceed in the future. That is the only question before us today, and it is for the House to decide whether I did the right thing.

**Mr. Skinner:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is pretty clear that we are having a debate because there are different points of view on whether what happened last week was suitable to all hon. Members. I have no doubt at all that, had there been unanimity last week, the debate would not be taking place today. The fact that there is a debate means that there are differing views on the issue. Therefore, to some extent, it is a question of your conduct in that respect, Mr. Speaker. It may be a minor matter to some hon. Members, but more important to others. My hon. Friends and I are trying only to establish the question of order. As there is no unanimity, should that procedure be followed?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman will recollect that it was I who suggested that this matter should be put to the House. I must say to the hon. Gentleman and to the House that even if this had been a critical motion it would still have been right for the Speaker to be in the Chair.

**Mr. James Callaghan** (Cardiff, South and Penarth): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to raise a point of order that concerns your position and to seek an assurance from you. I apologise for not giving you notice but I did not read the motion or the amendment—both of which are defective—until I came into the Chamber.

The motion refers to the action of 22 January, but also to the subject of an injunction by the High Court. There is no mention here of security. This seems to me to be significant, because if the motion or the amendment were passed—the amendment is perhaps closer to the point of view that I want to put than is the motion—you—or a future Speaker—might feel guided by what will be a resolution of the House of Commons, and if any injunction is asked for in the High Court and granted, you will, on the basis of precedent, feel obliged to resist any discussion in the House of Commons.

I am disturbed by the motion as it stands, and if you, Mr. Speaker, were to regard it as a precedent, I feel that that would be a constitutional outrage. Therefore, on a point of order—I think that it is a genuine point of order—I ask for an assurance that whatever decision is taken on the motion and on the amendment, you will not regard it as a precedent.

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. The point made by my right hon. friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) has led me to believe that were we to pass either the motion or the amendment, we would be accepting a ruling which, whatever we may think, would be a precedent in "Erskine May", and would, therefore, bind future Parliaments.

The point that I should like to put to you, Mr. Speaker, is that, in matters as grave as this—the relationship between an injunction in the courts and the role of the Government and the House of Commons, which you are elected to defend—it is without precedent that the House should reach a view without the matter going to the Committee of Privileges. This Committee was set up to examine in great detail something that we appear to be handling as if it was a normal matter of inter-party controversy.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, would you accept a motion for the adjournment of the debate? If that were carried it would be open to the Leader of the House to put the matter to the Committee of Privileges, and for the House to return to it when the full constitutional implications had been considered.

**Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop** (Tiverton): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As I read the motion before us, it is not concerned with setting precedents about anything. In so far as it means what it says—it must be presumed to mean what it says—the motion is about one individual decision taken by Mr. Speaker on one particular occasion. What it does not do is to extend that into any general proposition. Therefore, I do not think that any assurance is necessary about precedents, because the motion is not open-ended. The motion is specific to one decision on one occasion. The words used in it merely enable the House to identify what the decision is which the House is debating.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman is quite correct. The action that I took on 22 January is the matter that we are discussing this afternoon. I assure the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) that I have no intention of making this a blanket ruling. In any case, it was not a ruling but an instruction. It is a matter for debate and for the House to decide, and that is what I think the House should do. I have selected amendment (a) in the name of the Leader of the Opposition, and I have also selected amendment (h) in the name of the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins).

**Mr. Neil Kinnock** (Islwyn): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I hear what you say, and I am certain that, apart from the general wisdom that comes from that Chair, your interpretion must in common sense be correct. It appears to me, although, as you know, I have not had any form of conversation with you on the subject, that what you did last Thursday was entirely acceptable, as our amendment suggests. Your decision was taken in particular circumstances.

If the House were at some juncture today to vote to continue a prohibition on the basis of an injunction that was sought and gained on Wednesday—which was reflected in the decision which you were obliged to take in the circumstances on Thursday morning—for as long as the injunction remains in effect, would it not be the case that you could not have anticipated that outcome last Thursday, and would it not be an inhibition of your freedom of action and of the freedom of the House if the motion were accepted?

**Mr. Speaker:** As I read the right hon. Gentleman's amendment, that is exactly what it says. That is the amendment that I have selected.

**Mr. James Callaghan:** Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am grateful to you for saying that you would not regard this as a precedent, but it does not necessarily follow that it will not be so regarded in the future. With respect to you, Sir—I try to respect your rulings in this matter — it seems that my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) is on to a good point. This matter needs further detailed consideration by the Leader of the House and the Committee of Privileges. I therefore ask you whether you would be prepared to accept a motion, on which the House can decide, to adjourn the proceedings at the end of our debate, when the arguments have been adduced, so that further consideration can be given to the future procedures of the House.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is up to the House to decide whether to accept the motion, the Opposition amendment or, indeed, to add the further amendment. I am not responsible for motions that are put on the Order Paper. That is up to the House to decide.

**Mr. Benn:** Further to the point of Order, Mr. Speaker. Following what my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth has said, I think you will appreciate that we are not anxious that the vote should be a reflection on a personal decision made by you, but we are afraid—I am very much afraid—that a decision to confirm, as the Government say, or to accept, as my right hon. Friend said, will entrench a precedent. You know very well, Mr. Speaker, that your predecessor Mr. Speaker Lenthall established the duty of Speakers to defend the House. When an attempt was made to arrest the fiveMembers, he said:

> "I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak here, but as the House is pleased to direct me."

That created a precedent. From that day to this the House has looked to its Speaker to protect it from the Crown and the courts. My fear is that, because of the high controversy surrounding this one issue about defence, we may stumble into a precedent which would be undesirable.

None of us want to vote against you personally, Mr. Speaker, but we do not wish to put on the record a precedent that would bind future Parliaments. That is the issue. Will you accept a motion to adjourn the debate? The House has to determine it, but would you accept such a motion? Will the Leader of the House —as he is Chairman of the Committee of Privileges—say whether he would be ready to take on board an examination of the full implications of what we are to discuss today?

**Mr. Ivor Stanbrook** (Orpington): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. When I first read the motion, I confess that I also was a little disturbed at the thought that we might be rewriting our Standing Orders to make it impossible in future to discuss any matter that was the subject of an injunction in the High Court. I was satisfied, however, on further consideration, and having looked up the authorities, that that is not at all what the motion suggests.

The motion arises because you, Mr. Speaker, rightly took it upon yourself to give the House a decision in a particular case. Perhaps the wording could have been improved, but the decision relates only to one action on one day and one case in respect of which one injunction was issued. There can be no doubt that we are dealing with a specific instance in which you used your authority pending consideration by the House. That would appear to be a normal use of your powers, and therefore it is quite unnecessarily suggested that this would be a precedent. If it were, it would have to be followed by an amendment to Standing Orders, and that is not the case.

**Mr. Michael Foot** (Blaenau Gwent): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I press the case to you again? It is certainly within your power, is it not, at some stage in the debate, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) has suggested, to accept a motion for the adjournment of the debate? I should have thought that these circumstances were such that you should consider that. You may wish to do that later, but I should have thought that it would be possible to do that fairly early.

What is presented to the House is unique. What many of us fear—the more we discuss it, the deeper that fear will become—is that if the Government's motion or the Opposition amendment is carried a precedent will be set. Future Speakers in similar or reasonably similar circumstances to what occurred last week would then be able to turn back to this occasion and say that the House discussed it, a vote was taken and that that should guide us.

Surely there has hardly ever been a case — I can hardly think of a precedent — when a matter of this nature has been brought before the House by the Government within a few days without it having been referred to the Committee of Privileges or the Committee on Procedure, which are the right places in which to consider it. It is wrong for the Government and the Leader of the House, who has responsibilities in this matter, to press the motion on the House in the face of these objections. I therefore hope that we will have your assistance, Mr. Speaker.

We could have the assistance of the Leader of the House. Having heard what has been said, he could say that he will not press the motion to a Division. That would solve the problem. If the Leader of the House does not take that course, I urge most strongly that you, Mr. Speaker, accept at some stage a motion proposing the adjournment of the debate so that the matter can be considered properly by the proper Committee.

**Mr. Speaker:** This is in no sense a party political matter. It is a matter of high constitutional importance and one for the whole House. The matter is for the House to decide. I think that we must see what explanations may be given from the Front Bench. *[Interruption.]* Order. I shall then reflect on what the right hon. Gentleman has said and take my decision.

**Mr. Kinnock:** Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. As you have just said, the House has the power to decide which form of words on the Order Paper it will

*[Mr. Kinnock]*

accept. The problem arises on this occasion from the fact that the Government took a certain course of action, including an application to the High Court for an injunction against certain hon. Members. Both you and I, Mr. Speaker, in particular circumstances, made a specific response. As a consequence of that response, you counselled us on Thursday that it was for the House to decide.

A form of words has been chosen by the Government Front Bench which would effectively prolong the life and effect of an injunction taken in another court, and not in the High Court of Parliament. The consequence of that, as it is conceivable that Conservative Members could vote on partisan grounds, is that a motion is tabled which is a reflection on your decision last Thursday and, for reasons which are not entirely to do with constitutional niceties, but for partisan reasons of support for the Government — which are totally understandable — you will have created a precedent and prolonged the life of an injunction granted in another court. We might have an opportunity further to reflect on that, because that would not be the effect of the amendment.

In addition, I suggest that the Chair should emphasise that an injunction in another court cannot of itself apply to this High Court of Parliament, and that to continue the effect of an injunction sought by the Government in another court will be interpreted as breaching that essential convention, which is central to the constitution of this House of Commons, as both my right hon. Friends have pointed out.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** It is sometimes believed outside this House that the House is subject to no discipline whatever, neither that of the courts outside, nor that of its Members inside. It is essential that that view should never be supported in this House. The fact that no court outside can interdict this House from discussing something in no way removes from the House the power or the duty to control its own affairs and discipline its own affairs. What this motion offers the House the opportunity of doing is not submitting to the injunction or order of a court outside, but imposing voluntarily on itself a reasonable discipline in the national interest.

That is the question that will be before the House, and it is quite wrong to represent, either on a point of order or in substantial debate, that question as being tantamount to subjecting the House to injunctive processes from courts outside it.

**Mr. Benn:** Before you give your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank you for promising to consider the request that has been made. In order to clarify the matter, may I ask you to consider whether it would be possible for you to accept a manuscript amendment on the following lines at the end of the debate, or whenever you think appropriate:

> "That the debate be adjourned and Mr. Speaker's ruling of 22 January be referred to the Committee of Privileges."

If the Leader of the House were prepared to assent to his own Committee examining it, in view of the enormity of the issues raised, we could have a debate which would be an opportunity for Members to give their view before the Committee of Privileges meets. It would greatly help if the Leader of the House could indicate now his readiness to respond to that proposal.

**The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen):** The motion, Mr. Speaker, has not been submitted without careful consideration as to its assisting our procedures and to validate the action that you were obliged to take last Thursday morning. I believe that it would be a service to the House if we proceeded to debate it in those terms.

As to the other considerations mentioned by the right hon. Members for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callagham) and for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), it was open to them to put down an amendment to secure what they are now seeking to achieve.

**Mr. Kevin McNamara** (Kingston upon Hull, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry to prolong the matter, but could you explain to me precisely what the Government motion means? As I understand it, if we take out "on 22 January" we establish a general precedent, namely, that Mr. Speaker has the power to close rooms during the duration of any High Court injunction, whether sought by the Government, by a private citizen, or by anyone who felt that his rights were being aggrieved by a matter being discussed in Parliament before the subject of the injunction had been considered, or indeed by someone seeking to secure an injunction to prevent a matter being discussed in the House in such circumstances as to avoid justice being done and the people knowing about it.

It seems to me that a future Speaker, looking at this resolution—even bearing in mind what you have said, Mr. Speaker—could interpret it as a general power in Mr. Speaker to close rooms pending an injunction.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House knows that that is not my intention. The House knows that what I did on Thursday of last week was to suggest that the matter be put to the House for its decision. I say again that this is in no sense a party political matter. The Government have put down their motion and the Leader of the Opposition has put down his amendment, which, it seems to me, states exactly what he said at the Dispatch Box a few moments ago, that the House takes out from "the House" to the end and substitutes entirely different words. If the House votes for that—and it is up to the House—that would be the position.

As for the manuscript amendment, if the right hon. Gentleman will submit it to me in writing I shall consider that proposition.

**Mr. James Callaghan:** Just one more word, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the House says that we could have put down amendments. As far as I am concerned, this motion did not appear on the Order Paper until today.

**Mr. Cranley Onslow** (Woking): It was in the "No" Lobby yesterday afternoon.

**Mr. Callaghan:** It did not appear on the Order Paper until this morning. If some people saw the motion beforehand, that is not conveying it to the House of Commons. The proper way to convey it to the House of Commons is through the Order Paper of the House. So, while I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for saying that you will not regard this motion as in any way a precedent, I hope that you will also take into account in your consideration the fact that this motion did not appear until this morning and will bear that in mind when condidering whether to accept a manuscript amendment.

**Mr. Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough and Horncastle): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am not sure that it helps, but I will take it.

**Mr. Leigh:** As my hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) has said, the motion was in full view. I myself put down an amendment to it, and I am simply a Back Bencher. Surely the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) could have done the same?

**Mr. Speaker:** It is the fact that the motion was tabled yesterday and appeared on the Order Paper this morning. I will, therefore, consider the manuscript amendment, as I have already said.

5.6 pm

**The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen):** I beg to move,

That this House confirms the order of Mr. Speaker on 22nd January prohibiting the use of any room under the control of the House of Commons for the showing of a film, or the playing of a sound track thereof, which was the subject of an injunction by the High Court; and continues that prohibition in force so long as the injunction remains in effect.

As the title, and indeed the motion, make clear, our debate this afternoon arises from your decision, Mr. Speaker, on Thursday 22 January that no room under the control of this House be used to show the film which had been the subject of a High Court injunction the previous day. You received support from both sides of the House for that decision, but you made it clear that you had taken that action in order that nothing should

"prejudice the position until the House itself had had an opportunity to discuss the matter."—[*Official Report*, 22 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 1025.]

Accordingly, the Government have provided an early opportunity for the House to do just that.

I propose to explain what the motion before us would do, and why we believe that this is the best course open to the House. In particular, I recognise that there may be a special interest in the possible effect of the motion temporarily on the work of Select Committees, and I hope that it will be for the convenience of the House if I indicate now that I shall deal with that point towards the end of my speech. First, however, I shall outline briefly the background to the events of last week which culminated in your decision, Mr. Speaker.

The background to last week's events was made known to the House by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in response yesterday to a question from the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours). In that response she explained that it became clear last October that one programme in the series entitled "The Secret Society" would deal with specific material on a secret defence project. The BBC later decided not to broadcast this sensitive material.

Following Press reports on 18 January that the film would be given a private showing, however, my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, acting on behalf of the Government as a whole, applied on 21 January for an ex parte injunction against Duncan Campbell, who had accumulated the material on which the BBC programme was based. This application was supported by an affidavit alleging that dissemination by Duncan Campbell of the material in question would be severely damaging to national security. In the light of this, Mr. Justice Ian Kennedy granted an order restraining Mr. Campbell from disclosing or publishing, or permitting the disclosure or publication of,

"all or any of the information within his knowledge".

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): Up to this time, could Mr. Duncan Campbell possibly have received any kind of letter from the Attorney-General suggesting that it was clear for him to go ahead? It would be helpful to the House if any correspondence between the Attorney-General and Mr. Duncan Campbell could be given to us.

**Mr. Biffen:** This is a point which I feel could more adequately be answered by my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General, who will reply to the debate. I will see that his attention is drawn to it.

After the injunction had been granted, the Treasury Solicitor wrote to two Members—the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) and the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown) — drawing their attention to the injunction's existence as press reports had suggested that they intended to show the film in a room under House of Commons control. Later that evening it became known that the hon. Member for Livingston and other hon. Members had booked a room with the apparent intention of showing the film during the morning of 22 January.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): Is the Minister telling the House that the Government first knew of this programme on 10 October but did not move against it in any way until some time around 18 to 21 January? Was no attempt made to stop the BBC making the programme?

**Mr. Biffen:** I am not saying that. If the hon. Gentleman had listened to the questions to the Prime Minister this afternoon, he would have heard that very point dealt with.

**Mr. Robin Cook** (Livingston): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Minister said earlier that the Government learned on 18 January that there was an intention by myself and others to show the film on 22 January. On 21 January, the Government applied for an injunction to prevent that. What happened to the three days in between?

**Mr. Biffen:** Those are precisely the points of detail that will be dealt with by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, who has direct responsibilities in this area and who will be winding up the debate.

To prevent the film being shown before the House had had a chance to debate whether or not this should be done, my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General applied for an injunction early on 22 January to restrain hon. Members from showing the film. That application was, however, refused by Mr. Justice Ian Kennedy on the basis that the House should regulate its own proceedings. Thus we came to the point when you, Mr. Speaker, issued your decision that the film should not be shown in any room under the control of this House.

**Mr. McNamara:** I return to the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) about the three-day gap. It was possible for people to see that film without knowing of the Government's seeking an injunction. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) and I saw it, in pursuance of what we felt to be our duty to this House and to our party in relation to the RAF debate which was going to take place during that week. The Minister will recall that I mentioned it in that debate. If it was so important—we

*[Mr. McNamara]*

already knew from the invitations that were issued the preceding week and from *The Observer* newspaper that it was to be shown—why was there not more immediate and direct action by the Government rather than waiting until a later date? I should be grateful to hear the information that the Attorney-General has just passed to the Minister.

**Mr. Biffen:** As I have already said, this point will be dealt with by my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General, not least because of his direct responsibilities in this area.

Your decision, Mr. Speaker, has already been upheld on both sides of the House. Traditionally, Members have recognised that holders of your office have a wide-ranging discretion and a special responsibility to act in the best interests of the House. That is particularly the case when, as on this occasion, the matter requires resolution before there is an opportunity for the House to meet to debate it.

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): The right hon. Gentleman has made it clear that there is a discretion on the part of the Speaker, but that contradicts his earlier point about the Speaker being obliged to make a decision. Whether it was correct or incorrect is for the House to judge, but Mr. Speaker was not obliged to make that decision—he made it on the basis of his own knowledge of the circumstances.

**Mr. Biffen:** Mr. Speaker is, of course, a free agent in this matter and has sought early parliamentary confirmation of his action. There can be no doubt about those essential facts of the situation. To imply that somehow or other Mr. Speaker was leaned upon—I am not sure that that implication was intended—is totally remote from the truth.

I believe, as I am sure that the House believes, that it is in the best interests of this House for us to avoid a position in which we might be seen to render ineffective the decision of the High Court on a matter of national security.

**Mr. Foot:** Will the Leader of the House now deal with the very important matters that were raised before he embarked on the debate? When Mr. Speaker had given his ruling and the Government were proceeding to the next step, did the Government at any stage consider referring this important question to the Committee of Privileges or the Committee on Procedure, and was any such advice given by the Attorney-General? I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will find no other case in parliamentary history in which a Government decided to proceed with a motion of this nature without the matter first going to one of those Committees.

**Mr. Biffen:** I assure the right hon. Gentleman that in the view of the Government it is wise for the House to have an early opportunity to consider this matter. For those who take the view that the preferred course is to refer the matter to the Committee of Privileges, I should point out that the existence of this motion enables that matter to be raised.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Biffen:** I have given way generously but I have a responsibility to the House generally to proceed.

We are grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for exercising your discretion in this way. The motion before us specifically confirms the action that you took in prohibiting the House or any room under the control of the House being used for the showing of this one film and giving the House itself an opportunity to consider the matter. In seeking the continuance of that prohibition so long as the injunction granted on 21 January remains in effect, the motion further provides for the endorsement of the basis on which you made that decision.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** *rose*——

**Mr. Biffen:** I have already made it clear to the hon. Gentleman that I intend to finish. I intend to develop my speech for a while because I owe it to the House to do so. The hon. Gentleman is nature's eternal barrack-room lawyer. I am speaking on a matter of supreme significance to the House—a matter on which a judgment, not easy or lightly considered, is to be made by the House. I have a responsibility to put the case as I believe it to be on behalf of the Government and to seek the endorsement of the House. I believe that that endorsement will show that we believe in prudent behaviour in the face of an injunction which was sought for national security but which was deemed to be set aside by certain Members seeking to use the facilities of this House.

The considerations which I believe led you, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the film could not be shown within the precincts of the House seemed to me to be valid reasons for seeking to ensure that that should continue to be the case until the injunction is lifted. The House will have noted that the terms of the motion are specifically directed to the decision of 22 January and its continuance. This reflects the approach recommended by a number of hon. Members — among them my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) and the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) — in supplementary questions last Friday.

**Mr. Kinnock:** The right hon. Gentleman has just said that the implication of what you, Mr. Speaker, did last Thursday was that the prohibition should remain in force for as long as the injunction remains in force. You, Mr. Speaker, will recall, as I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman will recall, that in your statement to the House last week you said that nothing should occur to prejudice the position relating to the High Court injunction until the House itself had had an opportunity to discuss the matter and to make its own determination upon the matter. I submit that what you said last Thursday in no way implied that you thought that the prohibition should last as long as the injunction but only that it should last until such time as the House made its decision.

**Mr. Biffen:** The House is faced with a central decision as to whether the arrangements relating to the morning of last Thursday should continue for as long as the injunction continues, or whether at some stage one should reckon that we could, as it were, uncouple from that situation. I understand the right hon. Gentleman's position to be that there should be a point of uncoupling. We are saying that for clarity and simplicity the arrangements should last for as long as the injunction lasts. To move any distance from that, or to engage in a pick and choose exercise, would be difficult for Parliament and intolerable for Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Kinnock:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman again, but this is a matter for you. The principle of coupling and uncoupling has been introduced by the right hon. Gentleman. I have to ask, Mr. Speaker, whether last Thursday it was in your mind that there should be an extension of the prohibition for as long as the injunction lasted, or whether I and many other hon. Members were correct in believing that what was in your mind was that the prohibition should last only for so long as the House had not made its own determination.

**Mr. Speaker:** What was in my mind was to make that decision until the House had decided what should be done about the matter. I think that the right hon. Gentleman's amendment stakes out fairly that position.

**Mr. Biffen:** So that there is no misunderstanding between us, one of the matters that the House will have to resolve on this occasion is whether or not the arrangements of last Thursday should last as long as the injunction. If no view was explicitly taken on that matter, it would be left suspended in indecision, so the House properly addresses itself to that point. Of course, the right hon. Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock) and his colleagues take a different view. We understand that they are anxious to maximise any possible points of difference between us so that they may find an alternative on which they can unite.

Quite apart from my seeking a motion which would prove a generally acceptable basis for debate, I believe that there are strong arguments which should dissuade us from seeking to generalise in this area in the immediate aftermath of an individual case. First, as my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst said, laying down regulations which will restrict the activities of private Members is not something that we should undertake lightly.

**Mr. Spencer Batiste:** (Elmet) Is it not the primary responsibility of individual Members of the House to have regard to the consequences of their actions? Has not this unfortunate constitutional position arisen simply because some hon. Members are not prepared to exercise that responsibility? Is my right hon. Friend aware that many in the House will want to ensure that there is a mechanism in place to avoid a repetition of this serious and damaging occurrence so that we do not have to come back to this in the coming days?

**Mr. Biffen:** I take my hon. Friend's point, but our immediate task is to make secure the decision that was taken last Thursday and to realise the consequences that flow from it. My hon. Friend has wider ambitions, but I believe that they should await another occasion.

Secondly, in this most sensitive area of the relationship between the courts and this House, it has traditionally been the practice that we should as far as possible avoid broad statements defining their respective jurisdictions. Instead, we have dealt with each issue as it arose, and it seems to me both wise and pragmatic to continue to do so. In my view it would, therefore, be wholly inappropriate to use this case as an occasion for a formal recasting of our procedures and machinery for dealing with such matters. Equally, it would be inconsistent with that approach to use this one case as the basis on which to erect sweeping institutional changes to the way in which the House has access to security information.

I recognise, however, as I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, that there is particular interest in how the motion bears on the work of Select Committees. The amendment from my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) addresses this point. Let me say at once that it is not the Government's intention to alter the long-standing conventions under which Select Committees operate—in particular, with regard to the disclosure of information related to matters affecting national security. These recognise, of course, that such information is not unconditionally available.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Has the Leader of the House noted the terms of his own motion? It refers to prohibiting

> "the showing of a film, or the playing of a sound track thereof".

Is the Leader of the House aware that there are many transcripts of the whole television programme in the possession of hon. Members on both sides of the House? I have myself offered copies of the transcript to the Chairman of Public Accounts Committee and asked him to distribute it to members of that Committee because we need it in the process of carrying out our work? Is it not ludicrous that the Government should propose to ban a film the transcript of which is being circulated to Members in the carrying out of their public duties?

**Mr. Biffen:** I do not accept the hon. Gentleman's argument. To suggest that there should be casual flouting of the spirit or the letter of an injunction secured in the national interest as though the hon. Gentleman was somehow elevated far above the rest of common mankind is a proposition that I am not prepared to commend.

Perhaps I may continue with my comments in respect of Select Committees. The House will recognise that under the terms of this motion it would be open to a Select Committee, should the occasion arise, to apply to the House for authority to see the film within the precincts of this House if it felt that that was necessary for the proper conduct of its inquiries. I assure hon. Members that, if that were required, the Government would act promptly to provide time for the House to reach a decision on such a request. I further say to my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing, in his capacity as Chairman of the Liaison Committee, that I very much look forward to co-operating with him in monitoring how these arrangements proceed.

**Mr. Terence Higgins** (Worthing): My right hon. Friend will recall that last Friday my hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) asked him the following question:

> "When my right hon. Friend considers the terms of the motion, will he ensure there is nothing in it that might impair the rights of the Select Committees of the House?"

My right hon. Friend replied:

> "I can give the undertaking sought by my hon. Friend in respect of Select Committees." — [*Official Report*, 23 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 1148.]

We now know the precise terms of the motion that the Government have tabled. Can my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, without any qualification, repeat the assurance that he gave last Friday?

**Mr. Biffen:** I believe that the essential work of Select Committees is fully safeguarded by the terms that I have just described. In the light of that assurance, I very much hope that my right hon. Friend, who I am sure understands the Government's decision, will not press his amendment.

**Mr. Higgins:** I asked my right hon. Friend a simple question, albeit a rather lengthy one. Now that he has the

*[Mr. Higgins]*

terms of the motion, which were merely anticipated last Friday, can he give the precise assurance that he gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Woking last week—that the terms of the motion ensure that nothing in it could impair the rights of Select Committees of the House? That is the assurance that he gave last Friday. Now that the motion is before us, can he not simply say, "Yes"?

**Mr. Biffen:** What I have just argued indicates to the House what I had in mind in giving the undertaking last Friday.

**Mr. Higgins:** I am sorry to persist. I simply want my right hon. Friend to repeat the assurance that he gave last week. That does not seem an unreasonable request. Surely it is consistent with what he has said. For the avoidance of doubt, will he simply say it in terms?

**Mr. Biffen:** I appreciate the point that my right hon. Friend makes, but I believe that what I have just elaborated fulfils what I said last Friday. I hope that he will accept that.

There can be no doubt that issues of fundamental importance underlie this debate.

**Dr. John Gilbert** (Dudley, East): Will the Leader of the House give way?

**Mr. Biffen:** No; I have been generous in giving way so far.

I believe that those issues should be factors in forming our judgments rather than the focus of the discussion. The freedom embodied in parliamentary privilege can be properly maintained only if we continue to exercise it in ways that will not bring the House into disrepute. We have a duty also to give a lead in treating with responsibility issues of national security.

Against that background, the issue before us today is whether we support your action of 22 January, Mr. Speaker, in ensuring that the injunction granted by the High Court on the grounds of national security was not flouted by the use of the facilities of this House.

**Mr. John Morris** (Aberavon): Will the Leader of the House explain a matter that is causing anxiety to me and to right hon. and hon. Members on the Conservative Benches? As I understand the motion, it is a blanket prohibition on showing the film within the precincts of the House. The right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) has asked for an undertaking from the Leader of the House that the work of Select Committees will not be impaired. If members of Select Committees decided that they wanted to see the film or read a transcript of it, now could that be done? How can their work continue unimpaired within the precincts of the House in view of the terms of the motion? Must they go outside the House to see the film?

**Mr. Biffen:** In the pursuit of their work, should a conflict arise between the members of a Select Committee and any Government Department, members of the Select Committee clearly and explicitly have the right to come to the House for the matter to be resolved. [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] That is the traditional position laid down with the establishment of the Departmental Select Committees by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Pym). All the shock-horror indignation that we are now witnessing runs contrary to what I have just said and guaranteed to Select Committees as to how matters should be carried out.

**Mr. Higgins:** Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Mr. Biffen:** No.

We believe that you acted in this way, Mr. Speaker, in the best interests of the House.

**Mr. Kinnock:** I recognise that the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins), who has a long and honourable interest in these matters, wishes to intervene. I must tell the Leader of the House that I find his interpretations most peculiar. Is it not the case that Select Committees have the unimpaired right to send for persons and papers, including films? How, then, does the requirement arise that under the terms of the motion a Select Committee chaired by the right hon. Member for Worthing—or, indeed, any Select Committee—would have to come to the House to seek the right to view a film? That is what the Leader of the House has said. If he wants to correct that impression and, in effect, to accept—I appreciate that he could not do so within the terms of order—the words of the amendment tabled by the right hon. Member for Worthing, that would at least clarify the position even if it does not make the Government motion absolutely acceptable.

**Mr. Biffen:** I assure the right hon. Gentleman that the position at the moment is that Select Committees have the right of access to persons and papers. If those persons and papers are not forthcoming and there is a conflict, the matter may be brought back to the Floor of the House for resolution. That is the position. I have underlined and guaranteed that position in my speech.

**Dr. Gilbert:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Biffen:** We believe that you, Mr. Speaker, acted in that way in the best interests of the House. For the House now to draw back from that action would be to damage what you have protected—the relationship between this House and the courts.

**Mr. Higgins:** I am grateful to my right hon. Friend and I am sorry to interrupt him yet again. As I understand it, my right hon. Friend has described the existing position with regard to a conflict between a Committee of the House and someone asking for persons and papers to be presented. It is terribly important that we clarify the position with regard to that assurance. Can he confirm the assurance that he gave last Friday—that nothing in the motion in any way impairs the rights of Select Committees of the House? The only alternative is for my right hon. Friend to say that he is withdrawing that assurance, which would be very serious.

**Mr. Biffen:** I give that assurance and I believe that it is contained in my speech. I hope that that will clear up some misunderstanding between my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing and myself because we are most anxious to work together on this.

**Dr. Gilbert:** Will the Leader of the House give way?

**Mr. Biffen:** No, I must be allowed to proceed.

I note the amendment in the name of the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, the final limb of which is drawn precisely to create division on an occasion when I would have hoped that the House could speak with overwhelming authority. It seems to me of particular importance that we are united in confirming your actions, Mr. Speaker, by the continuing of this specific prohibition for as long as the injunction remains effective. I urge the House to reject the Opposition amendment and to endorse the Government motion.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Before I call the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), may I announce to the House that I have received a manuscript amendment from the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), which I would be prepared to call. It reads: Line 1, leave out from 'That' to end and add

'Mr. Speaker's ruling of 22nd January, relating to the showing of a film, be referred to the Committee of Privileges'.

5.35 pm

**Mr. Peter Shore** (Bethnal Green and Stepney): I am sure that the House will be grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for the announcement that you are accepting the manuscript amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn).

The course of the debate so far has been extremely interesting and also extremely disturbing.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I had thought that the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) was rising on a point of order. The House needs a little more information. Which of the amendments that you have announced to the House will be called and voted upon and in what order? It is crucial to the course of the debate that we have that information.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman knows that the amendments are called in the order in which they fall on the Order Paper. The manuscript amendment will come before the amendment tabled by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Shore:** It was my understanding of the matter, that the manuscript amendment would be called first.

It has already become apparent that there is a dangerous ambiguity in the Government's motion. The Government, through their drafting, appear to have created a serious danger that a precedent will be established which, in spite of whatever may be said now and during the debate about your motives, Mr. Speaker, and our understanding of the House, would on other occasions be used and cited with authority. For that reason, I believe on reflection that it is right that the matter should be referred to a Select Committee. I have no hesitation in saying that.

I was enormously worried by the remarks made by the Leader of the House about the Select Committees. It is perfectly plain that, if the prohibition on the showing of the film in the precincts of the House is to run for as long as the injunction, under the terms of the motion to that effect, if carried, it will not be possible for Select Committees to see the film unless they obtain a prior motion on the Floor of the House to amend or overturn the clear meaning and inhibition that the Government motion would impose. Those are two major dangers that we have already discovered, thanks to the persistence and assiduity of my right hon. and hon. Friends who have raised points of order and made interventions.

The Government's attempts to prevent the release of information on the Zircon project last Thursday and the motions and amendments on the Order Paper today raise many important questions. They raise four questions that seem to me to be of particular note and there may be more as the whole saga unfolds. The first is whether you, Mr. Speaker, were right last Thursday morning to instruct the Officers of the House to prevent a showing of the BBC film on video in that part of the Palace of Westminster controlled by the Commons.

Secondly, we must ask whether the Government were right to insist that secrecy and national security should override access to information by the public at large and by hon. Members in particular. Thirdly, if the Government were right, whey did they act so tardily and ineffectively to prevent publication? Fourthly, what is our proper course of conduct now that the information is in the public domain?

The first question has already turned out to be controversial. When you, Mr. Speaker, were informed on Thursday morning that an injunction had been granted against Mr. Duncan Campbell preventing him from revealing any part of the content of the BBC television film, and when you also know that a number of my hon. Friends had arranged for a showing of that film at 11 o'clock within the precincts of the Palace, you had to make an immediate decision—to allow the showing or to use your own authority, in, I think, an unprecedented way, to prevent it. You chose the latter course.

In reply to the point of order properly raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) on the Thursday afternoon, you made it clear that it was for the House itself to determine the issue and that your action, since the House was not sitting on Thursday morning, was designed only to ensure that

"nothing should occur to prejudice the position until the House itself had an opportunity to discuss the matter."—[*Official Report*, 22 January 1987; v. 108, c. 1025.]

Therefore, it was a ruling of a deliberately temporary character to enable the House, and not you, Mr. Speaker, to decide the issue. I am sure that that was right, and most hon. Members will think so as well. I am equally sure that it was right for Mr. Justice Kennedy to refuse the Attorney-General's request to issue an injunction against my hon. Friends and instead to leave the matter of showing the film for the House to decide.

The second question raises an equally difficult issue. I take it for granted that no hon. Member would wish to make public material that could be of use to a potential enemy or would in any way wish to endanger the security of the nation. I also take it for granted that it is one of the inescapable duties of a Member of Parliament to scrutinise Government policy and expenditure in the defence and security areas. Those two duties are difficult to reconcile and at times are in clear conflict with each other.

The claim of national security has been used as a cover for hiding shifts of policy, for ministerial errors and for bureaucratic bungling which should be exposed in the interests of democracy, of the taxpayer and of the security of the nation. On the other hand, accountability and public debate can lead to disclosures which are not just politically embarrassing for Ministers but which genuinely affect national security.

There is a widespread view that in Britain successive Governments, Labour as well as Conservative, have tipped the scales far too heavily against public debate and

*[Mr. Shore]*

accountability. Moreover, in a world in which technology makes secrecy increasingly difficult to maintain, and when other nations, including our principal military ally—the United States have passed freedom of information legislation, much information about our military secrets is available for public scrutiny in public documents available in Washington.

No one who has read the *New Statesman* article or who has seen Richardson and Balls' book "The Ties that Bind", published in 1985, can doubt that much if not most of the technical information in Mr. Campbell's article was readily available from public sources. Britain's tendency to excessive secrecy has been partly recognised even by the present Government. While they have recoiled from amending section 2 of the Official Secrets Act and are clearly strongly opposed to any form of freedom of information legislation, by setting up the Department-linked system of Select Committees in 1979, they opened themselves to far more sustained and informed questioning and debate than ever before on defence and foreign policy. The agreement reached in 1982 between the Public Accounts Committee and the Ministry of Defence that projects costing in excess of £250 million should be reported to the Committee was a further step forward.

**Mr. Allan Roberts** (Bootle): Is my right hon. Friend aware that, when the members of the Select Committee on the Environment visited the United States of America, we were provided with information, details and costings about the relationship between civil nuclear power and the production of military plutonium? That information was denied to the members of the Committee here, hon. Members from all parties, yet it was freely available to us in the United States.

**Mr. Shore:** My hon. Friend confirms the point that I made about a different area of policy but I am sure that what I have said also applies strongly to military defence procurement and projects.

Any case involving national security has to be judged on its merits. I have not seen the BBC film on Zircon, nor was I able to accompany my right hon. Friends when we were invited to meet the Foreign Secretary last Thursday morning. As my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition made clear on Thursday during questions to the Prime Minister, he took the view, following his meeting and exchanges with the Foreign Secretary, that the Government were right to take action to prevent publication of Mr. Campbell's article.

I accept that judgment, but in view of all the subsequent fury directed against the *New Statesman*, I must make it clear that, whatever the unintended effects may have been for national security, the self-evident main motive for the article and its publication was to arraign the Government for what the author believed to be their deception of the Public Accounts Committee. However, if damage was caused to the national interest it is a grave and worrying matter and something that we all deplore.

I shall now turn to the third question.

**Ms. Clare Short** (Birmingham, Ladywood): I have not seen the film, but I have carefully read the *New Statesman* article and I cannot see any issue affecting national security. I know that it is not possible for the Government to spell it out without breaching what they claim is an issue of security, but perhaps we could have a hint. We are told that the Soviets will understand that the thing is in the air and will know what it can do. A United Nations treaty requires us to say that such-and-such a satellite is in the air. In what way does the article breach national security?

**Mr. Shore:** As my hon. Friend well knows, I cannot answer that question. I would be able to answer it only if I had been properly and fully briefed. I do not believe that all the members of the Government are totally idiotic and I certainly do not believe that my right hon. Friends who went to see the Foreign Secretary are other than men of excellent judgment and sense.

I shall now turn to the third question that I posed at the start of my speech. Assuming that the Government were right in this case that secrecy was important, why did they act so tardily and so ineffectively to prevent publication? The Leader of the House has not given anything like a satisfactory explanation.

As the House knows, the Attorney-General sought an injunction against Mr. Duncan Campbell only last Wednesday. It was served on him on Thursday afternoon and by then this week's issue of the *New Statesman* was quite lawfully on the streets. Why was action taken so late? Last Thursday, in spite of repeated questioning, the Prime Minister had no answer.

On Friday, in a lengthy interview with IRN, the right hon. Lady sought to explain the delay when she said:

> "You can't just go and say please I want a blanket injunction against anyone publishing certain information. The injunction has to be against named individuals and a named publication and you have to have firm evidence of their intention to publish. So that limits what you can get. It was not easy to get that evidence in time."

For the following reasons, that was not a convincing explanation. First, the fact that the film was being made in a BBC series was known not weeks but months ago. My right hon. Friend the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee was interviewed last October for the film and asked point blank whether the Zircon project had been reported to the PAC.

Among others interviewed were Sir Frank Cooper, former permanent secretary to the Ministry of Defence, and Professor Sir Ronald Mason, the defence chief scientific adviser up to 1983. The latter was "flabbergasted" that the word "Zircon" had been mentioned and said, according to Mr. Duncan Campbell,

> "I just can't talk about it. I didn't know that was out . . . you surprise me".

We also know that Sir Peter Merrychurch, the director of GCHQ, met the Director-General of the BBC on 5 December and told him that "serious damage" to national security would follow if the film were shown.

Last night, in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours), the Prime Minister made the matter perfectly clear when she said:

> "The Government became aware in a general sense of the BBC's plan for one or more programmes in the Summer of 1986; and of the intention to include specific material on a secret defence project in October 1986. Discussions then took place between the Government and the BBC, who subsequently decided on grounds of national security not to show the material on the project."

Not only did the Government know, but the issue itself became public a week last Thursday when Mr. Alasdair Milne, Director-General of the BBC, having been advised by the permanent secretary to the Ministry of Defence that national security was involved, announced his public decision to veto the showing of the film. Why on earth was an injunction not served on Mr. Duncan Campbell then?

Then, a week later, *The Observer* carried a front page article on the BBC's decision to ban the programme. Still the Government did not act. No injunction was served against the *New Statesman*.

Yet not only is Mr. Duncan Campbell a regular writer for the *New Statesman*, but his paper negotiated a contract under which the *New Statesman* would simultaneously publish an article by Mr. Campbell when the television film was shown. That was an unusual contract clause, as the right of first publication is normally exercised by *The Listener*. Any inquiry as to the nature of the contract made with the BBC would have revealed this fact. Anyone with any sense, and who knows about Mr. Duncan Campbell and his previous history, knows that he writes for the *New Statesman*. So why on earth was action not taken?

The conclusion is inescapable. The Government had prior knowledge, ample time and sufficient information to prevent the disclosure by the BBC, the *New Statesman* and anyone else. They bungled it. Now they are thrashing around, looking for any excuse, heaping any amount of abuse and trying ineffectively to close the stable door after the horses have bolted.

On Thursday, after publication of the *New Statesman*, the Treasury solicitor wrote to all newspaper editors seeking an assurance that

> "your newspaper will not publish anything relating to subject matter falling within the injunction granted to the Attorney-General against Mr. Duncan Campbell on 21st January 1987."

Friday's newspapers gave the answer. The *Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, and *The Times* all published substantial pieces based on the *New Statesman's* article. Mr. Max Hastings, editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, wrote back saying that he could not give any such assurance, as did other Fleet street editors. Last Friday, his editorial summed up the matter in these words:

> "this Newspaper strongly supports the concept of defence secrecy and opposes the action of Mr. Campbell. But it would be perverse of us, along with the rest of the media, to accept the Treasury solicitor's request not to give further publicity to the material revealed when this has been made only after the Soviet Embassy and any other interested parties have had time to collect special souvenir editions of the *New Statesman*. The Government must have known for weeks what Mr. Campbell proposed to reveal. By acting now, in a hopeless muddle, the Attorney-General has made an ass of himself —and worse, of the legitimate case for official secrecy."

I caution my hon. Friends on this point. I am not sure that the criticism of the Attorney-General is fair, because two days later the *Sunday Telegraph* gave us a little more information. It said:

> "according to Whitehall sources"—

I wonder what those are—

> "Sir Michael Havers, the Attorney-General, felt that there were sufficient grounds a week ago to seek an injunction against Mr. Duncan Campbell . . . Sir Michael was opposed by Cabinet colleagues including Mr. Younger, Defence Secretary"—

who is not on the Front Bench today—

> "who were nervous about appearing to want a blanket ban. As a result, details of the satellite were published in last week's *New Statesman*. Decisions to prosecute for an alleged offence are taken by the Attorney-General, but a decision to seek an injuction needs Ministerial approval and that was not forthcoming until last Wednesday after vigorous representation by Sir Michael."

Is this true? The Solicitor-General will, I hope, give us a straight answer when he replies. Will he also tell us, since so many newspapers have ignored the Treasury solicitor's advice, whether their editors will now be proceeded against, or is it just the *New Statesman* that is to be the target for the Government's frustration and rage?

My last question is, what is our proper conduct now that the information about Zircon is in the public domain? What, in other words, should we do now that the horses have bolted, and the genie is out of the bottle? The Government's motion invites us to pretend that nothing has happened; to take part in a charade; to believe that, if we clap our hands over our eyes, no one else can see what is taking place; to continue, as the Government's motion puts it, not to show the TV film in the precincts of the House.

> "so long as the injunction remains in effect."

That resolution would not only prevent interested hon. Members in general from seeing the film, but would clearly prevent, as hon. Members have already made clear in their interventions, the Select Committee on Defence and the Public Accounts Committee from seeing it as well. Certainly they would need not only encouraging words from the Leader of the House but an amending resolution before they could do so.

**Mr. Leigh:** Is it not implicit in the motion tabled by the Prime Minister—and if it is not implicit in that motion, is it not made explicit by the words of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House today—that nothing in that motion is prejudicial to the rights of Select Committees conferred on them by Standing Orders Nos. 122 and130?

**Mr. Shore:** The hon. Gentleman should have listened to what I said at the beginning, or indeed what other Labour Members have said in their interventions. Words used in explanation of resolutions and motions passed by this House may have a certain value, but they are not to be set against the proper interpretation to be placed upon the motions and resolutions that are actually passed. That is what carries authority. That point has clearly been registered by the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) who has put down a specific amendment to safeguard the rights of Select Committees.

This is a lamentable story of Government ineptitude and inefficiency. We are now being invited to participate in a farce, and we will not do so.

5.58 pm

**Mr. Terence Higgins** (Worthing): The motion before the House supports the action that you, Mr. Speaker, took last week. I join those who take that view. In the circumstances it was right that you should have acted as decisively as you did. It is to the benefit of the House and of the country that that was the position. Nevertheless, the decision raises a number of complex issues, not least the vital importance, which I am second to none in supporting, of the need to preserve national security. That being so, I do not propose to pursue some of the points that the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) raised in a somewhat more partisan context.

I shall return to the point that I sought to raise in the speech of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. I am grateful to him for giving way to me no fewer than four times, because it is important that we clarify precisely the position of the Select Committee system. No one should be under any misapprehension. It is a fairly complex matter, which requires careful analysis.

*[Mr. Terence Higgins]*

I start by referring to the exchange that took place on the Floor of the House on 23 January between my hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) and my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. My hon. Friend asked:

> "When my right hon. Friend considers the terms of the motion, will he ensure that there is nothing in it that might impair the rights of the Select Committees of the House?"

My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House replied:

> "I can give the undertaking sought by my hon. Friend in respect of Select Committees." — [*Official Report*, 23 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 1148.]

This is the point that I wish to pursue. When that exchange took place, it was in the context of unknown wording for the motion, and I do not doubt that much thought has been given to the wording of both the Government's motion and the Opposition's amendment. That being so, it is right to ask my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to confirm today, now that the terms of the motion are known, the assurance that he gave on the previous occasion. We have heard the exchanges and we shall need to consider carefully what my right hon. Friend said. None the less, as has been pointed out, I tabled an amendment that effectively confirms the view that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House expressed last Friday.

I should stress that, as the new departmental Select Committee system has developed, in many respects it has been done not by changes in Standing Orders or by specific motions, but by the assurances that have been given to the House by successive Leaders of the House. There have been three since the Government supported the establishment of the Select Committees. For example, there is the matter, still being debated, of whether Select Committees should have the right, as against the request, to see Ministers. Successive Leaders of the House have given an assurance that if there is any dispute on that, the matter will be referred to the Floor of the House, and the Leader of the House will seek to provide time to debate it. This afternoon, if I understood my right hon. Friend correctly, he said something rather stronger. He said that, if there is any dispute on these matters, he will guarantee that a debate takes place. In this case, as the motion is narrowly drawn, the debate would be on the dispute about the film.

One should recall precisely the present powers to send for persons and papers. It is not just a question of the relevant Standing Orders, because some Select Committees have that power by virtue of a motion from the Floor of the House rather than by Standing Orders. Be that as it may, the situation is as follows. The Select Committees are given, either by motion or under Standing Orders, the power to send for persons, papers or records. If they request such papers, and that request is acceded to, they are able to obtain them and carry out their work in the usual way. However, if that request is refused, and provided that they go through more formal proceedings, then it is necessary to return to the Floor of the House to secure those papers. That is the existing position, and as my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House said, there is no change. That is so in this as in any other case.

It would seem to be the case, but I am not sure, that the situation is somewhat altered by the injunction. It is not clear whether we are now being told that the Committee will anyway have to return to the Floor of the House. Here we run into something of a procedural tangle because, as I understand it, should the Select Committee on Defence, for example, say that it wishes to see the film and that request is refused, it would need to return to the Floor of the House to obtain it, and there is no change in this. However, the effect of the motion, if we were to carry it, would be that the film could not be shown in the precincts of the Palace. As I understand it, there would be nothing to stop the Defence Committee requesting to see it and seeing it elsewhere, without returning to the Floor of the House. I am not sure whether that is the position, but it is my understanding of the position. We enter into a complex situation, and I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General, in his reply to the debate, will be able to make clear precisely what the position is.

It is important, if we can do so, that we should proceed as the Select Committees have proceeded up till now, by assurances from the Floor of the House rather than by specific motions. That system has worked very well until now, and if we can get that assurance, the House might prefer that.

Be that as it may, I am still a little unclear, despite four interventions, whether my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, in his final reply to me, was stating categorically that he repeated and reaffirmed, without qualification, the assurance that he gave the House last Friday—that the motion as it stands in no way impairs the rights of Select Committees. If that is so, that is a basis on which we might reasonably proceed, but I am not sure that I got that categorical assurance. That being so, and because in the hurly-burly of debate it was not easy to hear the precise words, I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General can make it clear beyond peradventure, and we can proceed.

The motion raises wide-ranging and important issues that may need to be considered in a broader context by the appropriate Committee, whether it be the Select Committee of Privileges or the Select Committee on Procedure.

**Mr. Stanbrook:** Is not my right hon. Friend's argument something of a non sequitur? After all, Select Committees derive all their powers from the House. If, tonight, we were to pass a specific motion prohibiting something in the House, that must apply to the actions of any Select Committee; otherwise, what my right hon. Friend is suggesting in his amendment is that a Select Committee, notwithstanding this motion, should have the right to override what has already been decided by the House.

**Mr. Higgins:** With respect to my hon. Friend, that is not my understanding of the position. The situation is the one that I have already described. That is, if we pass the motion, with the assurances of my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House but without my amendments, the relevant Committees could proceed in the normal way, but they would have to return to the Floor of the House to get the substantive motion. I think that that is so, but these are complex matters and I cannot guarantee to say on my feet, at a moment's notice, that that is not the position.

If we have the assurance that I have mentioned, we have a reasonable basis on which to proceed. It has to be a clear and categorical assurance that the status quo on the rights of Committees is not to be altered by the motion. As I understand it, that has been the position of the Government throughout. I cannot presume to say, but I am sure that, in making your ruling, Mr. Speaker, it was not your intention to inhibit the working of the Select Committees. That being so, I hope that the winding-up speech will be appropriately helpful and we can proceed accordingly.

6.10 pm

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to put before the House the manuscript amendment standing in my name that would transfer the matter to the Committee of Privileges. The amendment is, in line 1, leave out from 'That' to end and add

'Mr. Speaker's ruling of 22nd January, relating to the showing of a film, be referred to the Committee of Privileges'.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The right hon. Gentleman may move the amendment at the end of the debate, but he may speak to it now.

**Mr. Benn:** If the motion proposed by the Leader of the House were passed today, even the Committee of Privileges would not be allowed to see the film upon which Mr. Speaker gave his ruling.

I think it is obvious to the House that the issues we are discussing go far beyond the immediate matters of controversy between the Government and the Opposition, the related question of the Campbell article in the *New Statesman* on the film or the project. I do not wish to go back over the issues of last week when you took a decision, Mr. Speaker, at very short notice, because it is today that we face the big decision.

Those of us who have anxieties about the implication of the decision that you took last week, Mr. Speaker, wish to make it clear that those anxieties are in no sense personally related to you. Nevertheless, those anxieties are clear and specific and can be set out in the following way. If the Government are asking that we should "confirm" your ruling, or if, as the amendment put down by my right hon. Friend the Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock), states, we should "accept" that decision, the difficulties go far beyond the Opposition and extend to the Chairmen and members of the Select Committees. That is why I am moving that the matter should go to the Committee of Privileges, which was set up by the House many years ago to examine matters that require complex examination. We should not reach a decision until the Committee of Privileges has reported.

The issue that we are discussing is a fundamental constitutional one of the relationship of the Commons, Members of Parliament and the electors on the one hand; and the Executive and the judiciary on the other. Although you quite properly said, Mr. Speaker, that you did not wish your ruling of last Thursday to be treated as a precedent, if we confirm or accept it tonight it will appear in "Erskine May" and will be quoted in future Parliaments and have a profound effect upon Parliament.

I do not believe that there is any precedent for the ruling that you gave, Mr. Speaker. I have searched carefully through "Erskine May" and I can find no precedent, nor can I imagine that when the Committee on Accommodation was set up it was ever intended that the organisation of Committee Rooms of the House should be used to prevent the showing of a film on the provision of information that might assist hon. Members in the course of their work.

It is right that we should look at your role, Mr. Speaker, in this connection, because it is the highest office that we can bestow and you speak for us and defend us from the Executive. I have cited before, and will cite again, the words of Mr. Speaker Lenthall. On 4 January 1642 the King came to the Commons to seize the five Members. Mr. Speaker Lenthall, described as "a man of timorous nature", knelt and said:

"May it please your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here."

That was the precedent. It could be argued that if it was not in relation to five hon. Members and King that precedent would not apply. However, we have taken it, ever since, as a statement of your role. Now when a new Speaker is elected he goes to the other place to claim the ancient privileges of the House.

I am sorry to go back to the texts, but people may not always appreciate their importance. In 1688 the 9th article of the Bill of Rights stated:

"That the freedom of speech, and debates or proceedings in Parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any Court or place out of Parliament."

Hon. Members may ask whether a film shown somewhere else in the Chamber can be described as a proceeding in Parliament. Fortunately, we have a precedent for that as well. In 1938 Duncan Sandys, a Member of the House and also a member of the Territorial Army, received from a colleague in the Territorial Army information that there were defects in the air defence of London. He tabled a question and the person from whom he got the information was charged under the Official Secrets Act 1911. Duncan Sandys came to the House to appeal to the House to protect him by way of privilege and the person who gave the information.

I know about this matter because my father was on the Committee of Privileges or the Select Committee which reported on the case. I remember most vividly the debate in the House. The House upheld the view—I shall refer to it because it refers directly to the question as to what is a proceeding in Parliament—and did so in a case involving the Official Secrets Act. I shall quote from "Erskine May", page 93, commenting on the Committee that examined the Sandys case:

"cases may easily be imagined of communications between one Member and another or between a Member and a Minister, so closely related to some matter pending in, or expected to be brought before the House, that, although they do not take place in the Chamber or a committee room, they form part of the business of the House."

That was one of the most important judgments reached by the House, especially when one considers, to its credit, that it was in the middle of war. As far as I recall, the matter was discussed in the House in May 1940, when it may well have had other matters to consider. Nevertheless, it entrenched the right of its Members to receive information from someone who is not a Member of the House even when that information is in respect of the security of the country.

I give that historical and legal background only to underline the enormity of the decision that it is proposed we should take without any further examination of the issues at stake. My amendment does not prejudge any of those issues, but invites the House to put the matter to the Committee that is best qualified to judge.

It is an issue that is not just of historical and legal importance, but one which will have immediate, practical importance to the future workings of parliamentary democracy. I ask the House to ask itself these important

*[Mr. Benn]*

questions before hon. Members go into the Lobby to vote on any of the amendments, other than the one referring to the Committee of Privileges.

First, is it right for the Government to engage in major military projects without telling Parliament? This question, as my hon. Friends will know, points a finger of criticism at both Labour and Tory Governments. I think I am one of the few surviving Members who sat in this House when Mr. Attlee was Prime Minister and Mr. Attlee developed the atom bomb without telling Parliament. At the time, that may have been considered acceptable, but I do not believe that any hon. Member would accept that it would be right to do that today.

The House does not want technical details about the defence of secrets when the question of security arises. I have not read the article in the *New Statesman* and I do not particularly want to read what Duncan Campbell may say about a particular satellite. However, Parliament must know the general nature of major defence projects, their purpose and their cost. If Parliament does not know that it is abdicating its responsibilities.

The second question is whether it is right that Ministers should be able to go to any court and use the magic words "national security" as the basis for a court injunction. In a democracy it is for the House and electors to decide what is in the national interest. And when there is a general election, it is the people's judgment as to what is in the national interest that counts. It is not for civil servants, generals, scientists or Ministers to determine what is national security. The judges of the Cheltenham case have said that if the magic words "national security" are used they will not allow the matter to be raised.

**Mr. Norman Buchan** (Paisley, South) *rose*——

**Mr. Benn:** The third question that I would like the House to consider is whether it is right that any Speaker — so as not to personalise it — hearing news of an injunction that has been issued should be able, without the explicit and specific authority of the House, to prevent hon. Members from seeking available information that would assist Parliament in its work of holding Governments to account. As the court in question declined to grant an injunction against some hon. Members, it is clear that it recognised the limits of its powers. Page 204 of "Erskine May" states:

> "the courts admit: That the control of each House over its internal proceedings is absolute and cannot be interfered with by the courts."

I do not know, and it is not my concern, to what extent that aspect was in your mind, Mr. Speaker, when you took what you feel to have been interim action, but that is the question that we have to ask today, because we are reaching permanent decisions.

The next question is whether we should accept and confirm a limit on our freedom as Members of Parliament that would assist the concealment of any matter by any Government of any Parliament — this is not just in relation to this matter—by the use of national security and injunctions. I worry greatly over the other implications of your ruling, Mr. Speaker. What if the police had gone to a magistrate and asked for a warrant to search the papers of my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) at the time they were going to the home of Duncan Campbell? What would have been the position? Is it the case that the House could ever allow the courts or a magistrate to send policemen into the Palace, where already a film may not be shown, to discover the sources of information of a Member who might be contemplating a parliamentary question?

If we accept the motion or the amendment, we would be placing the House of Commons and Members of Parliament for ever under the effective control of the Government, in that Ministers could bring an injunction, the court could accede to the injunction and—nobody would wish this less than you, Mr. Speaker — Mr. Speaker would become an agent of the Minister and his injunction and the court that upheld it, to enforce upon Members the denial of the rights for which we were elected. I cannot believe, knowing you, Mr. Speaker, that it would be your wish to be remembered as a "Counter-Lenthall" whose protection did not extend to hon. Members in this position.

I should like to make a final comment as an old Member of the House. We all take children and visitors round the House. I do and have done for many years. We tell them that we keep Black Rod out. We tell them about the Outlawries Bill, we tell them that the House decides on its own business before it gives attention to the Gracious Speech. We tell them about the Army and Air Force (Annual) Act and the order to prevent a standing Army being maintained and we tell them about the five Members. Those are not meaningless rituals. They are reminders of monumental struggles to build democracy against tyranny. It is important that we should not treat them simply as tourist attractions.

For all those reasons, I appeal to hon. Members of all parties to pass the amendment that refers the matter to the place where these implications can be fully considered. I appeal to the Leader of the House to recognise the importance of his role in granting a free vote to Conservative Members on the question of reference to the Committee of Privileges. If that is rejected, the matter will have to be dealt with by the motion on the Order Paper. In 36 years in the House I cannot recall a debate as important as this and I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing my manuscript amendment to be put on the Order Paper tonight along with the motion and the other amendments before us.

6.25 pm

**Mr. Cranley Onslow** (Woking): The right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) is right in what he said about the importance of the debate. However, some of the considerations that he put before the House seem to be not quite as relevant as he supposed, and some of his arguments were not as complete as they might have been. When he told us how he conducts parties round the House, he might have added one other important piece of parliamentary law, which is the right of any hon. Member, when he feels it appropriate, to require that the House remembers its obligation to keep matters secret by "spying strangers". When we consider this important matter, we should not forget that we have that duty and that we have a procedure that has been used, rightly, in the national interest. I am glad to see that the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) appears to agree with me.

**Mr. James Callaghan:** I was agreeing with a remark made by my hon. Friend the Member for Midlothian (Mr. Eadie), not with the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Onslow:** I do not mind whether the right hon. Gentleman listens to his hon. Friend or to me. However, as I have the Floor perhaps I can claim your attention, Mr. Speaker.

The most important feature of the debate seems to me to be that the House should support the action that you took, Mr. Speaker, and the reasons why you took it. If you had taken a different decision, you would have anticipated the freedom of the House to make up its own mind by precipitating a course of events that would have made today's discussion irrelevant. It is not the Chair's function to do that, as you are the first to recognise. You are here to protect the rights of hon. Members, not to pre-empt them. *[Interruption.]* To be told that I am blathering when I say that suggests that there are some Opposition Members whose motives in the debate are not as pure as they might be.

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have been listening attentively to the speeches and I have not decided how I intend to vote. However, it is not right that any hon. Member should accuse Labour Members of unworthy motives. The hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) should substantiate his comment or withdraw it.

**Mr. Onslow:** If it was not the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) who interjected, blathering from a sedentary position, I apologise.

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. Member for Woking has not answered my hon. Friend's point. He said clearly that the motives of Labour Members are not as pure as is made out. That casts aspersions on Labour Members and it is only right and proper that the hon. Gentleman should withdraw that remark or name those he is accusing.

**Mr. Speaker:** This is an important debate, involving a high constitutional issue. I ask the House to keep the temperature down. I am sure that the hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) did not intend to impugn the honour of any Member in the House.

**Mr. Onslow:** That was certainly not my intention. I do not have any intention of being provoked further by sedentary interventions. I hope that there will not be any more.

We must first recognise the rightness of your action, Mr. Speaker. We must also recognise that you had to take that action in circumstances which may well have no precedent. The right hon. Member for Chesterfield said that he had searched "Erskine May" for a precedent. I do not suppose that any hon. Member was surprised to hear that he did not find one, because this must be the first occasion on which this device has been employed in an attempt to use the procedures and facilities of the House to circumvent an injunction of this kind. Therefore, we are making case law. We had to react to a situation that was created not by the Government but by some Opposition Members, for reasons that so far we have not heard them explain. I hope that there will be an opportunity for those concerned to explain.

Perhaps the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood), who appears to be waiting to speak for the alliance, can explain how far he became involved in attempts to obtain a Committee Room to show the film. We look forward to hearing him do so. I will not say any more, because I have not heard his explanation. I have not heard the explanation of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) for the action he thought it right to take. I am sure that the House will be interested to hear what he has to say. Equally, I hope that both hon. Gentlemen will concede to the House that they confronted you, Mr. Speaker, with an entirely new and unlooked-for situation, and that it is right that you should have reacted to it in the way that you did.

Nor, when we come to consider the extent to which Select Committees of the House may or may not be involved, should we be too carried away by comparisons which might be drawn if we were on the other side of the Atlantic. I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) will not mind me saying that the rights of Select Committees are drawn entirely from the decisions of the House. They are not independent, autonomous bodies, they do not have absolute powers and they exist in order to serve the House and to do, broadly speaking, what the House wants them to do.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): Does my hon. Friend accept that many hon. Members think that some Select Committees take themselves a great deal too seriously? It is the Floor of the House that matters above all.

**Mr. Onslow:** As a former Chairman of the Defence Select Committee, I do not think that I want to be drawn into that argument, but my hon. Friend may wish to make it in his own way.

We find ourselves discussing this matter today, not because a Select Committee of the House took the initiative to book a room and show a film which was made by somebody whom the *Daily Telegraph* describes as a professional exposer of defence secrets and who takes it upon himself to decide where the national interest lies. If a Select Committee had taken that decision and created this situation, we would be considering something different, but we are not.

Nor should we be too impressed by the argument of the hon. Member for Livingston that the horse has bolted, so there is no point in locking the door. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made, with considerable force, the comment that one action which undermines national security does not justify another. It would be wrong if the House took a decision this afternoon which appeared to have the opposite effect. We cannot accept the proposition that, because a breach of national security may have been committed by somebody outside, we should be manoeuvred into a position of condoning it. If Parliament became, in that sense, a public convenience,it would be very bad indeed. People at large expect us to maintain a continuing judgment and defence of the interests of national security.

I know that many hon. Members want to speak, so I shall not speak at length, but I want to touch on one other point. The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), who intervened on Friday morning when my hon. Friend the Leader of the House made his statement, thought that this situation was a further example of the need which he sees for some kind of standing monitoring body of Privy Councillors to invigilate issues of security and intelligence. Nothing that has been said in this debate justifies that in any way. I can see no justification for such

*[Mr. Onslow]*

bodies. The Home Secretary deployed powerful arguments against them in the debate on 3 December. There is no "need to know", nor are things being wrongly concealed from Parliament. The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee has confirmed that his Committee has not been deceived, so the main burden of the newspaper story has already been destroyed.

We are left with a situation in which undoubted harm is threatened to our national interest. It may not be, in this case, by secrets being clandestinely handed over to an enemy, but by an attempt to create a situation in which the Government cannot defend the national interest as effectively as they think necessary. The House is being asked, judging by some of the comments that we have heard, to condone a situation which would be a most serious threat to our national interest. Whatever else we may do this evening, we cannot approve of that.

6.36 pm

**Mr. James Callaghan** (Cardiff, South and Penarth): When I came into the Chamber this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I promise you that I had no intention other than to listen to the intellectual stimulation which is always provided by Prime Minister's Question Time and then to enjoy a quiet cup of tea. When I saw, for the first time, the motion on the Order Paper and the consequential amendments I began to be concerned about what the House was being asked to approve.

A resolution of the House is of great importance. It passes into the annals of the House and is referred to by Mr. Speaker and others, such as future Leaders of the House, and will undoubtedly be of great significance in determining our future action. Therefore, something further should be considered before we agree to a motion, or indeed to the amendments on the Order Paper. I say that about both motion and amendments, and that is why I raised the matter as a point of order at the beginning.

As the oldest Member of the House——

**Mr. Winnick:** Not the oldest Member. What about our hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-East (Mr. Edwards)?

**Mr. Callaghan:** I am delighted to hear that; there is still a chance yet.

I have no intention of challenging what you did last week, Mr. Speaker, because in the circumstances with which you were faced you had no alternative. The amendment of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) that you have said you will put to the House later this evening is not intended to convey any implication of that sort as far as I am concerned, or anybody else. It is designed for an entirely different purpose and I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you will take it personally as such.

However, we should have more time to consider the matter. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) referred to the fact that the Government seem to have taken a long time to take action on this matter. They also took a long time to put down this motion, because unless we had some access to the Lobby yesterday, and happened to pick up a sheet of paper that was lying in it, we did not know what was to appear on the Order Paper today. The Government were tardy in the action that they took in the courts and tardy in relation to the motion. I beg for more time to consider what the House should commit itself to.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Government have every right to use the issue of national security to request the House of Commons not to consider any particular matter at any time. That throws a great obligation upon the Government not to abuse that privilege, or their responsibility in this matter.

The House also has a right to be sceptical. All Governments, especially after a period in office, fall into a belief in their own capacity to be right on all occasions, and to be judge in their own court. No Government are immune, and the longer the Government are in office the more the arrogance of power eats at them. I am not referring only to this Government; it applies to almost every Government that I have seen in the House, unless they have a majority of two or no majority at all, when one has to be very humble to almost any Member. I do not deny the Government their rights or responsibility for security in this matter.

I did not find the speech of the Leader of the House convincing. He seemed to be in some discomfort, and it was a rather stumbling speech as though he was pretty uncomfortable about what he was doing. I assume that he was not involved in the orginal decision. I was reminded of an occasion early in the war when Winston Churchill was put up to defend a series of not very splendid decisions by the Chamberlain Government. He did it in such a robust way that somebody from the Opposition Benches —I have forgotten who it was—[HON. MEMBERS: "Lloyd George."] Yes, of course it was—said that the right hon. Gentleman should not convert himself into an air raid shelter for the protection of his colleagues. No one could have accused the right hon. Gentleman of being a robust air raid shelter this afternoon. He sounded as though a dilapidation order had been served on him.

In giving the Government the benefit of the doubt, as I do on these matters—I have not been briefed on this; I try to speak with a sense of responsibility—I am a little worried about what is wrong with what has happened. I can only assume that it is the disclosure of the fact that the project was being undertaken that has so alarmed the Government. It is unusual to find my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield and me operating together, but, unlike him, I have read the evidence in the *New Statesman* and I find it a little difficult to know—perhaps I am a little sceptical—what it is all about. But then, I have not had the advantage of being briefed. If I had been, no doubt the Government would have convinced me.

That being so, without casting any aspersions—I daresay that the Government have acted in good faith; I hope so, because it is their responsibility to do so—we have a responsibility in the House to see whether the procedures that have been followed, and which you, Mr. Speaker, had to undertake on this occasion, could be improved.

I appeal to the Leader of the House, and to Conservative Members, who will have more influence with him than I do—as you rightly said, Mr. Speaker, we have not approached the matter from a party point of view —and, indeed, I ask my own Front Bench, from whom I shall probably have an affirmative answer, to support the amendment of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield.

I have served in the House for many years and I want to say seriously to hon. Members that there is a strong case here for the House to look at the matter to see what procedures could be devised that would improve on the present position. It may be that there are none. I have lived long enough and been in office long enough to know that it is impossible to define the exact constitutional relationship between the courts and Parliament. Indeed, it would probably be undesirable to do so. That is not to say that we should not consider these matters from time to time to see whether some improvement can be made. That is a proper job for the Committee of Privileges.

I hope that the Leader of the House will not feel that amour propre is at stake here, that the Government must insist on their motion, and that Conservative Members, and perhaps some Opposition Members, who have not heard the debate will vote as their Whips tell them. I hope that he will tell the House that, on reflection, having listened to the arguments that have been put forward, including the argument of the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins), which it may be possible to dispose of, perhaps tonight—I do not know—there is a good case for looking at the situation which has arisen without precedent as a result of an attempt to show a film. Let us have a look at the matter. No harm will come to the House of Commons if the Committee of Privileges looks at it. That Committee is drawn from senior Members on both sides of the House.

There is nothing more that I want to add tonight. We should give the Government the benefit of the doubt, whatever our party views may be on this question. As we are unable to judge for ourselves, I am willing to give the Government the benefit of the doubt on this matter. There will always be occasions, in the future as in the past, when the Government may know things that cannot be made available. I do not accept the view of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield that Parliament must on all occasions know everything. It is not possible to conduct our national affairs in that way.

In that spirit, I urge the Leader of the House, and Conservative Members, who will have more influence with the Leader of the House than I, that we should take a little more time to look at the matter. We have a perfectly good Committee to look at it. It may say that it can design no improvement and that we must leave it to Mr. Speaker in future, as has been the case in the past, and you, Mr. Speaker, and your successors will then be burdened with the task. That may be what will happen. But I do not believe that we should commit ourselves to something that will be referred to year after year after you, Mr. Speaker have gone from the Chair, when your successors may not take the same position. We should not be bound by a resolution of the House without considering it further.

6.45 pm

**Mr. Roger Sims** (Chislehurst): I am privileged to follow the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan). If I do not pursue his argument immediately, he may find that my comments on Friday, when I referred to the desirability of not taking a decision in the heat of the moment, chime very much with some of the comments that he has just made.

The debate contains two interwoven strands. One concerns the making of a film and the publishing of an article, the extent to which they posed a threat to national security, whether and how national security was breached and whether in those circumstances the Government should have acted differently. The other strand concerns the rights, usages and privileges, both of the House collectively and of its individual Members. It is to the latter point that I want to address myself.

You had occasion, Mr. Speaker, in the course of recent months, to remind us that next year we shall celebrate the tercentenary of the Bill of Rights, which is the nearest thing that we have to a written constitution. The right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) has already reminded us of one of its clauses and it does no harm to remind ourselves again. That is:

> "That the Freedom of Speech and Debates or Proceedings in Parlyament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any Court or Place out of Parlyament."

It is clear from "Erskine May" that the definition of "Proceedings in Parlyament" extends beyond the Chamber and embraces the activities of Members of Parliament such as in Select and Standing Committees, tabling questions, and so on, in the course of their parliamentary duties.

I confess that I was nonplussed by the exchange between my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) about the status of Select Committees. Surely the present position is clear: that if a Select Committee calls for papers or records which are refused, it can come to the House and have a resolution passed. But it can be no defence in calling for papers that they are the subject of an injunction. If they are the subject of an injunction, that is of the High Court, of which this is a higher court. For a document to be the subject of an injunction would not of itself prevent it from being presented to a Select Committee. I really could not see why my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House was not prepared to agree straight away to give the undertaking which he was asked to give by our right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing.

Having been fairly clear in one's mind as to what are proceedings in Parliament which are the subject of privilege, it is clear that other activities may well fall within that definitation. But equally, a private gathering of Members in a room does not constitute proceedings in Parliament, even though that room may well be within this building.

However, as Members of the House we enjoy privileges in another sense. I well remember, shortly after my election to the House nearly 13 years ago, taking a few friends round. I asked one of the security fellows if I could take my guests out on to the Terrace. He said: "Of course, Sir. This is your House." So it is. It is the House of all of us. Indeed, in theory, we can do what we like within the building.

With that power and privilege goes responsibility and none of us should abuse or misuse that power, responsibility and privilege. In any case, of course, the interests of us all are bound by some rules that have been made so that this place can do its business properly. There are rules about the way in which we can book rooms, where we can take strangers and how many people we can take on to the Terrace at any one time. However, there is a relative freedom to use the facilities of this House and that freedom is very important in enabling us to carry out our duties as Members of Parliament.

Last week, we were faced with an unusual and unique set of circumstances. I do not need to repeat them, as they have already been clearly described by my right hon.

*[Mr. Roger Sims]*

Friend the Leader of the House. However, it seemed that when you were faced with a situation in which my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General had failed to get an injunction to prevent certain Members of the House from viewing a film which was to be shown within a few minutes, you were then faced with the difficulty, Mr. Speaker, that the judge had said that this was a matter for the House. You found yourself in a dilemma because there was no chance whatsoever of consulting the House so that it could make its collective will known.

Therefore, you took what you described as urgent administrative action, as you had the right to do in your executive capacity as the person responsible for this end of the Palace of Westminster. At the time of making your statement you made it perfectly clear. You said:

> "I gave instructions that nothing should occur to prejudice the position until the House itself had an opportunity to discuss the matter."—[*Official Report*, 22 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 1025.]

That is precisely what we are doing now.

The grounds on which the injunction was granted against certain people were, among others, those of national security. I understand that the Leader of the Opposition and some of his hon. Friends were briefed on Privy Council terms and accepted that the contents of the film undermined national security and that they made it clear that they supported your decision. You have not said, Mr. Speaker, whether you had a similar briefing, but clearly you would have been entitled to one as a Privy Councillor, and it would be perfectly proper if you had had one.

Faced with that situation, Mr. Speaker, I believe that you were absolutely right to make the order that you did. It has been referred to in some quarters as a ruling, but I think that that confuses it with some of the rulings that you make in the House. It was an order made in your administrative capacity.

The fact that some hon. Members subsequently watched the film elsewhere is immaterial. Your powers, Mr. Speaker, and those of the House are confined to this building. That the contents of the film were subsequently published despite the injunction, does not alter the correctness of your decision. However, it seems to point to a weakness in the law about injunctions. I am not a lawyer, but as I understand it, an injunction in cases such as this normally has to apply in respect of certain named persons or bodies and has no impact on anybody else.

Common sense would suggest that, in a case like this, where there is a possible danger to national security if certain material is disclosed to unauthorised persons or if it is publicised in any form, it should be possible to obtain an injunction covering the material and its publication or its disclosure by anybody, rather than specifying possible outlets. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General will comment on whether he feels that there is a case for a revision of the law in this respect.

Reverting to the immediate issue that concerns the House, I believe that you, Mr. Speaker, were right to take the decision that you did, and as the injunction that was obtained is still in effect, the prohibition should remain in force. The fact that some people have got around the injunction does not alter that.

My inclination is to support the Government's motion, but I have to say that, like right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House, I am concerned about the implications for the future of the wording of the motion. It appears to apply only to this film, and to the present incident and no other. Therefore, I seek clarification of the effect of the motion. Does it create a precedent and does it lay down guidelines that will bind the House and future Speakers?

The Leader of the House said that he felt that each matter of this sort should be dealt with as it arose, but I am not sure that the form of words that he used made it entirely clear that this did not create a precedent. It is not difficult to imagine circumstances in which a Government might seek to curtail the activities of Members of Parliament by claiming that circumstances had arisen that were similar to those of last week. That Government might quote this decision as a precedent. It would be especially difficult if the circumstances were very similar in that the Speaker of the day had to act without consulting the House.

Therefore, I hope that it can be clearly on record, in unequivocal terms, that the motion in the name of the Leader of the House does not create a precedent.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** One cannot say that about a motion.

**Mr. Sims:** I hope also that the House will consider the decision in isolation. If that is not possible—it may well not be possible — I can see some attractions in the manuscript amendment. My reservations about it are that, although it serves the purpose that I sought to raise on Friday, this matter should be considered carefully before any definite decision is reached, it has the defect that the rest of the main motion would then fall, including those words that support Mr. Speaker's decision last week. It is important that we should do that, regardless of what else we do.

Parliamentary privileges, as defined in the Bill of Rights, and our rights as Members of Parliament must be exercised responsibly. However, they must also be guarded jealously. They have been so guarded by our predecessors and it is imperative that nothing that we do today should in any way diminish those rights and privileges.

**Mr. W. Benyon** (Milton Keynes): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I seek clarification of a matter which is worrying many hon. Members and which has been referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims). If the House were to pass the manuscript amendment, does that mean that your prohibition would remain in force for the length of the injunction or until the House has reconsidered the matter, whichever is the earlier?

**Mr. Speaker:** I think that would mean that my prohibition would remain in force until the Select Committee had reported.

6.58 pm

**Mr. Archie Kirkwood** (Roxburgh and Berwickshire): That point of order is useful because the hon. Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims) was obviously agonising over that issue, as were other hon. Members, including me.

Like the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), I come to today's debate prepared to consider that we were dealing with a very restricted situation. The meaning of the phrase "proceedings of the House" is not normally understood to cover the showing of films in Committee Rooms and injunctions relating to specific security issues, and I thought that that was such an unusual combination of circumstances that there would be no danger for future occasions in accepting the ruling as it stands.

I have listened carefully to the interesting and valuable debate and have come to the conclusion that the motion moved by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) is right. I shall advise my right hon. and hon. Friends to support that amendment as a first step in the voting proceedings later this evening.

It is of no comfort to me that the House is in this difficult constitutional predicament. Nor is it of any comfort to me that you, Mr. Speaker, were put in the predicament you were last week when you prevented the BBC film from being shown. The hon. Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) was right—I booked a room to show the film last week and I was to receive a copy of the video cassette for that purpose. At that stage, the only prohibition extant was that issued by the BBC.

I took the view that it was an important part of my duty, as an hon. Member, to scrutinise actions of the Executive which had potentially far-reaching effects and severe financial implications. I did not intend to disseminate anything that I saw. When the High Court injunction came along, and when you issued your instruction, Mr. Speaker, that changed things substantially. I believe that your decision was correct on the basis of the circumstances and the information available to you at the time.

**Mr. Onslow:** Is the hon. Gentleman saying that when he cancelled his booking of the room he was aware of your ruling, Mr. Speaker, or did the ruling come after the hon. Gentleman's decision not to proceed with the booking?

**Mr. Kirkwood:** From memory, I think that I withdrew the booking after the High Court injunction and Mr. Speaker's instruction. I think that that was the proper course of action.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** The hon. Gentleman cancelled his booking on the previous night. Your direction, Mr. Speaker, did not take place until 10.30 the next morning.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for putting that detail right.

**Mr. Onslow** *rose*——

**Mr. Kirkwood:** I do not want to make a meal of that as I do not think that it is very relevant. I should, however, like to make it clear that when there is any risk of endangering national security I hope that the whole House agrees that we should want to err on the side of safety or, as the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth said, to give the Government the benefit of the doubt.

Today, however, we might inadvertently be consenting to the establishment of far-reaching parliamentary precedents. That being so, the proper course of action is that proposed by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield. There is clearly a category of information which must in all circumstances remain confidential, secret or outwith public knowledge. I hope that the whole House accepts that. How has that principle been implemented in this case? I put it to the Government—in sorrow rather than in anger—that successive Governments, but especially the present Government, appear to have been obsessed by the need to keep everything secret. It is the old so-called section 2 syndrome. The House has only to consider what has been written in the *Daily Telegraph* and *The Mail on Sunday* and to read comments made by the general secretary of the First Division Association to realise that.

If Government policy is so obsessive that it tempts civil servants to question what is being withheld because everything is withheld, the Government will inevitably be the author of their own misfortunes. I am a dedicated advocate of a much freer and more open system of government. Closed and secret administration is detrimental to a properly run democracy. It is also less efficient. A system which has a clear dividing line between what should be confidential and what can help shape and inform public debate would command more public respect and be more likely to work because those who work in it and those who report on it would be much clearer about how far they could legitimately go in releasing information.

Where does the dividing line lie? Having studied all the information that has now been made available about the Duncan Campbell film — I must confess that I am untutored when it comes to signal intelligence satellites — I do not believe that the film prejudiced national security. I cannot commit my right hon. and hon. Friends because they have not seen the film. It seems reasonable, however, that the Government should monitor communications of potentially hostile Governments and international terrorist groups. It is public knowledge that we have a network of ground-based listening stations feeding through to GCHQ. The fact that we are considering similar facilities in space seems logically unexceptional. Moreover, the existence and purpose of any proposed satellites are, I believe, already known to any potential foe.

The fact that signal intelligence satellites exist should be made known to the House or, if that goes too far, to its representatives. I make a clear distinction, however, between the existence and purpose of such satellites and details about their functional capacity, electronic hardware, software and technical specifications, which are obviously highly sensitive and should in no circumstances be revealed publicly or even privately to hon. Members or their representatives.

The major projects statement to the Public Accounts Committee is a system which is supposed to provide protection against abuse. Whatever else comes out of this affair, Mr. Campbell has done the House a service by exposing the inadequacy of that system. If a decision has been made in principle to launch a signals intelligence satellite in a geostatic orbit at 53 deg E, the launch costs and off-the-shelf hardware from America alone must cost about £250 million. If projects such as Zircon can be developed to any stage without the Public Accounts Committee being notified, the present system of scrutiny must be changed.

It is clear that we are in a mess. The line of attack, if attack is the right word, that the Official Opposition have taken is strange. They seem to be accusing the Government of not being patriotic enough. They have accused the Government of being incompetent, which is clearly true, but they have taken a strange and, I believe, wrong tack. We have ended up with the worst possible outcome, mainly because of the Government's incompetence. Everybody is now running for political cover.

Precious little attention is being given to what can be salvaged. It is in the national interest to try to redress any damage that has been done and to try to do better in

*[Mr. Kirkwood]*

future. We now know the facts and circumstances surrounding the Government's decision, as they have been made public through the *New Statesman*. I believe that the Government want to prevent the film from being shown so that we do not discover how innocuous it is. I suspect that they are afraid to show the film because any viewer would be staggered at the Government making such a colossal mountain out of a security molehill. The Government must come clean and allow the Select Committee on Defence access to the film, even if the PAC cannot see it. If the Government do not do that, I shall remain convinced that they are afraid to show the film.

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford) *rose*——

**Mr. Kirkwood:** I do not think it right to leave absolutely unfettered discretion about what is or is not secret to the Government or their servants in the Ministry of Defence or at GCHQ. Still less do I think it right to leave the decision to the BBC, to Mr. Duncan Campbell, to the editor of the *New Statesman* or to any combination of those. In our view, a committee of senior Privy Councillors drawn from the House should be given the task of vetting at the planning stage all defence, surveillance and security projects which are being planned and which will cost more than, say, £20 million to £50 million in total end cost. That committee could then confirm the extent to which the projects should remain secret and the amount of detail that should go into the major projects statement to be scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee from a financial point of view. That will take the members of that committee inside a curtain of secrecy, but there is no other way to prevent damaging predicaments such as this from recurring in the future.

The Government must urgently review their present predilection for obsessive secrecy. They have given the word a bad name. They must also accept some element of independent scrutiny to guarantee that in future the true interests of national security are not confused with mere party political embarrassment.

7.10 pm

**Mr. Churchill** (Davyhulme): I rise, Mr. Speaker, to endorse your order to prohibit certain of the more irresponsible Members of the Opposition from aiding and abetting a Left-wing journalist determined to circumvent a High Court injunction which prohibited the showing of the film on the ground of national security. That journalist, Mr. Duncan Campbell, under contract to the BBC, removed the film from the BBC whose property and copyright it is, without its authority. He refused the BBC's requests to return it. He caused or allowed illegal copies of it to be made. It is a matter for concern that Members of the Opposition should make themselves accomplices to such acts of illegality.

A caveat must be entered about the motion on the Order Paper. It would be wrong for a duly constituted Select Committee of the House, a Committee which has responsibility for overseeing a given Department of Government, to be covered by any High Court injunction, or indeed by such an order as you have made, Mr. Speaker. The Select Committee on Defence, like other departmental Select Committees, has power to send for persons, papers and records, and provided that the BBC was willing to meet a request from such a Select Committee, as I believe it was last week, there would have been no requirement for a motion in this House.

If we pass this motion tonight, that situation will be changed. We would have to arrange for a meeting of the Select Committee on Defence, if we wished to view the film, to be held in another place or outside the Palace of Westminster. Alternatively, we would have to seek the leave of the House, Mr. Speaker, to have your order lifted in the case of our Select Committee. Either course would represent a restriction of the rights and freedoms enjoyed by the Select Committee as it is at present constituted.

I would be loth to see the rights of Select Committees curbed in this way. I hope that the Government will either accept the amendment in the name of my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) or make it clear that the motion tonight does not, and is not intended to, restrict the powers of Select Committees. If we fail to do that, we may be in danger of making a decision that we would subsequently regret.

**Mr. John Morris:** Does the hon. Gentleman realise that the effect of accepting the amendment of the right hon. Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) would be to ensure that any Select Committee which wished to do so would be able to see the film in question—and, of course, any Member can, if he so wishes, attend the meetings of any Select Committee?

**Mr. Churchill:** I appreciate that. Indeed, the manuscript amendment is not entirely satisfactory either, because it does nothing to keep in force the prohibition of Mr. Speaker while the matter is referred to the Committee of Privileges.

While welcoming the decision of the Director-General of the BBC not to screen one film out of the series of six made by Mr. Duncan Campbell, on the ground of national security, I must point out that the BBC has no one but itself to blame for the situation in which it finds itself. We are entitled to ask what business the BBC thinks it has to hire a Left-wing political activist, a man who already has a criminal conviction on matters of national security, and give him a six-figure budget to produce half a dozen programmes on matters dear to his heart — sensitive matters of national security. It is one thing for the BBC to invite Mr. Campbell or anyone else to participate in such a programme, but to elevate him to the status of ringmaster in a Left-wing circus represents a flagrant abuse of licence-payers' money and flies squarely in the face of the corporation's duty to provide political balance.

**Mr. Heffer** *rose*——

**Mr. Churchill:** It is no use the BBC claiming that the Left-wing bias of Mr. Campbell would be balanced by other participants. It is the conception, the treatment and the control of such material in its production and editing phases that is all-important.

**Mr. Heffer:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Churchill:** I will, in a minute. A particularly sinister aspect of this business is the way in which the good name of the BBC—such as it is—should be abused by inviting former Ministers, former Prime Ministers, permanent secretaries at the Ministry of Defence, Government chief scientists and others to take part in a programme which they would imagine was being made in-house by the BBC, with the normal constraints of balance required by the

BBC, when, in fact, this was a totally different situation, with the programme being inspired and directed by someone on the far Left of British politics.

**Mr. Heffer:** Does the hon. Gentleman realise that he is now on extremely dangerous ground, especially if we remind him that his grandfather—and it is all on the record—received information about the security of this country, about the Army, the Royal Air Force and the Navy, from civil servants and, quite rightly in my opinion, raised these matters in the House in the interests of the country? If it was good enough for his grandfather, is it not good enough for other people to be prepared, if they think it in the interests of the nation, to do something similar?

**Mr. Churchill:** The hon. Member makes a fair point.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Withdraw.

**Mr. Churchill:** I shall not withdraw. The hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) makes a fair point when he says that the late Sir Winston Churchill in the 1930s received certain information which he brought to the attention of the House in the interests of national defence. I defy anyone to say that it is in the interests of national defence to seek to put in the public domain national intelligence and defence secrets which are of interest to a potential enemy.

**Mr. Tony Banks** *rose*——

**Mr. Churchill:** One of the least lovely aspects of this whole affair is the glee with which certain elements on the Opposition Benches seek to do the work of the enemies of this country by trying to expose the defence and intelligence secrets of our nation. These are antics which, if repeated in the Soviet Union—with which certain Opposition Members seem to think we should be in alliance, rather than with the United States—would earn them 20 years down a salt mine. These elements are intent on undermining the forces of democracy. The Prime Minister has rightly said that these are people who seek to use our freedoms in order to destroy them. The Opposition will make a cardinal error if they believe that people in the country at large want our national secrets uncovered.

**Mr. Allan Rogers:** The hon. Gentleman may cast aspersions on Opposition Members, but does he remember that the biggest spies in British history were members of his class who went to the same public school, spies such as Burgess, Maclean, Philby and all the others? If he wants to look for traitors in this country he should look to his own party, to his own class, and to his own school.

**An Hon. Member:** Harrow.

**Mr. Churchill:** The hon. Gentleman makes a mistake if he believes that they were members of my party, and I did not go to Harrow, nor did I go to Cambridge. I believe that the Government were right to seek a High Court injunction to prevent this film being shown. You, Mr. Speaker, were right in giving time to the House to reflect on the position by preventing the High Court injunction from being circumvented by certain irresponsible people in this House. In our eagerness to support your position, Mr. Speaker, and that of the Government, we must not do anything that might detract in any way from the established rights and freedoms of Select Committees. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend, in winding up the debate, will be able to give the House some positive assurance in this respect.

7.24 pm

**Mr. Robert Sheldon** (Ashton-under-Lyne): There have been a number of misconceptions and a certain amount of confusion. A shall try to put into proper perspective the role of the Public Accounts Committee and my role as Chairman so that people can see the kinds of decisions that we make and the reasons why we make them.

A large part of the Committee's work is involved with the Ministry of Defence because that Department is engaged in very large projects which frequently overrun and overspend. Many of the projects also tend to be a little speculative when they first begin. They are at the frontiers of the state of their particular art, so we spend a little time on them. We ask fairly straightforward questions. We want to know when they are expected to be working, how much they will cost and what the objectives are. We insist on a large degree of monitoring to see how the projects are going and how the money is being spent at each stage of development as the project goes along. Finally, we want to compare the objective with the outcome and the achievements at the end of it all.

Since becoming Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee in 1983 I have been much concerned with the question how to deal with the many secret projects which come before the Committee. One of my early tasks was to satisfy myself by frequent references to the Chevaline case that the lessons had been learnt and that the rules were being observed. I gave many talks on public accounts matters in which I always included the Chevaline lessons because they needed to be absorbed. The Chevaline programme was an improvement to the Polaris missile system which involved extremely heavy expenditure by successive Governments, but for over a decade the House was kept totally in the dark. The programme was finally brought to light in 1980 and the Public Accounts Committee investigated and reported its conclusions in its ninth report of Session 1981-2.

As a result of that experience, it was agreed that the Ministry of Defence would have a major project statement covering every project in excess of £250 million for the lifetime of the project at the time it was begun. There are about 50 such projects. We monitor them, look at them and record their progress. This has been going on for quite some time. We are able to look at the extent of cost overruns, performance criteria and how far they are met.

When the Public Accounts Committee met it took into account a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General. In the ninth report of the Committee of Public Accounts 1981/82, page 29 paragraph 12, the Comptroller and Auditor General said:

> "it is possible to envisage circumstances in which a Government department might argue that some important information should not be reported to Parliament by C and AG or even disclosed to the Public Accounts Committee for the reasons or on the grounds that to do so would be damaging to the national interest. In such circumstances it would be likely that the C and AG would wish to consult the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee about the handling of such material if other considerations pointed to report."

These are good rules. They can be changed and they can be considered inadequate to meet the circumstances, but these are the rules. I wanted to explain how far these rules,

*[Mr. Robert Sheldon]*

as we understood them, have been met. What are the rules? Projects of more than £250 million are reported to Committee. No highly classified project, other than the one that came before the Public Accounts Committee, has ever come before me previously. Other aspects of expenditure, such as expenditures that are seriously in excess of estimate, are reported to Committee. If a project is much less than £250 million and is going badly or something is wrong, or if there is some procedural difficulty, it will come before the Public Accounts Committee.

If I was convinced at any time—and I thought of this constantly—that a project had a high classification, I would ask how should I react. Given that kind of responsibility, I can inform the Committee. Obviously, this is the best way to proceed if a project meets other objectives. The Committee has a wide range of experience and a certain healthy scepticism from seeing many dubious projects. We have well-attended meetings and there is a great deal of report reading to be done. We had 52 reports last year, which was a great burden on the Committee. I pay tribute to the hard and dedicated work done by all members of the Committee.

It is very different from my younger days, 20-odd years ago, when I was a member of that Committee and when it was regarded as a sentence that had to be endured. Today there is positive enthusiasm, which I welcome and am grateful for. That is the best way to handle it. There are other matters that might come before the committee where this might not be possible. If matters involving secrecy and highly sensitive classification came before me, I would need to make the inquiries that the Public Accounts Committee would make if it was in session.

The Public Accounts Committee checks first on certification. Once a contractor has a secret project and he knows it is not going to come before the Public Accounts Committee and there is no danger of exposure, he is at Liberty hall. He is able to put on his prices much more easily than if it is a project that sees the light of day very readily. I have to take that into account. So I have to check on certification. Normally we do not spend much time on it, but we have to make sure that the money has gone to the right people for the right projects. At the outset, when the Public Accounts Committee was set up it had to do just that.

In more recent years we have had a greater concern—value for money. We have to make sure that we get economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The economy aspect is fairly straightforward. We want to see that something has been bought for the least money. In a project of the kind that we have been discusing today we would want to make sure that subcontractors had been selected and that they had obtained whatever was necessary for the least amount of money.

A little more difficult is efficiency. We want to know that the best system has been obtained for the money provided. If it costs a little more to get something extra, we would want to make sure that that was the one that was chosen eventually. Effectiveness is the most difficult. We have to make sure that the proposed way is the right way to achieve the objective that the Ministry has in mind.

There have always been ways whereby expenditure has been concealed from Parliament. That should come as no surprise to anybody. As Financial Secretary to the Treasury I knew of expedients that had been used for years by Defence Secretaries to meet demands for cuts in expenditure which were readily agreed but which, by the use of various strategems, were frequently avoided. I was aware of the trickle feeding of expenditure so that large projects were not properly identified because the money was spent in dribs and drabs. I was aware, too, of the way that Votes could be divided to avoid unwelcome sums appearing. Then there has always been the problem of teeming and lading whereby advancing or delaying the payment of invoices at the end of the financial year could conceal the continuation of spending plans. All those are among the expedients which have been used in the past. So I came to the job with a scepticism that was alive and inquisitive.

The position now is different from the time of Chevaline. We now have the National Audit Act 1983 and the National Audit Office. The Comptroller and Auditor General is now an officer of this House, just as the Clerks of the House, the Serjeant at Arms and the Library staff are. After all, that is what Gladstone intended. The Comptroller and Auditor-General is not chosen by civil servants but chosen jointly by the Prime Minister and the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. He has the staff of the National Audit Office, 900 of them, who operate from within Departments of State checking on expenditure, including expenditure of the highest specification.

In addition, the Comptroller and Auditor General's very auditing function sets him aside from the Government machine, as it has always done. Any auditor requires a certain amount of aloofness or detachment from the activities that he is investigating. The Comptroller and Auditor General has frequently been highly critical of Departments. The changes in his role arising from the National Audit Act go further. He now produces reports to Parliament and the green covers are the result of a painstaking investigation of Government Departments on behalf of all of us. We have, I believe, in Sir Gordon Downey a notable public servant. What is more, much more, he is a servant and an Officer of this House. He acknowledges it, takes pride in it and sustains this role with ability and integrity.

As I said before, no notification of any highly classified expenditure has previously been presented to me. When would it have come before me? It would have come after Treasury sanction had been given and when it was in the Estimates. That is what I assumed. I would be notified as soon as the decision had been made, whether in Cabinet, in Cabinet committee or elsewhere. The amount of £250 million is the amount over the lifetime of a project. So if a Department is only beginning the project but has made the decision to start, I should be notified because the expenditure would be £250 million.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Will my right hon. Friend clarify one point for the House so that my hon. Friends understand it clearly? It is that accountability to Parliament on these highly secret projects is not accountability to the Floor; it is not accountability to the Public Accounts Committee; it is accountability to my right hon. Friend himself. It is my right hon. Friend himself who has the specific role of examining these matters and other members of the Committee are precluded from doing so.

Secondly, does not my right hon. Friend accept also that when the Comptroller and Auditor General decides what projects are brought before him, and invariably him alone on these matters, he is not required to decide whether it is a £250 million-plus project or a £10 million project, which is the lower sum which my right hon. Friend need not have referred to him under the system of drip feed on secret contracts? My right hon. Friend simply has to decide, irrespective of the volume or value of the contract, whether he thinks he would otherwise be reporting to Parliament. Does not that place upon him a great responsibility? That is at the very heart of the argument of Duncan Campbell.

**Mr. Sheldon:** Of course there is a great responsibility on me, but we have a choice of how we deal with highly classified projects. If a matter of such high classification is to go before the whole Public Accounts Committee there are obvious dangers. I have put it before the Committee, and the Committee has accepted, that there may be cases —no case has come to me yet—which will have to be dealt with in the way that I have described. There is no other way. If this were not possible, then I doubt very much if I would hear anything about them. That is an essential and necessary condition. I think that it is reasonable.

The only thing that concerns me is to ensure that I am given such information. I have to make the best judgment. The judgment I have made is that no decision has been made on this project. That is why it did not come before me.

Perhaps I may tell the House of how I first knew of the project. Then I will say what happened after that.

**Sir Ian Lloyd** (Havant): The right hon. Gentleman has been most helpful to the House, and I am extremely interested in what he has been saying. But there seems to be a fundamental dilemma. What is the position when a project in excess of £250 million is of such great secrecy and moment that the mere disclosure of its existence by anything other than a code name is possibly of the greatest interest to enemies of the State. What is the position in those circumstances?

**Mr. Sheldon:** I think that I have mentioned that; it would come before me and it would be left to me to decide how I handled it. If an amount in excess of £250 million were involved, the project would automatically come before me.

Perhaps I may deal with the way in which this was first disclosed to me. Last September I was asked to take part in a television programme dealing with secrecy in government. I had appeared in a number of discussions, programmes and seminars at various times, and I assumed that this would form part of a pattern with which I was familiar. When I discovered that the programme dealt with this project I brought my participation to a close.

I had no previous knowledge of the project, even though I understood the way in which these matters would normally be relayed to me. On inquiry to the Comptroller and Auditor General I learnt that this was a highly classified project on which the only money spent had been on project definition. There was no commitment to proceed and therefore no programme expenditure had been committed.

After this, there followed a number of inquiries on my part — very exhaustive inquiries; I must convince the House of that—to assure myself that this was the case. I have reason to believe that everything that I am putting to the House is fact. I have mentioned the steps that I have taken previously to assure myself about the promptness of information to me if a decision to proceed was made.

On the different aspect of secrecy, what surprises me, as it must surprise any hon. Member, is why no action was taken earlier. The matter dates back to the middle of October. Matters were known, and I assumed that my involvement would not be required because action elsewhere was obviously going to be taken.

The general point is that the problem with secrecy is that if too many matters are made secret, the currency of secrets is debased. Secrecy is used to avoid political embarrassment to Ministers far more frequently now than it used to be. It conceals matters which need to be kept out of the public view. Certain matters must obviously be kept from the public view. However, so often a civil servant's brief is to ensure that by concealing matters the Minister's appearance at the Dispatch Box is more effective than would otherwise have been the case.

There tend to be more disaffected civil servants now and fewer civil servants are prepared to be used in that way. The danger is that a barrier may exist between important secrets and convenient secrets. That is an important barrier because important secrets are important and need to be kept secret. The barrier must be redefined to ensure proper security to which I believe we are all entitled.

7.40 pm

**Mr. Ivor Stanbrook** (Orpington): There are many important issues to be considered in the course of the debate. However, they are simple issues. The allegation made by the originator of the film and the article was that Parliament was, by implication, being kept unconstitutionally and unlawfully in the dark about the project. No one who heard the remarks made by the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon), the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, could sustain that argument any longer.

An allegation was also made that the film was not prejudicial to national security. In response to that, we have the authority no less than that of the Leader of the Opposition. That is probably the best possible authority in the view of Tory Members.

Hon. Members have asked why the film was not prohibited earlier.

**Mr. McNamara:** Is the hon. Gentleman convinced that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition has seen the film?

**Mr. Stanbrook:** I am sorry, but I did not hear the hon. Gentleman's question.

**Mr. McNamara:** Does the hon. Gentleman believe that my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition has seen the film?

**Mr. Stanbrook:** All we know is what we have read in the newspapers. The reports have not been denied by the Leader of the Opposition. I would have supposed that he would deny what was attributed to him if it was untrue. It was said that the right hon. Gentleman agreed that this was a matter of national security which should not be revealed. It would be interesting to know whether any

*[Mr. Stanbrook]*

Opposition Member who has seen the film wishes to proclaim publicly that the film is proper material to be shown and not a matter of national security.

**Mr. Allan Rogers:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Stanbrook:** No, I am sorry. I have dealt with that point.

Why was the film not prohibited earlier? There are legal difficulties involved, which I can appreciate. It appears that the film was at least partly the property of Mr. Duncan Campbell and he was the originator of the article or at least supplied the information. He had a proprietorial interest.

An injunction was rightly directed against Mr. Campbell, his servants or agents. However, that injunction apparently did not apply against the *New Statesman*. We do not know whether the *New Statesman* had knowledge of the injunction, but it cannot be said to be Mr. Campbell's servant or agent or acting under his instruction. That is one of the aspects of the case that deserves fuller consideration.

An injunction obtained against a potential leaker of national security secrets should be effective not only against the original perpetrator but against all those who might carry out his purpose in leaking state secrets with knowledge of the injunction. As I understand it, to be effective at present an injunction to restrain the leakage of a state secret must be taken out against each and every potential publisher. There must also be evidence of his intention. That is too much to expect the Law Officers' Department to achieve. I hope, therefore, that the Government will now act swiftly to fill that gap in the law and so prevent a recurrence of this disaster — because that is what I believe it to be. In a matter of top national security it should be possible, when an injunction has been taken out, for a copy to be served upon all those who might be considered liable and willing to publish. That notice should be sufficient to deter publication.

Another argument that has been raised is that if the article has been published already, why bother to stop its general publication? That argument betrays a naivety about national security which should not be acceptable. The answer is that national security is too important a subject to be broadcast in that way. The importance of the document is a matter for the judgment of people who are better qualified in these matters than I. However, I accept that leaks should be minimised even after they have occurred in one form, channel or newspaper.

The aspect of the case that interests me most as a constitutional lawyer is that revealed by Mr. Speaker's ruling. I was a little unhappy when I first read the motion before the House. I thought it meant that the House was being asked to deny to itself one of its most cherished privileges — the right to regulate its affairs without interference from the courts. On closer examination, I found that the motion renounces that right only in respect of a specific matter covered by a particular injunction. It is certainly right and proper for the House as a whole to decide not to assert its undoubted privilege in a particular case for as long as the injunction remains in effect. That is the traditional practice. It is the custom of the House not to act contrary to a matter that is the subject of an injunction by the High Court, not because it must or because constitutionally it is bound, but because good government is achieved in that way. An injunction issued by the High Court, especially in a matter of national security, is something which the House would not want to challenge.

The traditional practice has been followed hitherto and should be followed in specific cases when the House knows what it is doing. No question of a precedent therefore arises, because each individual case would have to be judged on its merits. However, the actions of the House in a corporate capacity differs from the actions of individual Members who may choose to act in their own interests. As the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne said, hon. Members may choose to act in pursuance of their duty to inform themselves on behalf of their constituents on any matter without the consent of the House. That is an entirely different matter.

**Mr. Buchan:** Good God! The hon. Gentleman would have us all in uniform.

**Mr. Stanbrook:** If the hon. Gentleman wishes to challenge my understanding of the law, I hope that he will make it on that ground. I suggest that the traditional practices that have been observed hitherto should be followed, and that the procedure that we are invited to adopt this evening is perfectly correct and in accordance with precedent.

The High Court may properly enjoin an hon. Member or a collection of hon. Members not to act unlawfully. It is the privilege of individual hon. Members of the House of Commons——

**Mr. Buchan:** Or of a number of hon. Members.

**Mr. Stanbrook:** Individual Members, or a number of Members acting in their individual capacities and not as the House of Commons, have privilege applying to everything they say in the Chamber. They do not have that privilege outside this Chamber. If an hon. Member or a group of hon. Members wish to show a film which is the subject of an injunction and wished to view it by arrangement with, for example, a local cinema, I think that they could properly be restrained from doing so by the High Court. That answers the question posed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins). If his Committee sought to see the film outside the precincts of the House, it could be covered by a High Court injunction. The Committee would not be entitled to claim parliamentary privilege, because its members would be outside the House.

**Mr. Patrick Cormack** (Staffordshire, South): On the contrary, if the Select Committee was meeting officially it would be able to view it, because a Select Committee of this House can convene in any place.

**Mr. Stanbrook:** That is a matter of constitutional law. My opinion is that it could not, but that is a matter of opinion. Showing the film within the jurisdiction of the House of Commons is an entirely different matter. The privilege is that of the whole House. If the House wishes to see the film mentioned in the motion, or wishes to allow all or any of its Members to see it within the precincts of the House, it can do so properly and lawfully despite any High Court injunction.

Over the centuries the House of Commons has never exercised its power arbitrarily in this way. Mr. Justice Kennedy was acting wisely and constitutionally when he refused an injunction against individual Members who wished to see the film on Thursday. He was right to say that if the hon. Members concerned wished to see it, it was a matter for decision by the House itself, and he refused to exercise his jurisdiction. Had he done so, it might well have raised an important constitutional issue. He put the ball back into our court.

It is for the whole House to decide whether to act contrary to an injunction. It is not within the power of any one or more hon. Members to assert a privilege which belongs to the House as a whole. Therefore, Mr. Speaker's action in ruling against the showing of the film presented the House with this opportunity to decide the matter, and it is wholly within the jurisdiction of the House to do so. I entirely agree with the course taken by Mr. Speaker, because it was the proper course.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing has tabled an amendment to the motion which suggests that the motion

"does nothing that might impair the rights of Select Committees."

In one way that is acceptable because the position will be the same tomorrow as it was yesterday. Of course, that cannot mean that if the House passes this motion amended in that way a Select Committee could disregard a resolution of the whole House. Every Select Committee is subject to the will of this House and derives its authority from the House. The Standing Orders give them their powers and responsibilities. If this House says, as it will purport to do if this motion is passed, that this film shall not be seen——

**Mr. Allan Rogers:** Why have the Government imposed a three-line Whip?

**Mr. Stanbrook:** —it must follow that the Select Committee which is to see it may not see it, because to do so would be contrary to the rules of the House. My right hon. Friend's amendment is a non sequitur. That view was reinforced by the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris) who speaks for the Opposition on legal matters. He said that the effect of the amendment would be to cancel all that has gone before.

**Sir Kenneth Lewis** (Stamford and Spalding): I listened with care to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House. On more than one occasion he sought quite firmly to give the impression that, notwithstanding the fact that the House as a whole, if it votes in a certain way, would not see this film, a Select Committee could still do so. My hon. Friend the Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) is arguing the opposite.

**Mr. Stanbrook:** I did not get the impression that the Leader of the House gave such a reply. I think he said —if he took my advice, but I am quite sure that he did not—that the position remains the same, and that Select Committees have the rights conferred on them by Standing Orders in accordance with the practice of the House. If that includes the right of this House to determine its own procedures and behaviour, and if a resolution of the House were to say that something shall not be done, it is not open to the members of a Select Committee to say that it shall be done by them.

Finally, I shall refer to the manuscript amendment tabled by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn). It is quite wrong to assume that this is an honourable and proper way out of the problem before us, because the effect of adopting that amendment which cancels all the rest would be to say that Mr. Speaker's authority, which was exerted for a special purpose and for a limited time and had temporary effect, shall remain and that the House itself shall not make a decision on the matter until after a comparatively lengthy reference to the Select Committee on Privileges. That process could take a considerable time.

**Mr. Cormack:** Surely the House is best served in these important matters by the Select Committee of Privileges. To refer the matter to that Committee is to refer it to the House's appointed custodian of these matters.

**Mr. Stanbrook:** Which has the better authority to speak on behalf of the House—the House itself, or one of its Committees?

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Matters come back here for debate.

**Mr. Stanbrook:** I agree on the matter of whether the House should automatically as a matter of custom comply with a High Court injunction. That cannot be questioned. The extent of the House's privilege in that respect is a proper matter to be referred to the Committee of Privileges. To say that this specific, urgent and important issue should not be decided here and now by the House is wrong. By all means let the Committee of Privileges be asked to look at this general question, but we must not give it the authority that we possess to make a decision on this matter. For those reasons, we should pass the motion unamended.

7.58 pm

**Mr. J. Enoch Powell** (South Down): I am sorry that this motion has been placed before the House in its present terms, and I hope that the House will refrain from converting it into a resolution but will resort to passing the written amendment referred to at an earlier stage and make use of the advice that ought to be sought upon a profound matter of this kind from the Select Committee of Privileges which the House has for that very purpose.

The motion, as it stands on the Order Paper, raises at least three separate though interconnected matters of grave concern and constitutional importance. I want to refer to them briefly. The first is that it assumes that the precincts of the House enjoy total immunity and privilege. If that were not the assumption made by the Government, the motion would be quite unnecessary and nugatory. It assumes, in other words, that an act which is unlawful outside the precincts of this House is lawful or, at any rate, immune from legal proceedings, if it takes place inside the precincts.

There is no question whatsoever as to the absolute privilege which is enjoyed by the House when it is going about its business. The House as a House and the Committees of the House sitting as Committees of the House enjoy and must enjoy total and absolute privilege: nothing which is done or said in them can be called in question in any other place. That is not open to discussion or to dispute. It is a principle which every hon. Member of this House would defend. We extend it, however, to an exorbitant degree when we say that just because something is said or done in the precincts of this House it ought to be deemed to be covered by the same absolute privilege and immunity from legal process.

We enjoy the privileges which we have in order to exercise them on behalf of those whom we represent. I cannot believe that it could be in the interests of the public

*[Mr. J. Enoch Powell]*

that acts which have been properly declared unlawful if committed at large could be committed within the precincts of the House under cover of a kind of penumbra of privilege supposedly diffused from the Chamber itself. The motion, therefore, and the assumption which underlies it, confuse the House and its proceedings with the premises in part of which the House conducts those proceedings. I believe that that is a matter which ought to be clearly established.

A reference which was made by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), in a very important earlier contribution to this debate, confirms me in what I am saying. When the right hon. Gentleman was looking for an instance of privilege enjoyed outside the Chamber and outside the proceedings of the House, he mentioned the communication with which the Sandys case was concerned. That was a communication which was made right away from the precincts of the House, but was caught because, in the view of the House, it bore upon the proceedings of the House, because there a proceeding of the House was involved — the tabling of a written question—and the House decided on that occasion that its privileges were involved and ought to be defended.

The second problematic matter which this motion raises is that, having assumed that an injunction and the powers of the courts are ousted in the precincts of the Palace of Westminster, the Government proceed to eliminate that privilege in a specific context and for a specific purpose. They want to pass a resolution to say, "Nevertheless, although an injunction does not have effect in the precincts of the House, such and such things prohibited by an injunction shall not be done in the precincts of the House."

It seems to me a very grave matter, where there exists a privilege of this House, if the House, by resolution, should make exemptions from it. It is of the essence of privilege that we all enjoy it and that we all enjoy it without exemption.

One often hears references to privilege being abused but, of course, privilege is not used unless it is abused. The hon. Member who uses his privilege to say in this House things which he could not say outside it and which perhaps no one else in this House wants him to say is using his essential privilege. If once we begin to say that a resolution of the House can take away or can limit or can define or can specify what privileges may or may not be exerted, we have laid an axe to the roots of privilege itself. Although therefore I believe that the underlying assumption behind the motion, as regards the extent of privilege, is itself mistaken, nevertheless I consider it erroneous that the House, having assumed such a privilege, should proceed by resolution to curb and limit it in a specific matter at the suggestion of the Government.

The third matter, Mr. Speaker — I am relieved that you have returned to the Chair, because it concerns yourself and you have been generous and frank in placing yourself at the disposal of the House so that it could be debated — relates to your decision, as you expressed it, to ensure

"that nothing should occur to prejudice the position until the House itself had an opportunity to discuss the matter." [*Official Report*, 22 January 1987; Vol 108, c. 1025.]

Old Mr. Lenthall has been invoked more than once already this afternoon, but I think that old Mr. Lenthall is in place here. Of course, if it comes to the knowledge of the Chair that the House intends to consider a certain matter, it is part of the functions of the Chair, which are often exercised by the Chair in Committee, so to proceed that the House has the opportunity to do what it is known to intend to do.

As it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, the difficulty about the decision which you took arises from this: how it came to your knowledge that the House would wish to have before it such a motion as we are debating this afternoon. It was Lenthall who said that he had not

"eyes to see nor ears to hear but as this House might direct."

There is nothing which this House had done or said which could have conveyed to your ears the knowledge or the presumption that we would wish either to assume an extended privilege covering the precincts as a whole or to limit the exercise of that extended privilege, as this motion does.

I feel, therefore, that the Chair, in making the order which it did on that occasion, was not in fact exercising the function of preserving the opportunities and safeguarding the discretion of the House, for I do not believe it can be claimed that the House itself is in a position to take a decision extending its own privileges. Our privileges—I think this is commonly accepted—rooted as they are in history and in precedent, are not capable of being further extended by ourselves. In so far, therefore, as the motion implies an extension of those privileges or may do so, that with great respect, Mr. Speaker, is not a matter for itself not an action which the House has it any longer in its power to take.

All these considerations lead me to the conclusion that the issues that have been raised by this event have turned out to be far more serious, far more far-reaching in their implications, than perhaps anyone, even members of the Government themselves, realised a few days ago. It is precisely in such circumstances that to avoid error we have by custom resorted to the use of the Select Committee of Privileges, a Committee which can at leisure, taking due account and debating among itself, thrash out and examine all the aspects which are tied up in this single motion. I hope, therefore, that the House will not dispose of the matter by passing this motion, or indeed the amendment to it which virtually repeats those elements of the motion itself which are open to exception, but will use its well-tried method of referring to the Select Committee of Privileges a matter of such deep and important moment.

8.8 pm

**Mr. Jonathan Aitken** (Thanet, South): The right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell), who has deservedly earned the reputation of a great House of Commons man, did the House a fine service with that speech. I raise what is the first, but by no means the last, voice from the Conservative Benches at least, firmly in favour of the motion of the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn).

This debate was billed as some sort of clash over issues involving press freedom, defence and security. In fact it has turned out to be a first-class House of Commons occasion, because rightly, from the moment when the Father of the House intervened—so fortunately diverted from the Tea Room where he intended to go — the House, with its customary instinctive feel, began to get the message that there was something up of considerable importance to the future destiny of the House of Commons and Parliaments which would be here long after all of us.

The right hon. Member for Chesterfield was right to say that this is fundamentally a constitutional issue. We begin with a look at the wording of the Government's somewhat flawed motion. It starts with your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and it has been common ground throughout the debate—I share that common ground — that you were right in your judgment of the individual case in the individual circumstances of that moment. The trouble with the Government's motion, particularly its last 14 words, is that it sets a dangerous precedent, a precedent that could make the House bow before the injunction of the courts in circumstances different from those that we are discussing.

Some of my right hon. Friends in their militant speeches have been up in arms, and rightfully so, against the *New Statesman* and Mr. Duncan Campbell. It is not fanciful to foresee a day when there is a reversal of roles, with an extremely Left-wing Government in power and a Right-wing newspaper standing up for what it believes to be a just cause. The courts could impose, in the name of national security, an instant genuflection in the shape of an injunction that would silence Parliament. This could be a dangerous precedent.

I share the mood of the House in saying that the only sensible move that we can make is to send this matter to the expertise of the Select Committee of Privileges.

**Mr. Patrick Cormack** (Staffordshire, South): Does my hon. Friend agree that another great advantage of that course is that the House would not need to divide?

**Mr. Aitken:** I frequently see the merit in not having Divisions, and on this occasion it would remove any possibility of questioning, limiting or extending Mr. Speaker's ruling, so I take my hon. Friend's point.

The secondary issue in the debate is the role of Select Committees. Even after the four — or was it five? — interventions with answers from my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House that sounded as though they were in the evasive tense—most uncharacteristically—I did not quite understand how the status quo of Select Committees was to be preserved and what his assurances meant. All I can say is that I cannot believe that the status quo of the Select Committees is to be placed in the Alice-in-Wonderland situation in which they are prohibited from discussing certain matters, seeing certain films or listening to certain broadcasts in the precincts of the House but can go down the road and outside the House constitute themselves as Select Committees and be completely in order. This is another area of doubt, muddle and confusion.

We have exposed certain fundamental worries that, seen with the sweep of history and the past, and the dangerous precedents that could be set in the future, should make us hesitate for an eternity before we vote for the Government's motion. I shall not do so, and if given an opportunity I will support the amendment of the right hon. Member for Chesterfield.

8.13 pm

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): I shall be brief. We have had a confusion in this debate by getting two things mixed up. First, there are the rights and privileges of the House, and I am glad to notice that increasing numbers of hon. Members on both sides of the House are coming round to the point of view that, to protect rights and privileges, especially those of Back Benchers, the matter should go to the Select Committee of Privileges. That is exactly right.

Secondly, and related to this point, is what has happened to the film outside the House. This is just as important, and I hope that in discussing the one item, we do not mix up the two. I hope that we shall have a debate about what has happened to the film and what has happened to the *New Statesman* and Duncan Campbell, after the police went to his house and took the documents. We have to concern ourselves with the rights and privileges, but we must also be concerned with the rights and privileges of the people who put us here. I do not accept the view of the Prime Minister and some Conservative Members that it was a terrible thing that the film should have been produced in the first place, and terrible that there should have been an article in the newspaper because it was a Left-wing newspaper.

Some of us are not convinced that the *New Statesman* is as Left-wing as it used to be. There was a time when we would have accepted that it was a Left-wing newspaper —I shall not get into that argument—but we were right in not getting the two matters discussed together. I want an assurance from my Front Bench that it will seek, as early as possible, a debate not merely about our privileges and rights, but about what has happened to the film, and the fact that the BBC has been prevented from showing it, and about what has happened to the *New Statesman*.

What has happened to that newspaper can happen to any other Left-wing journal, genuine or otherwise, and every middle of the road journal, and that is the beginning of the police state. The attack on, and entry into, newspaper offices is the beginning of an authoritarian system. It is what happens in all authoritarian states, whether they are Left-wing or Right-wing. The House must equally concern itself with that.

Any Government that can table a motion accepting the idea that a judge can determine what happens in the House should be aware that such ideas are allied to the police state. It means that the courts, under the control of the Government, are determining what is happening in the elected forum, and that is a dangerous line for the Government to take. I hope that the people understand precisely what is happening.

We did not get our rights easily. They were not handed to us by the Almighty. He might have had a slight hand in it, but on the whole, we got our rights through people fighting for them. All rights, whether it is the right to have a Parliament, to have elected representatives with pay, to have Parliaments elected every few years, or to have a free press, were not handed to us on a plate. They had to be fought for. All our rights have been fought for by people outside the House, and they have merely made it possible for us to represent and protect them inside the House. In protecting our privileges, we are arguing for the rights of the people outside.

I think that my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) made a first-class speech, as did the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell). I have heard marvellous speeches in the House tonight.

If the Government have any sense at all, they will not push their motion to a vote but will accept the manuscript amendment of my right hon. Friend the Member for

*[Mr. Eric S. Heffer]*

Chesterfield to enable the matter to go to the Committee of Privileges. I also urge my right hon. Friends to get a pledge from the Government that we should have an early debate about what has happened over the *New Statesman*, the film and the need to put up a struggle to preserve our rights and freedoms in Britain.

8.20 pm

**Mr. Timothy Raison** (Aylesbury): Like the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) I did not intend to take part in this debate, but neither did I intend to spend the time having tea.

I came to this debate with two firm views—one, that you, Mr. Speaker, acted entirely properly in what you have done; the other, that the security of this country is of the greatest importance and that the *New Statesman* was wrong to publish the article by Duncan Campbell. I believe that its motive in doing so had nothing to do with parliamentary control; it was entirely to do with a form of titillation. Nevertheless, I have listened to this debate this afternoon and doubts have been thrown up in my mind about the course proposed by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House.

I believe that those doubts are inevitably connected with the position of Select Committees. I do not happen to be one of the most extreme partisans of Select Committees. I believe they do a good job—I have been before Committees on a number of times as a Minister, and I believe the way in which they carry out their work is generally fair and that they are useful—but I have never taken the view that Select Committees should be entitled to receive information that is not available to the rest of the House. Anything that is available should be available to all hon. Members.

Over the past few years, the Select Committees have acquired certain powers, and I think that we should recognise that. There is some ambiguity about whether those powers would be left should the Government's motion be carried. I also believe that the wording of the amendment tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins) would also lead to some ambiguity. What would be the position of the Select Committee? Could it see the film? Perhaps it could see the film off the premises, unless an injunction taken in the courts prevented it. It would be absurd for a Select Committee to leave the House in order to see the film.

It may be possible for the Committee to summon an unwilling provider of the film—the BBC or whoever—and to go to the House to seek leave to summon the film to be shown. I do not know how the rest of the House would react to that. I would have thought that in the light of your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and if the Government's motion was carried, the House would say that the film was not available to the Committee. There is some ambiguity about that; it must be cleared up, as it is very unsatisfactory.

Another important aspect of this debate is whether or not your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and the motion moved by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House, could constitute a precedent. It has been argued that the motion contains specific wording about a particular event and there is no generality, but nevertheless precedent always arises from a single action. We cannot be sure what line would be taken if a similar event cropped up again. It is obvious that what we have here is a bit of a muddle, but it is a muddle on an important matter. That is the flavour of today's debate.

What is the answer? I know that when my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General, winds up he will approach the matter with great care and wisdom. I have the highest regard for him. The best advice that one could offer the Government is to accept that the matter be referred to the Committee of Privileges. That has been the tenor of today's debate.

If the House decided to refer the matter to the Select Committee of Privileges, if the Leader of the House, could assure us that, in the interim your ruling, Mr. Speaker, would continue to apply, I would be perfectly happy. That ruling would continue until the Committee had been able to report to the House and as long as the injunction lasted. That would be a reasonable decision. If any other decision were reached on the matter tonight, it would ignore the whole tenor of the debate. The matter should be dealt with by the Committee of Privileges and I hope that the Leader of the House will accept that.

8.25 pm

**Mr. Robin Cook** (Livingston): I differ from the opening remarks of the right hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Raison) and other hon. Members who said that they had not intended to make a speech today. I had intended to make a speech, and I am duly grateful for the opportunity to do so.

Having sat through the debate, there is one point that I should like to take up from an earlier speech. I want to refer to the thoughtful and serious speech offered to the House by the hon. Member for Chislehurst (Mr. Sims), because he made a point that should be firmly nailed to the floor as a fallacy. He argued that in voting for the motion we were not necessarily creating a precedent, and he wished for an assurance that in voting for the motion the House was not creating a precedent.

It is, of course, open to any future House, or any future Speaker, to choose to disregard the precedent and to select from precedents in the Standing Orders or in the Journal of the House. What we cannot disguise from ourselves is that if we voted for the motion we would be creating a precedent which may or may not be used to guide future Speakers. That is unanswerable, and the House should be cautious about this.

In one of the morning papers a Minister—on an unattributable basis—said that if the motion was carried it would be "a useful precedent". It is precisely for that reason that I hope the House will not rush into a decision tonight.

I shall be brief, as I know that the House wishes shortly to reach a conclusion. I shall not spend too much time on the motion. It certainly does not survive the interplay of free intellect and the application of common sense. It invites the House to agree not to watch the film, although many hon. Members have already read the transcript. It invites hon. Members to pretend that they do not know any information, although that information has been widely disseminated to their constituents through the daily newspapers. It invites hon. Members to agree that they will not watch the film in the Palace of Westminster, although they may watch it outside the House. It is a farrago of nonsense.

It is a matter of regret that the Leader of the House had to move the motion. In a spirit of friendship I acknowledge the right hon. Gentleman's robust common sense which so often enlivens the debates in the Chamber. It is a shame that he has had to defend this piece of nonsense. I have listened to the right hon. Gentleman on a number of occasions, and I have sat in Committee with him on the Finance Bill. One certainly gets to know other hon. Members when one is in a Committee on the Finance Bill. I have never seen him so miserable and so unhappy as he was tonight when he proposed the motion.

I shall not add to the right hon. Gentleman's misery by dissecting the motion, but I shall seek to consider it in the context of two wider issues of principle which have dominated the debate. The first is the relationship between this House and the courts. We cannot duck that issue, because in the motion there is a specific reference to a film banned by injunction. It would have been better if the motion had contained no reference to an injunction. If it had been a simple motion naming a specific film I would have been happier, though I would not necessarily have voted for it. I am unhappy because the motion clearly sets out to recognise the authority of the courts over the proceedings of this House. That is at the heart of the dilemma.

It is clear that the injunction granted by the courts and the injunction referred to in the motion does not run within the Palace of Westminster in terms of proscribing the watching of the film. If it did, the Government could not explain why they felt it necessary to return the next day to seek a specific injunction against me and 13 other named Members, which the very same judge, quite properly, threw out within one minute. He did so because he was respecting a long tradition in which the courts have not sought to exercise their powers inside the Chamber.

The hon. Member for Orpington (Mr. Stanbrook) made an extraordinary speech in which he appeared to be giving away the privileges of the House hand over fist. I want to point out to the hon. Gentleman that there is a full chapter in "Erskine May" on the history of Parliament and the courts showing how Parliament has asserted its independence of court jurisdiction. It is clear from that chapter that the exemption from the jurisdiction of the courts is not confined to proceedings of the House, either in the Chamber or in a formally constituted committee. It states:

> "For such purposes the House can 'practically change or practically supersede the law'. This privilege is not confined to the chamber in which the House sits. For instance, it has been held to extend to the sale, within the precincts of the House, of intoxicating liquor without a licence".

I regret that that profound principle of constitutional law degenerated into an example from the licensing law. However, the principle is clearly established and has been well accepted over the decades.

It is a matter of surprise that the Attorney-General, who, as we read this week, is the longest serving Attorney-General this century, and who therefore has perhaps had the greatest opportunity to master the principles of constitutional law, chose to go to the courts to seek an injunction that would breach the long tradition and convention of the relationship between Parliament and the courts and had to be reminded of the tradition by the judge rather than by anybody in his own chambers. We should not lose sight of the fact that the Government attempted to use the courts against named Members of Parliament who were seeking to go about what was certainly public business in a spirit, as they conceived it, of conformity with their duties as Members of Parliament. It was only after that failed that the Attorney-General then turned to you, Mr. Speaker, and obtained the ruling that was served upon me on Thursday, and it was subsequent to that event that the motion was tabled for debate today.

The second issue of principle raised by the motion and by today's debate is the right of hon. Members to have access to information on which to carry out the task with which we are charged in the constitution, which is the important task of scrutinising the Executive.

I agree with the hon. Members who have said that this has been a splendid debate which has shown the House of Commons at its finest. It has been a good debate and there has been a degree of cross-party agreement, certainly in the latter stages. However, it is sad that there should be any doubt about what the legislature will do with the motion at the end of the debate. One can make certain shaming comparisons with other legislatures and the way in which they would behave if confronted with such a motion. If such a motion was tabled before Congress, there would be uproar. The debate might last longer than our debate, but there would be no doubt as to what the majority of both sides of Congress would do with a motion that suggested that they should not see a film that might be politically embarrassing to the Executive and which the Executive did not want them to see.

To understand the enormity of the proposition, it is necessary to set it against the events of the past five days. Unlike the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), I believe that important questions of press freedom have been raised by the conduct of the Government in the past five days, and by the motion. It was only last week that the Government instructed the Treasury solicitor to write to the editor of every daily newspaper seeking an assurance that they would not report what the *New Statesman* had already printed. The final paragraph of the letter stated:

> "Please let me have an assurance by midday Friday, 23 January 1987 failing which the Lord Advocate will consider taking legal action against you."

That letter was sent to a Scottish editor. It is a bizarre instruction, because no crime is committed by failing to give an assurance requested by the Treasury solicitor, at least not yet. It is disturbing that the Government saw no impropriety in approaching editors to seek an assurance that they would not report a matter that was already in the public domain.

Another issue of press freedom intimately bound up with the debate is the arrival of special branch officers at the office of the *New Statesman* on Saturday. I concur with the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) that there is room for debate as to how Left-wing the *New Statesman* may be. Indeed, it last sprang into national prominence shortly before Christmas when its present editor urged the Labour party to abandon its policy of nuclear disarmament. The previous editor achieved a moment of notoriety within the Labour movement in 1983 when he advised the electors in half the constituencies in England to vote alliance rather than Labour. By anybody's standards, it is a newspaper within the mainstream of political opinion.

**Mr. Allan Rogers:** It is drowning in it.

**Mr. Cook:** Yes, it is drowning in the mainstream of political opinion.

If such an independent newspaper can be visited by the special branch and turned over by it — I assure the

[Mr. Cook]

House that it was not simply Duncan Campbell's drawers that it was looking through; it went through the files and offices of everybody in the *New Statesman*—no paper in the land is safe from such a development. I hope that the events of last weekend will not also be regarded by the Government as a "useful precedent."

It is against the background of those events that we have to judge the full enormity of the events before us. The motion asks us to agree not to have access to the information contained in the film. Worse than that, given that we all know what is in the film, and that most of our constituents know what is in it, the motion realistically invites us to pretend that we do not know the information. That is insupportable. I find it difficult to accept that Mr. Duncan Campbell, who produced the film and wrote the article, was seeking to damage national security. I have read the transcript. There are few technical details contained in it. There is no discussion of the specifications or of how the satellite will operate. I have, by comparison, leafed through the book entitled "The Ties That Bind" which was published in 1985. It is replete with technical details as to how such things operate.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** In support of what my hon. Friend is saying about Mr. Duncan Campbell's intentions, may I draw his attention to page 17 of the script, where Mr. Campbell says:

> "Obviously we can't broadcast the exact technical details of what Zircon's targets will be."

**Mr. Cook:** My hon. Friend has anticipated a point that I wished to develop.

To return to the book entitled "The Ties That Bind", I must confess that, despite my enthusiasms for the subject and my anxiety to prepare a decent contribution for today's debate, I found my attention constantly wandering from the book, which is of a technical character that I could not comprehend. I must put it to the House that if it is possible for the Government to allow a thick volume of technical specifications to be published, what is it in the transcript that makes it such a threat to national security? It is not good enough to argue that one breach of national security does not justify another.We are talking about the same breach. That argument is dangerously close to saying that there is one law on national security for Allen and Unwin when it publishes a respectable tome, and another law for Duncan Campbell and the *New Statesman* when they wish to produce an article that is critical of and politically embarrassing to the Government.

The thrust of that programme is not about the specifications of the satellite, but about the contention of Duncan Campbell that the Government broke an undertaking to the Public Accounts Committee. I accept that there are two views on whether the undertaking has been broken. I say to my right hon. Friend the Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon) that, having applied my mind to this over the last week, and having sought advice that is available to me, I am inclined to take the view that on balance the undertakings to the Committee were not broken, but that is not the point of principle.

Duncan Campbell had convinced himself that those undertakings had been broken, and through the programme he sought to show that the undertakings had been set aside by the Government, who have sought to conceal this project. It is not a sufficient reason to suppress the programme on the grounds that he was wrong in claiming that those undertakings had been broken. If he was convinced that Parliament had been deceived, he had every right to prepare a programme which set out why Parliament had been deceived and why he had come to that conclusion, and we have every right to receive that information and to have access to the programme in which it is contained.

I believe that the motion should be thrown out, even on its merits. However, it is not merely its merits that require the House to decline to pass the motion. The House should decline to pass the motion because of the wider questions that it begs concerning press freedom, and most important of all, the access of the House to the information that it needs. Were this motion to be passed tonight, it would tilt dangerously further the balance of power between this Chamber and the Government. For that reason, I believe that it is imperative that the House refrains from that step tonight and sends this issue to the Committee of Privileges.

8.42 pm

**Mr. Kenneth Warren** (Hastings and Rye): When I expressed the hope to catch you eye, Mr. Speaker, I imagined that I would be taking part in an acrimonious debate. Having sat through the entire debate, what is fascinating is the way in which the House has risen to the heights to which it rises on all too few occasions, through your good offices, Mr. Speaker, and has done itself a great service. I found a renewal of faith in Parliament as a place where sound common sense emerges if we listen to each other for long enough.

Mr. Duncan Campbell's article, let alone his film, should not have merited a debate, nor should it have been considered by the Government as being anything other than the kind of low-level technological rubbish that the article is. What is surprising about the article is that it has major inaccuracies, which caused me to wonder why the editor of the *New Statesman* bothered to publish it after he had commissioned it.

One has only to look at the introduction to the article, where Mr. Duncan Campbell says that there has been an expenditure of £500 million, and to have heard the right hon. Member, for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon), the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, saying that there was no such expenditure, to realise its lack of value. The Government could have checked on that and said in public that Mr. Campbell's other assertion at the beginning of his article that the satellites would be positioned over the Soviet Union was a load of technical rubbish.

Further on in his article Mr. Campbell states that the United Kingdom has no forces further east than the Gulf and therefore there is no need for a British communications satellite there. That hardly does justice to a man who claims technical accuracy as the basis for his article. He does not seem to have heard of Hong Kong.

Much of what Mr. Campbell put in his article has been freely available in magazines such as *Aviation News*, and much of that which he quotes has been well known in the world of technology for the last 10 years. If we had made some sensible, straightforward, simple inquiries, we would soon have found that there was nothing here which should have been brought to the level of a major debate in the House.

I have met Mr. Duncan Campbell. All of us occasionally carry chips on our shoulders, but he carries breeze blocks on his, probably brought about by the fact that he had always hoped to join the intelligence community, but I understand that wiser counsel prevailed and he was turned away from that opportunity.

Once again we are up against the question of the overwhelming envelope of secrecy with which we bind ourselves too often. There is no need for us to pretend that devices such as intelligence satellites do not exist, that it would be a good idea for us to have one. The Russians and the Americans have them, and there is free information available about them. We should ensure that we do not discuss the capability or specification of those satellites, but here again we touch, as we do far too rarely in the House, on the concept of and need to practise freedom of information. Governments in power do not like that concept, but the Opposition dearly love it. Surely there can be unity on both sides of the House to downgrade the amount of secrecy that surrounds so much of the workings that we try to pursue here.

I should like to endorse the marker put down by my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins), to make sure that Select Committee's interests are preserved, but I hope, Mr. Speaker, that through the service that you have rendered to the House, through this debate we will be able to move to a point where there is no need for a Division, but there is a need for both sides of the House to agree that the Committee of Privileges has a special part to play to conclude our debate.

8.47 pm

**Mr. Merlyn Rees** (Morley and Leeds, South): I shall vote for the manuscript amendment that was put forward in a remarkable first hour of the debate, when the House of Commons was at its best and new ideas were brought to our notice. I hope that the media—who are fond of saying what happens at Prime Minister's Question Time —will report it for the excellent debate that it has been.

I shall raise two or three points. I will resist the temptation that my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) put in my mind when he was talking about the filing cabinets and drawers at the *New Statesman* that had been looked into by special branch, and I wondered what special branch would have found if it had looked into the drawers at the *Sun* newspaper.

The hon. Member for Hastings and Rye (Mr. Warren) has great technical knowledge which is denied most of us. What he said raised questions about the article. I can make no judgment on that, but it led me to ask myself what the nature of the briefing was that was given to my right hon. Friends in the Shadow Cabinet, who were right to go and take it. When the Prime Minister tetchily said that she was considering not giving a security briefing to the Leader of the Opposition about the Wright affair, I did not know what she was talking about, because no such briefings take place. Whenever Governments consult the Opposition it is because the Government are in trouble on an issue and they want to give the Opposition a briefing on Privy Council terms. As far as I have been able to find out, the press were given almost the same briefing on the same day as the Opposition, and the informed press the following day contained information about the same sort of thing — the need to get out from under the American umbrella and the cost factor. They are matters that ought to be raised on the Floor of the House.

I shall put two points to the Minister, and since he is not here, perhaps they can be brought to his notice. If the Government wanted to get to a newspaper in the way that they did, why did they not use the D notice system? I do not like that system very much, but it is available and something we looked into on the Franks committee. The arrangements are set out. But the Government did not do that. Instead, they handled it in a ham-fisted manner through the Treasury solicitor.

Who is responsible for GCHQ? Considering how the Government handled the Falklands war up to D Day, which was not very clever, when the newspapers last week reported the bickering in the Cabinet, it was no wonder that the Attorney-General had a problem. If he is to get advice from his colleagues about the public interest, who will be the one to do that? I recall that, on the Ponting business, the Attorney-General said that he did not consult anyone. In that case, it does not matter if there is confusion in Government policy because the Attorney-General will take it in his stride.

Under what terms was the BBC told not to show the film? Under the terms of the charter, the Government have the power, for security reasons, to tell the BBC not to publish. But also under the terms of the charter, the BBC has the right then to reveal that the order has been given by the Government. If this was done on security grounds, the BBC should have revealed that fact. I suspect that it was not done on security grounds because it was not on real security grounds, if the article that I have read is anything to go by.

This has been a remarkable debate, and I hope that the Solicitor-General will respond in a like manner. Both sides of the House want a response to a debate in which hon. Members from both sides of the House have put forward ideas that have changed minds. I hope that the Government will change their mind.

8.50 pm

**Mr. John Morris** (Aberavon): This has been a remarkable House of Commons occasion.

**Mr. Cormack:** On a point of order Mr. Speaker. Is there any particular reason for the wind-up speeches beginning now? Some of us have sat throughout the debate and are rather anxious to take part.

**Mr. Speaker:** If the Opposition Front Bench spokesman rises, the Chair will call him. If the House wishes to take a decision on all three amendments, time must be allowed for that.

**Mr. Morris:** I am willing to concede a few minutes to the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack).

8.51 pm

**Mr. Patrick Cormack** (Staffordshire, South): I am most grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, and I am particularly to the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris). I shall not detain the House for long. I would have liked to make several points, but I shall make one. Like the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth, (Mr. Callaghan) I did not come to speak — many of us did not—but this has been a classic House of Commons occasion, when minds have been changed during the debate.

My mind was changed when one statement was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Davyhulme (Mr. Churchill). He said that, if we voted for the Government's

*[Mr. Patrick Cormack]*

motion, we would be supporting the Chair and the Government. He said that in all good faith, but if that construction could be place upon the debate, it would do infinite damage to the House in every possible way. It would be completely wrong for you Mr. Speaker, to be thought to be allied with either side of the House, be it Government or Opposition. For that reason above all others, although many have been adduced which could convince people on both sides of the House, it is essential —I did not think that I would agree so enthusiastically with the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) — that we should follow his, on this occasion, sage advice and refer this matter to the body that we as the House of Commons have appointed—the Committee of Privileges.

**Mrs. Sally Oppenheim** (Gloucester): Will my hon. Friend give way?

**Mr. Cormack:** I must not give way, because I promised to be brief.

I urge my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House and my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General to respond to the collective wisdom of the House and accept the manuscript amendment.

8.53 pm

**Mr. John Morris** (Aberavon): There is no better way of underlining the fact that this is a House of Commons occasion than by giving way to the hon. Member for Staffordshire, South (Mr. Cormack), and I am delighted to have done so.

We are grateful to my right hon. Friends the Members for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) and for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) and other right hon. and hon. Members for their contributions to this memorable debate. They have expressed their concern that, by passing the motion, we wittingly or unwittingly may be encroaching on the privileges of the House. We may be creating a dangerous precedent of affecting to put into effect the orders of another court — orders specifically mentioned in the Government's motion. Therefore, I hope that before it is too late the Government will say that they are prepared to accept the amendment of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield.

You ruled, Mr. Speaker, on what I understand to be a one-off occasion in unusual circumstances when the House was not sitting on a Thursday morning, hoping that perhaps the House would reach some conclusion on your temporary order later in the day. The danger is that, if the precedent that has been created is endorsed today in the terms of the Government's motion, right hon. and hon. Members who raise similar issues in the future will hark back to your order and to the resolution itself, because our contributions will have been forgotten in the sands of time.

But the order of the House will be there. It will be part of "Erskine May" and will be prayed in aid if ever there is an injunction from another court, whether it be on the Government's application or on that of any other citizen of the land. That is the danger. A wide path has been created and if we go down that path without having given it proper and due consideration, we may be limiting the future freedom, privileges and traditions of the House. I am sure that is the last thing that you intended when you ruled temporarily.

You have given us yet another instance, Mr. Speaker, of great assistance to the House when, in response to an hon. Member's question, you said that if the matter went to the Committee of Privileges, your order would subsist for the time being, certainly until the Committee of Privileges considered the matter. May I add that perhaps the appropriate time that the matter would subsist would be not only when the Committee of Privileges considered the matter but when it in due course reported to the House and the House resolved the matter. That would be the time scale, and I am glad to see, Mr. Speaker, that you acknowledge what I have to say as correct.

That is what will remain. Therefore, in those circumstances, I do not understand what the Government have to lose by modifying their position. Your order will remain, Mr. Speaker. The film will not be shown within the precincts. Whatever the absurdities of the position as regards the outside world, the Government would not lose. If the Government were to say now that they would accept the amendment, I would willingly, in the interests of the House, sit down and allow the Solicitor-General to take his place. It may well be that Ministers are now considering the matter and we may have to wait a little longer before news comes to the Floor of the House, but I am ever optimistic.

Mr. Sherlock Holmes might say that the House tonight is dealing with the curious case of the defective injunction. As in every mystery, the House would like to know first, who did it—or perhaps would be more accurate to ask, who did not do it properly. Secondly, now that the horse has bolted from the stable, what is the rationale for the absurd position whereby, as the delightful phrase in the injunction states

> "Mr. Campbell, his servants"—

I like that—

> "or agents are prohibited from disclosing . . . anything relating to the project in question."

The horse has bolted from the *New Statesman* stable which provides Mr. Campbell with his fodder. However, we are asked to continue with the pointless exercise of turning a blind eye to the fact that every *New Statesman* reader knows of the project, but access to the film that deals with it is denied a showing within the precincts of this Palace.

If we pass the Government's motion, there will be a sort of cordon sanitaire around this building, with the effect that Members of Parliament will be able to read the *New Statesman* in the Library, but will not be allowed to see the film in the precincts of the House. That is the absurd position that we are asked to endorse. Our impression is of a monumental bungle to which no one will own up.

We have not yet had the opportunity to debate the Government's litigiousness in the Antipodes. If there is a Manpower Services Commission in Australia, it must be delighted with the Government's efforts to enhance job opportunities for our ever-needy Australian legal cousins. However, we know that the Government have been advised by their lawyers to sue on the similar subjects in Australia and in Ireland. Ultimately, somebody will come forward and confess to having advised the Attorney General to sue in Ireland, regardless of the Irish constitution, its history and traditions. The track record of the Law Officers is not exactly peerless. Therefore, it is not surprising that many hon. Members consider their activities with scepticism.

The known history is that the BBC passed the contents of the film to the security services. It is not clear whether every technician involved in its making had been positively vetted. The film was due to have been shown in November. However, although the BBC had agreed in principle to the showing, it kicked for touch and delay followed delay until eventually there was a Government request, I surmise by the Ministry of Defence, in early December, not to show it.

It is an interesting light on this curious case that heavy briefings sought to pass the poisoned chalice to the Secretary of State for Defence. Ultimately, it had to be passed into the robust hands of the Foreign Secretary, who had to clear up the mess.

How credible was the Pontius Pilate act of the Ministry of Defence? Sir Frank Cooper, a former distinguished permanent secretary, was interviewed as far back as October and he, I am told, is on the film. It is extraordinary that that fact, and the subject matter, did not galvanise the Ministry of Defence to action, especially when Sir Clive Whitmore, the permanent secretary, is one of the joint chairmen of the D Committee. "Thank God," a nation in peril said, "for the BBC."

Eventually, in addition to the willingness of the BBC not to proceed with the film showing, an injunction was obtained against Mr. Campbell, his servants or agents.

The Prime Minister took the nation into her confidence on Friday on the IRN news and revealed that the Attorney-General could not just go along to the court and demand any old injunction, or a blanket one, to safeguard national security. She announced to an anxious nation that to obtain an injunction, one had to have names of specific persons and evidence had to be obtained which amounted to specific knowledge of an intention to publish. We were asked to accept that the Government were not at fault in not having included the *New Statesman*—or, come to think of it, ITN — in the terms of the injunction, because there was no evidence of an intention to publish.

I suppose that the security services do not know that Mr. Campbell is a paid staff journalist on the *New Statesman*. It would be improbable that, if he failed to publish the facts of his research one way, he would not try another. There was no whiff of an injunction at that stage.

I suppose that it was asking too much for the powers that be to lift the telephone and ask the editor for an assurance that he would not publish. If such assurances were sought, and not obtained, I should have thought that a court might have looked favourably on the Government's application, as it would have sufficiently specific evidence to obtain the injunction in the terms of the Prime Minister's lesson to the nation.

That is exactly what happened in the Saudi Arabian leak. I understand that the *New Statesman* went to Sir James Craig, the former ambassador, and put to him its intention to publish his letter. Understandably, there was great anxiety. The next day, an assurance was sought by the authorities from the *New Statesman* about whether it would forbear publishing. The assurance was not given. An injunction was then sought and, on that evidence, obtained. Unhappily, such was the lack of awareness in the Attorney-General's bailiwick that the injunction did not cover Scotland. When it was discovered, a Scottish judge had to be woken in the middle of the night. Unhappily, by that time, the Scottish printing presses were whirring.

If the security services did not know that Mr. Campbell wrote for the *New Statesman*, I do not understand why the BBC, in its proper anxiety to protect national security, did not tell them. Perhaps that is asking too much of it. It might have gone further, and disclosed that there was a contractual agreement between the BBC and the *New Statesman* stating that the latter could and would publish the material in the film. Specific exception had been made, in line with normal copyright arrangements.

I understand that the idea was that the film would be shown on Wednesday or Thursday and that the *New Statesman* would roll off the presses on Thursday. It was a pretty sound and firm umbilical cord. Where was Mr. Alan Protheroe, a member of the D Committee? Why did not he or somebody in the BBC disclose that fact to the security services? If they did, somebody was very negligent indeed when limiting the injunction to Mr. Campbell, his servants or agents.

The question is not as the Prime Minister has said—that there was not sufficient evidence—for there was an embarrassment of riches in evidence provided that somebody opened his eyes to the significance of the BBC, the *New Statesman* or the Campbell connection. The Prime Minister's reply to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition this afternoon was utterly unrealistic of the legal position.

Cases which involve the passing of secret information appear regularly before the courts, as with trade secrets and confidential information between employers and employees. The normal procedure is that, as soon as somebody knows that somebody else is in possession of confidential information about him or her which has been wrongly obtained, the person concerned seeks an undertaking that the information will not be disclosed or used. If the person fails to give an undertaking, that failure is prima facie evidence before the court, and the court invariably grants an injunction.

In this case, the Ministry of Defence knew that Campbell was making the programme with information that he should not have possessed. According to today's *Times*, the Ministry knew that back in October. The issue is not, as the Prime Minister said, whether the Government should have served an injunction against the BBC, but why they did not serve an injunction against Mr. Campbell early in October. The Government plainly could have done that. The BBC programme was being made by what is said to be the misuse of official secrets. If Campbell had failed to give an undertaking not to use the information, the Government could unquestionably have obtained an injunction.

If the Government had obtained an injunction, as any reasonably competent lawyer could have advised them, Campbell could neither have made the programme nor have written the article. If the Government are right about the dangers to national security, it is their failure to move against Mr. Campbell in October that is the real act of incompetence in this case.

I shall now consider the Attorney-General's actions towards my right hon. and hon. Friends when seeking to ban the showing of the film in the Palace. During that application, you, Mr. Speaker, were put in a most difficult position and decided to hold the situation for the time being.

What came over the Attorney-General to apply for an injunction againt my hon. Friends, when he knew, or should have known, of the case of Stockdale and *Hansard* in 1839, in which it was made clear that the House is the sole judge of its own proceedings? He did not need to go to Mr. Justice Ian Kennedy to have that, as the Leader of the House told us, resolved beyond peradventure. That is

*[Mr. John Morris]*

an indication of the absurd position in which we find ourselves today, with absurdity heaped on absurdity, the whole of the outside world able to read the *New Statesman*, hon. Members unable to see the film within these precincts and the Government being seen to go against the whole tradition and history of the House in trying to limit the freedoms that it has won over the ages.

9.10 pm

**The Solicitor-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew):** I should like to begin with a matter that is rather more serious in its content and significance than most of the speech of the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris). Although it is unorthodox, I hope that, with the House's traditional sense of justice, I may be permitted to deal with a matter mentioned by the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) during Prime Minister's Questions, when he suggested that a senior member of the Government had indicated to Mr. Campbell — and I paraphrase — that he, a senior member of the Government, was prepared to take part in the television programme in question and that Mr. Campbell was at liberty to proceed with that programme.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** Not just one programme.

**The Solicitor-General:** That was very much the essence of it — a senior member of the Government — my hon. Friends heard it. There would have been one way in which to establish this beyond any doubt, and that is if some notice had been given. I want to make it perfectly clear that, in so far as there is any suggestion that the Attorney-General was the Member referred to — and I say this with the authority of my right hon. and learned Friend, who is in his place — he has sent no letter to Mr. Campbell telling him either that he, the Attorney, would take part in the *Secret Society* programme or that Mr. Campbell himself could get away with it.

There has been one exchange of correspondence on the subject of the BBC programme between Mr. Campbell and the Attorney, and that was the one that took place shortly before 15 July 1986 when Mr. Campbell wrote to my right hon. and learned Friend to confirm

> "our request for you to consider being interviewed for BBC-TV on the subject of war emergency legislation".

My right hon. and learned Friend replied on the 15th, thanking him for his request

> "that I should agree to being interviewed for BBC-TV on the subject of war emergency legislation. I have considered your request very carefully but have concluded that the questions that you will be asking go far beyond my responsibilities as a Law Officer and that consequently it would not be appropriate for me to discuss these issues on your programme".

There was no reference to my right hon. and learned Friend taking part in any programme about a satellite; there was no reference to any programme about a satellite.

I believe it to have been rather less than helpful to the House that there was no indication in the question that the conversation or exchange of correspondence did not relate to the satellite programme. My right hon. and learned Friend tells me that he had no idea that this programme was being made about a satellite and that he had no connection with it whatsoever. I insist on the opportunity of putting that right.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** I thank the right hon. and learned Gentleman for giving way. When he checks *Hansard* tomorrow he will see that I quite explicitly referred to the series *The Secret Society*. I did not refer to a particular programme. But that is not the main point that brings me to my feet. Is the Solicitor-General assuring the House that the letter that he read to the House a moment ago is the only one that was removed by the Special Branch from the offices of the *New Statesman* yesterday?

**The Solicitor-General:** Certainly not.

**Mr. Cook:** Ah.

**The Solicitor-General:** We have heard reference to Sherlock Holmes. The hon. Member for Livingston exclaims "Ah" as though he were a latter-day Sherlock Holmes, whose investigations have unearthed some riches. Of course that is not the case. I say in answer, on behalf of my right hon. and learned Friend, whom I consider to have been wronged, that no exchange of correspondence ever took place between my right hon. and learned Friend on the subject of the programme save the letter that I have quoted.

**Mr. Cook:** May I then ask the Solicitor-General to read the other letter that was removed yesterday from the *New Statesman* from the Attorney-General?

**Sir Patrick Mayhew:** I am not going to detain the House on matters that have no bearing on the film with which we are concerned. In a debate that has been very wide-ranging and of fascinating interest, one thing is absolutely apparent. Following the speech of the right hon. and learned Gentleman, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon), the hare that there has been some concealment from that Committee of matters that ought not to be concealed from it really will not run any more. In a speech that the House found deeply interesting and impressive it was made clear that that charge cannot be sustained.

The third general point is that this has been a very wide debate that has brought recognition from all sides that there are conflicting interests between the rights and proper privileges of Members of this House and on the other hand the necessity in certain cases to keep secrets secret. My hon. Friend the Member for Woking (Mr. Onslow) indicated that that was the case, as have the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) and many other hon. Members. That lies at the root of the difficulty that confronted you, Mr. Speaker, last Thursday. It is right that we should recall what the Government's motion would require us to decide.

**Mr. Kinnock:** I think that the right hon. and learned Gentleman might wrongly identify the root of the difficulty that faced Mr. Speaker last Thursday. The root of the difficulty, of the collision which is bound to occur between inquisitiveness, natural and right, of the House of Commons and the need to keep secrets that are identified as being essential to the security of the state, lies back last October when the Government first apprehended the fact that such a secret was likely to leak and they did absolutely nothing about it.

**Sir Patrick Mayhew:** The Leader of the Opposition takes far too superficial a view of this. As the Prime Minister made clear, the action that the Government took in relation to the BBC in October had the result that the BBC took a responsible action in relation to this programme. It withdrew its programme and the programme was not shown. The Leader of the Opposition has been very indignant about the fact that the Government did not proceed against the *New Statesman* and take out an injunction. We have listened to his indignation. Why does he not congratulate the BBC on its responsible and contrasting attitude? Perhaps he will do so now?

**Mr. Kinnock:** The point surely is, and the right hon. and learned Gentleman must know it, first that the security of the state and the confidence of the secrets of the state should not depend upon cosy chats with the BBC. Secondly, the right hon. Gentleman had better tell us why it was the case, because as my right hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Leeds South (Mr. Rees), a former Home Secretary, pointed out, there are powers of relationship within the charter of the BBC that require the Government to make the announcement that those powers have been exercised to require the BBC not to publish or publicise or broadcast certain material. Why was not that particular power exercised? Surely it cannot be that this Government, of all Governments, are afraid to give the impression of being repressive.

**The Solicitor-General:** The Government would quickly have been accused of being repressive had they marched in with a heavy hand and demanded that of the BBC. By following the course that they did, the Government secured the voluntary withdrawal by the BBC of the programme.

**Mr. Merlyn Rees** *rose*——

**The Solicitor-General:** No; I have given way many times.

There has been general agreement that you, Mr. Speaker, faced with a difficult decision on Thursday, took the right decision. I think that the speech of the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) was the only one that was critical of that decision. I think that it was taken on the basis that there was not any privilege that would justify the showing in this House of a film in circumstances where that would be unlawful outside. I believe that it is a fair summary of the debate that there has been great understanding of your position and great support for it. That is entirely fair and right. That disposes of the first limb of the Government's motion.

However, there has been throughout the debate as it developed a concern for the deeper connotations of the issue that the Government's motion gives rise to. That has become apparent from all sides of the House. It was a matter of importance, Mr. Speaker, when you intervened and said that you understood that the consequences upon you of the manuscript amendment moved by the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), if accepted by the House, would be that your prohibition would remain in force until the Select Committee of Privileges had reported. That was an extremely important matter which aroused interest in all quarters of the House.

What arises, however, is whether that prohibition would remain in force only until such time as the Select Committee had reported, or whether a further period would elapse. I do not know whether it would be possible for you to inform the House whether there were more that would follow.

**Mr. Speaker:** The point was raised in his speech by the right hon. and learned Member for Aberavon (Mr. Morris). I can confirm that, if the House decides to refer the matter to the Committee of Privileges, my instructions of 22 January will remain in force until the House itself can make a decision following the report of the Committee of Privileges, so long, that is, as the present injunction remains in force.

**The Solicitor-General:** That is very helpful, Mr. Speaker, and the whole House is grateful to you for that assurance.

The Government wish to take account of the views that have been expressed. It is right that in a debate affecting the affairs of the House account should be taken of them. Certainly the Government do not approach the matter with a closed mind. The Government wish to say that if the manuscript amendment finds favour with the House, as we believe it does, they would accept it. A great deal has been said in the debate—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This has been a very good debate. I said at the beginning that this is a House of Commons matter and that is what it should remain.

**The Solicitor-General:** I want to make one point in the interests of accuracy and fulness. I want to explain why the injunction was not asked for against the *New Statesman*. Several hon. Members have made the point that the law of England does not permit an injunction to be obtained in blanket form. An application must be made for an injunction against a named person. We cannot say that something may happen which ought not to be permitted and an injunction should be taken out against all the world. It may be that that rule should be reviewed in cases of national security. *[Interruption.]* That is the explanation why——

**Mr. Joseph Ashton** (Bassetlaw): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it in order while the debate is taking place for the Prime Minister's press secretary, Mr. Bernard Ingham, to run around the Press Gallery briefing the *Daily Mail*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I only take notice of what happens in the Chamber.

**The Solicitor-General:** That is the rule that prevented my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General on behalf of the Government from obtaining an injunction against the *New Statesman*. At the time, the Government did not know of any evidence that would have permitted that. This was not a matter that the Attorney-General decided upon by himself. Quite rightly in a matter of such sensitivity and difficulty, he consulted Treasury counsel of vast experience. That advice was unequivocal. He was told that the evidence available would not have made it proper to apply for an injunction against the *New Statesman*. That is why that matter took the course that it did.

**Mr. McNamara:** Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

**The Solicitor-General:** No, I will continue, because the House wants to reach a decision and I have already given way on several occasions.

Criticism was made that we should have proceeded much earlier. Once the BBC had withdrawn its programme and made its decision, there was no evidence or sign that anyone was going to seek publication of that film. The BBC had withdrawn it and there was no evidence available to the Government that anyone was to consider the film

*[The Solicitor-General]*

for publication. That is why no move was made until a report appeared that the film was to be shown in the House. A decision then had to be taken as to whether to proceed. That decision was taken on Tuesday and on Wednesday the injunction was obtained.

Since we are to decide to refer the matter to the Select Committee of Privileges, I want to mention this matter for the record so that criticisms understandably made in the early part of the debate should not go unanswered and actions should not go unexplained. That is important. If there had been any sign of concern that the article should have been submitted for publication or printed by the *New Statesman* without any attempt being made to check whether it would damage national security, or if any indignation had been expressed by the Opposition about that, I would have accepted that indignation with more voracity. However, there was no sign of that.

The House now wishes to come to a decision. I believe that it is right, in the light in the way in which the debate has progressed and the views expressed, that the manuscript amendment should be accepted. I recommend that to the House.

*Amendment made*: in line 1, leave out from 'That' to end and add

'Mr. Speaker's ruling of 22nd January, relating to the showing of a film, be referred to the Committee of Privileges'.—*[Mr. Benn.]*

*Main Question, as amended, agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That Mr. Speaker's ruling of 22nd January, relating to the showing of a film, be referred to the Committee of Privileges.

# Orders of the Day

## Ministry of Defence Police Bill *[Lords]*

*Order for Second Reading read*

9.30 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Archie Hamilton):** I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

First, I should like to remind the House of the main purposes of the Ministry of Defence Police and the reasons for its existence as a separate police force. As early as 1686 the Admiralty became aware of the need for an organisation to prevent crime within its dockyards. The Secretary for the affairs of the Admiralty of England was then Samuel Pepys, who instructed that a force of

"porters, rounders, warders and watchmen be formed to guard the naval yards".

The porters escorted visitors, the rounders patrolled the yards and did the rounds, the warders had charge of the keys, and the watchmen guarded at night. This force continued until it was disbanded in 1834, when the first of the dockyard police forces was formed. The Admiralty introduced these forces, consisting of special constables, at dockyards and some other establishments, having had the benefit of the advice of a superintendent of the new Metropolitan force. Members of the dockyard police forces had full police powers and there were even incentive schemes to encourage members to detect embezzlers.

Sir Robert Peel's Act of 1829 for

"improving the police in and near the metropolis"

created the Metropolitan police force and in 1860 it took over from the dockyard police the job of guarding naval dockyards. The Metropolitan Police Act 1860 authorised the employment of Metropolitan police constables in Her Majesty's yards. This was later amended to include principal military and air force stations, and up to 15 miles outside such stations in respect of Crown property or persons subject to naval, military or air force discipline.

The Metropolitan police took over the policing of Portsmouth and Devonport dockyards initially, and other establishments soon afterwards. To give some idea of numbers, 128 members of the force were employed at Deptford and Woolwich, and about 400 in other Admiralty establishments. The Metropolitan police also formed a water police branch and at Devonport dockyard the whole of that branch lived in an old hulk once commissioned as HMS Leda.

The 1860 Act applied only to England and Wales, although it was extended to Scotland in 1914. After that year, the Metropolitan police were progressively withdrawn from the dockyards because of the all too familiar strain on their resources. The Special Constables Act 1923 allowed special constables to be employed permanently by public departments to protect such establishments. The Act had effect in Scotland but not in Northern Ireland.

The period up to the end of the second world war saw the establishment of the Admiralty, Army Department and Air Force constabularies. By 1949, the Admiralty constabulary comprised some 3,500 men policing 150 separate establishments, and had its own training school. The Army Department constabulary initially numbered 2,100 when it was formed in 1925 as the War Office constabulary. Police protection at civilian manned stations under former Air Ministry aegis was originally provided by Metropolitan and county constabularies, but members of these forces were gradually withdrawn after the formation of the Air Ministry constabulary, later renamed the Air Force Department constabulary. During the second world war this force's strength rose to a peak of 3,530.

In 1947, the Emergency Laws (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act extended the 1923 Act to cover any premises in the United Kingdom used by the Admiralty, Army or Air councils for military purposes, including those in Northern Ireland, although there was no provision there for powers outside an establishment.

The Visiting Forces and International Headquarters Order 1965—SI 1536/1965—further extended the 1860 Act to include the property of visiting forces and international heaquarters and the persons subject to the service law of such forces. In 1971 the three single service constabularies were amalgamated into the present Ministry of Defence police. In one form or another, that force has been doing its present job since 1860, when it was a branch of the Metropolitan police.

The Home Department police forces are no less stretched now than before and at the same time the policing of MOD property has developed in ways which themselves place heavy demands on police resources. The MDP is itself now some 5,000 strong.

The force provides a high level of physical security on sensitive defence property through its special knowledge of MOD's establishments and the Department's many complex systems. It also provides, for example, a specialised CID resource which has knowledge of the internal accountancy of MOD and which is able to investigate fraud, which can be nationwide, in conjunction with its Home Department police colleagues. It was because the special needs of such large organisations are so demanding of manpower that separate police forces with constabulary powers, such as the British Transport police and the Atomic Energy Authority constabulary, were created.

Not only do these forces make a considerable contribution to keeping the peace, but in doing so, they provide relief for the Home Department forces. The MDP is by far the largest of the police forces outside the Home Departments but is among the last to have its powers defined in a single Act. In drafting this long overdue measure every effort has been made to avoid any overlapping with the duties of the Home Department police. I make it absolutely clear that the Home Department police have prime responsibility for the enforcement of the law, and nothing in the Bill changes that. Indeed, the Bill sets out to be supportive of the Home Department police forces wherever MDP assistance is called upon in matters affecting the security of MOD establishments.

To give a flavour of the type of duties the MDP perform, I should first mention the operations to contain demonstrations, which are undoubtedly the most public of the MDP's activities. In the past year alone, there have been over 700 demonstrations, many associated with anti-nuclear protests or with the introduction of byelaws at defence establishments. Some of the demonstrations were on a major scale which called for a considerable commitment of both MDP and Home Department police forces. A recent demonstration at Rosyth involved 1,000 demonstrators, and another at Molesworth resulted in some 3,500 people attending. It may be necessary on occasion to deploy up to 600 MDP constables at such demonstrations.

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I was trying to catch the Minister's eye earlier. He just mentioned Rosyth. Of the 5,000 members of the force, how many are employed in Scotland? When the Minister talks about the Home Department police forces, is he also talking about the Scottish police force rules?

**Mr. Hamilton:** Yes. When I refer to the Home Department police forces, I mean the Scottish ones under their chief constables as well as the English ones under theirs. On the number of MOD police employed in Scotland, I am afraid that I do not know the split of the 5,000 between England and Wales and Scotland, but I shall write to the hon. Gentleman about that.

In addition to these exceptional protection tasks and the MDP's normal duties protecting and patrolling MOD sites, there are more specialised roles such as CID duties and VIP protection duties. During the past year, some 25,000 offences have been reported to CID. The detection rate is some 60 per cent. — a very gratifying result, although it reflects the relatively closed society within which the MDP operates. Offences range from thefts, assaults, smuggling, fraud, burglary and forgery — indeed, almost the full range of crime found in our society. There is an absolute requirement for the MDP to pass serious crimes such as murder and rape to the Home Department forces.

The MDP is formally responsible for policing MOD establishments in the United Kingdom, as required by the Defence Council, its three service boards and the Procurement Executive Management Board. It also provides police services for military forces of other Governments based in the United Kingdom.

In addition, while at Army and RAF stations and establishments, service police are primarily responsible for investigating crime by service personnel, the Royal Navy has no service police branch, and the MDP may be called upon to investigate crime committed by service personnel in Her Majesty's ships and at Royal Navy establishments. Similarly, the Procurement Executive has no service police resources, and where constabulary powers are required, MOD police are employed at Procurement Executive establishments.

**Dr. Godman:** The Minister talks about the Royal Navy not having a service police force, and I think that he said that the MOD police could investigate alleged crimes committed by Naval personnel. Under the terms of the Armed Forces Act, would these personnel have the right to investigate allegations of crimes committed by families of the Naval personnel? I do not want this to be answered by Conservative Back Benchers but by the Minister.

**Mr. Hamilton:** MOD police are able to investigate crime on MOD property, so if the crime is committed in family quarters, they would be in a position to investigate it, but this has to be done in the closest conjunction and co-operation with the Home Department forces, and it has to be cleared by them.

**Dr. Godman:** I have no wish to take up the time of the House, but there are some important issues here. Is the Minister telling the House that in the case of an alleged

*[Dr. Godman]*

sexual assault or child abuse committed in the married quarters of sailors or officers, the MOD police would investigate the matter? Surely that is not so.

**Mr. Hamilton:** Much depends on who was on the scene of the crime first, and to whom the call was made. If the call were made to the MOD police, and they were the first on the scene of the crime, they might be the people to start the investigation. However, they would be obliged to get in touch with the Home Department police forces and to co-ordinate with them. On serious crimes, we would expect the Home Department police forces to take over the investigation.

**Mr. Dick Douglas** (Dunfermline, West): I apologise for intervening so early in his speech, because the Minister has yet to get on to deal with the substance of the Bill. Is not one of the complications of the measure that MOD police coming on to married quarters in, say, Rosyth have been in contact with the Fife constabulary, but the Bill makes such relationships unclear?

**Mr. Hamilton:** The position has always been clear. The Bill does not change the role of MOD police. It merely brings activities in which they have been involved under the same legislation. The MOD police are entitled to investigate crimes on MOD property.

**Mr. Martin J. O'Neill** (Clackmannan): I am led to believe, by the Association of Chief Police Officers for both Scotland and for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, that the Home Department forces would claim responsibility for the investigation of all serious offences, and particularly those against the person. One of the problems into which we have to look in Committee would be the lack of co-ordination in this sector. We should be grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) for raising this point. Serious offences against a person, which would cover the tragic crimes to which my hon. Friend referred, should be the responsibility of the Home Department police forces in the final analysis.

**Mr. Hamilton:** I accept that. Serious crime, like all crime, is the responsibility of the Home Department forces. It is a question of the inter-relationship with the Home Department forces regarding serious crimes. The Ministry of Defence police would hand over responsibility for such crimes at once. If the case involved murder, rape or any such thing there would be no question and the investigation of such crime would be handed, straight away, to the Home Department forces, although, conceivably, the MDP may be first on the scene of the crime.

When it comes to minor crimes there is often an agreement within the Home Department forces that it might be better if the MDP investigated it. It all depends on the resources and expertise of the MDP.

**Dr. Alan Glyn** (Windsor and Maidenhead): In the initial investigations have the MOD police got the same powers as a police constable investigating a similar offence?

**Mr. Hamilton:** The purpose of the Bill is to give the MDP constabulary powers. At the moment the MDP have the power of special constables, but under the Bill they would have the power of constable and would be in a better position to investigate crime.

An awful lot is made of the difference between the Home Department police forces and the MDP. In practice there is close co-operation and the MDP police get on extremely well with the Home Department police. We should not imagine that there is enormous friction between the MDP and the Home Department forces.

The security threats to the Ministry's establishments range from innocent trespass, theft and fraud to espionage, sabotage and terrorist attack. In reviewing these threats, the Defence Select Committee and the MOD police review committee — known as the Broadbent committee — placed high value on the contribution the MDP could make to dealing with them. Obviously, it is not the responsibility of the Home Department police to pursue serious threats which materialise, but the MDP will often make the initial, immediate reaction to good effect. Both committees concluded that it would be highly desirable to have a Bill such as this to draw together all relevant existing enactments in a way that reflected the MDP's present duties and clarified its powers.

There is at present no single Act of Parliament from which the MDP derives its powers. In fact there is no Act which provides specifically for the MDP at all. The separate police forces to which I have already referred are authorised by Acts which confer appropriate powers directly. In contrast, the MDP derives its powers from a Metropolitan Police Act passed in 1860 to permit the use of Metropolitan constables in royal dockyards and military stations. Although this early legislation has been amended and extended many times down the years, it was not conceived with the duties of a modern force in mind and it cannot be appropriate for duties which could not be foreseen in Victorian times. Not surprisingly, there are gaps and ambiguities which were detected by the Select Committee on Defence and confirmed by the MOD police review committee in the Broadbent report.

The main clauses in the Bill, therefore, set out to codify and clarify the powers of MDP and to realign them with their present duties and responsibilities. The Bill will make few changes of substance to the MDP's jurisdiction and it is not intended to make major changes in the way in which its duties are carried out.

**Mr. Douglas:** The Minister has mentioned the Broadbent report several times. In his exposition of the Bill would he care to state where the proposals in the Bill are in line with the Broadbent report and where they exceed the proposals in the Broadbent report?

**Mr. Hamilton:** That is a difficult question and I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman in writing.

**Mr. O'Neill:** May I assist the Minister? On 24 July 1986 his predecessor, the hon. Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee), answered a very substantial question, which covered many of the points at issue, put by his hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key), who is present in the Chamber.

**Mr. Hamilton:** I am grateful to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill).

The MDP and the defence police federation have long sought the unambiguous mandate for their duties which this Bill attempts to provide. The House will, I think, be sympathetic to such modest aims and will, I know, put their very useful knowledge of this topic to good effect as I briefly run through the clauses in the Bill.

The intention of the first clause is to provide the force with a statutory basis in its own right instead of its rather curious status as a body of special constables with the powers of constables of the Metropolitan police under the 1860 Act. The force will consist of the existing body of members and any members who shall be nominated by the Secretary of State. Such persons as are appointed will need to be attested, or sworn in, before a justice to carry out the law of the area in which they shall serve. The clause allows the Secretary of State to exercise administrative control of the force through the police committee. The chief constable has control of police operations and responsibility for the application of the law.

Clause 2 provides constabulary powers in the United Kingdom for land and property under the control of the MOD, visiting forces, international headquarters, ordnance factories and dockyard contractors. It will enable the MDP to police non-MOD sites such as the Royal Mint, where they have historic responsibilities, when suitable notice has been published by gazette. It will also enable MDP to assist local police forces who request assistance in carrying out their duties in the vicinity of MOD land.

Elsewhere in the United Kingdom MDP powers will be limited under this clause principally to Crown property and to persons serving the defence interests of the Crown either directly or as contractors. MDP will continue to be able to exercise their powers in relation to visiting forces and to ordnance companies' and dockyard contractors' property. These limitations will apply throughout the United Kingdom and replace the outdated provision in the 1860 Act which was intended to enable a dockyard constable to act up to 15 miles outside his establishment.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** (Bury St. Edmunds): As a supporter of the Bill I do not wish to pursue a clause point. However, in clause 2 there is the provision that the

> "Ministry of Defence police shall have the powers and privileges of constables."

in any area of the United Kingdom outside those defined in the early part of the clause. The clause goes on to say that that is

> "in relation to matters connected with anything done under a contract entered into by the Secretary of State for Defence".

That is too wide. The Secretary of State might be buying lettuces or blankets, or the American forces might be buying a wide range of things. I cannot believe that the Ministry of Defence police would want to be involved, or could properly be involved, in anything that touched upon contracts entered into by the Secretary of State.

**Mr. Hamilton:** I understand my hon. Friend's point. However, we might be talking about a very sensitive piece of defence equipment being manufactured by a contractor. It would be possible in those circumstances to have Ministry of Defence police on the premises of a private defence contractor making sensitive equipment for the Ministry of Defence. That is the prime reason why that has been put into the Bill. It gives us the freedom to be able to put Ministry of Defence police on the premises of private contractors and manufacturers who are manufacturing defence equipment.

Although most of the United Kingdom is within 15 miles of MOD property, the 1860 limit is no longer relevant to the MDP's important dujties, for example when protecting MOD property in transit. Under clause 2 the constabulary powers which the MDP need to protect Crown property in transit will no longer be arbitrarily affected by the 15 mile limit. On some occasions MOD vehicles are provided with an additional escort by the Home Department police force through whose area the vehicles are passing, but on occasions the Home Department police are hard pressed elsewhere and are therefore unable to assist with traffic control. In such circumstances, or in an emergency, it is necessary to provide the MDP with the powers of a constable because the traffic directions issued by a private citizen are not binding upon other members of the public. However, MDP keep closely in touch with their Home Department colleagues concerning vehicle movements and they would need to use these traffic powers only when it was known that members of the local police were unable to attend a traffic blockage near to an MOD vehicle in transit.

Clause 2 also empowers the MDP to act in relation to Ministry of Defence or contractors' property or personnel where an investigation may need to be followed up outside the bounds of an MOD establishment. That was the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths). That could extend to fraud involved in the purchase of clothing or something of a relatively unspectactular form.

In practice, the MDP criminal investigation department usually acts with the Home Department CID in such inquiries.

**Mr. Douglas:** Has the Minister or one of his hon. Friends had the Broadbent report? How does what he said in relation to traffic control conform with paragraph 53 of Broadbent?

**Mr. Hamilton:** I cannot comment on each individual paragraph of the Broadbent report, but the Bill broadly ties in with Broadbent.

The MDP may, however, find itself in a position where it has to act quickly—for example, to prevent stolen goods from being removed before the arrival of Home Department forces. Clause 2 covers such situations to safeguard the occasions when or any reason the MDP CID find themselves unable to summon the immediate support of their Home Office colleagues.

Members of the MDP regularly patrol dockyard waters. Clause 2 covers the occasional requirement to act in respect of MOD vessels lying outside a dockyard but within territorial waters—for example, when taking a prisoner off a vessel about to enter harbour or to assist in protecting sensitive supplies for a vessel anchored just offshore. In such situations the Home Department forces are not always able to act, because they do not have the resources or right equipment.

The remainder of clause 2 defines the terms used in the Bill.

Clause 3 gives effect to a recommendation in the Broadbent report that the MDP staff associations should be recognised by any future legislation. By such recognition the Department acknowledges the Defence Police Federation as the sole negotiating body for all ranks up to chief superintendent who would otherwise lack representation and who are prohibited by their contract from withdrawing their labour. The clause describes the subjects on which the DPF will be able to make its

*[Mr. Hamilton]*

representations, and the role of the Secretary of State in regulating the conduct of the federation. The clause confirms an existing agreement with the department which the federation has long sought to codify in an MDP Bill.

Clause 4 makes it an offence to impersonate any members of the MDP by wearing or possessing an article of uniform, or by using a badge or document which conveys a false impression or MDP membership. Similar legislation protects members of the Home Office forces, and it is particularly important that such protection is extended to those whose task can involve guarding highly classified equipment and property.

Clause 5 deals with the offence of causing disaffection amongst MDP which could lead to strike action or breaches of discipline in the force. Again, the provision mirrors that found in the Police Act 1964. Although, as with the previous clause, that Act does not cover the MDP, it is clearly necessary to prevent acts of a seditious nature taking place within the ranks of a security force, whose task is to protect sensitive material and installations.

Clause 6 consist of amendments to existing legislation.

The final clause gives the short title and date of commencement and extends the Bill to Northern Ireland, where MDP have a very small presence.

The aim of the Bill is to clarify the existing powers of the Ministry of Defence police and to enable it to carry out its duties without risking infractions of the law and without interfering with the activities of other forces. Home Department chief constables have primary responsibility for the application of the law generally, and, as before, theirs will normally be the leading role in dealing with major offences. There is scope, where jurisdictions are concurrent, for potential conflict between the responsibilities of the MDP, Home Department and other forces. But, in practice, relations with other police forces are very good and all concerned in the MOD are determined that they should remain so.

It is against that background that the Government are persuaded of the need for a clear statutory basis for the MDP. It cannot be satisfactory to base such an important and comendable service affecting national security on a series of enactments dating from the last century. Previous debates in the House have indicated that there is a considerable awareness of, and sympathy for the MOD police. I know that hon. Members on both sides of the House will wish to support the Bill, which seeks to clarify the statutory basis of the operations of this loyal and professional force.

I commend the Bill to the House.

9.59 pm

**Mr. Martin J. O'Neill** (Clackmannan): I had some misgivings earlier today about whether we would reach the Bill. The Prime Minister seemed, in the course of the afternoon, to display an ignorance of the fact that the Bill was coming before us. In areas where she is ignorant, we are often not allowed to pass comment, but those matters seem to have been resolved and we now have an opportunity to deal with the Bill. It has been suggested that the Prime Minister's lapse was attributable to the rather sloppy attitude that the Government have at the moment towards security.

However, there is certainly no reflection on the work of the MOD police. As we were treated to a brief history lesson by the Minister, I shall not go into that. Suffice it to say that in the——

*It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

*Ordered,*

That at this day's sitting, the Ministry of Defence Police Bill *[Lords]* may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

*Question again proposed,* That the Bill be now read a Second time.

**Mr. O'Neill:** It is just over 300 years since Samuel Pepys advised the Special Commissioners of the Navy to guard the naval dockyards. I shall not deal with all the functions of the porters, rounders, warders and so on. It is significant that, despite the sterling efforts of those men and their successors, the danger of embezzlement of stores from Ministry of Defence establishments is still as great a problem as it ever was. In many respects it is probably even greater than it was in days gone by. Certainly it is true to say that the categories of policemen involved have extended far beyond the porters, rounders, warders and watchmen. We now have some 150 establishments in Britain and Northern Ireland with a complement, in 1984, of about 4,220 men and women.

This is not a controversial Bill. We do not intend to seek to divide the House. We can probably tidy up any of the difficulties in Committee, I hope fairly briefly. But we have the opportunity this evening to explore some of the difficulties and issues which have been brought to my attention by the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Ministry of Defence police. However, the latter group seems to be a great deal more satisfied with the proposals than the chief constables. Nevertheless, their misgivings can probably be met in the course of our deliberations.

There is always an anxiety, especially with a highly professional, somewhat self-conscious group such as the chief constables, that someone will muscle in on their patch, for want of a better expression. However, there is little appreciable difference in terms of the skills, training and rewards between the Ministry of Defence police and their civilian counterparts, the Home Department police.

The questions which the chief constables have raised with me are evidence of their anxiety about the question of jurisdiction. That could be resolved and I hope that we can look at some of the problems this evening and in Committee. I am sure that compromises and guidelines can be established which will be to everyone's satisfaction.

Other issues have been raised. The question of the creation of special constables is still exercising the Government. I can see the danger in allowing the MOD police to have special constables, because only a certain number of people would be prepared to volunteer their services. The Government must judge whether those individuals should be encouraged to join the civil police or the Ministry of Defence police. I hope that the Minister will be forthcoming about that. My hon. Friends and I have no hard and fast feelings about it and would be willing to take judgment and to listen to the Minister's view on it. I hope that a view will be forthcoming before the Bill leaves the House.

Of course, there are other areas in which the MOD police and the civil police are drawn together. That obviously applies to terrorism and the threat of it, when close co-operation must be secured at the earliest possible moment. I know that contingency plans have been drawn up as a result of wide-ranging discussions between Home Department police and the Ministry of Defence police. I hope that the new status that the legislation will afford to the MOD police will not result in any additional barriers being erected where, at the moment, I am satisfied that there is useful co-operation.

We have heard about convoys of nuclear loads almost by implication, and I appreciate the Minister's reluctance to discuss that. I say that partly because of recent publicity, although my own inclination is that the Government are far too secretive. Some of the people near to whose property the loads travel would be better off if they were fully aware of what was taking place and the circumstances in which those convoys were being organised.

The fire and ambulance emergency services are obviously involved. In the recent case in Wiltshire, it is clear that a fire tender was present. If there had been a fire, I am certain that it could have been dealt with speedily.

However, at the moment, movement of nuclear loads is still the prerogative of the Home Department chief officers. Once a convoy leaves the base, it is the responsibility of the chief constable, through whose areas it travels. I have asked the Minister of State for the Armed Forces questions about this, but his response was characteristically reticent. I am not saying that he is being economical with the truth, but he is being reticent about some of the circumstances surrounding the incident in Wiltshire. I see the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) in his place—I understand that he is the local Member of Parliament, and he may wish to raise that point.

One is never too clear about the point at which the local constabulary is actively involved. When sensitive loads —regardless of what those loads are—are discussed, the local police should be informed so that they have a fair idea and can move into an incident at the earliest possible moment. In that situation, we must avoid any difficulties that the legislation could create by putting barriers between local police and Ministry of Defence police.

I recognise also that there are sensitive issues regarding personnel for convoys and who should carry arms. Ministers ought at least to recognise that. Perhaps some probing amendments in Committee will provoke a response.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** Does the hon. Gentleman recall that, when the Atomic Energy Authority police were established and given powers to safeguard the movement of nuclear fuel, they were given power to be armed? They are armed. Does he remember that the Secretary of State

*[Sir Eldon Griffiths]*

who pushed that legislation through the House was the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), who is now so strongly opposed to arming the police on any occasion?

**Mr. O'Neill:** I was able to indulge in the luxury of watching proceedings in the House from a position somewhat removed from that which I now enjoy. I recognise that difficult decisions about arming the police have occasionally to be made. I am not suggesting that there are no circumstances in which the police should be armed. The interesting thing about moving nuclear waste is that the civil police have a far more open approach than the military authorities. As we have to consider the removal of waste from craft such as nuclear submarines, we are entitled to greater frankness.

I have noted that the hon. Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman), prompted I think by a report in last week's *New Scientist*, has said three times that he is concerned about the transportation and, ultimately, dumping of nuclear waste from nuclear-powered ships in the Chatham area. A variety of issues are involved, not just the mischievous point raised by the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths). There are circumstances in which the police have to be armed for their own safety and for the safety of people around them.

We do not want to find that, because we have considered the Bill with a somewhat dewy-eyed view, we have not got it right the first time, as we do not often get a second chance.

The Ministry of Defence police force, which comprises some 4,200 people, is one of the largest in the country. The Secretary of State is a one-man police authority. I do not represent a London constituency, but I am aware that there are a variety of views about police accountability. Local chief constables through whose territory Ministry of Defence police may travel in the course of their duties are subject to the limited accountability that present legislation provides. There is a feeling—it was expressed to me by a chief constable—that the chief constable of the MOD police will be subject to far less accountability than his civil counterpart. We should consider that in Committee to see whether accountability can be more clearly defined.

If public confidence in the police is to be restored, or maintained—depending on people's attitude—they must be entitled to more accountability from chief constables, especially in the MOD force, as we are unlikely to legislate again for some considerable time.

We also have the problems of the Police Committee, which I understand will be a kind of advisory board for the MOD police. I understand that on this committee there will be representatives of the Scottish Office, the Northern Ireland Office and the Home Office, and that there will be civil chief constables' representatives, but not the MOD chief constable himself. This could well put the MOD chief constable at a disadvantage. The valid point was made to me by the MOD Police Federation today that they want their man involved in all the discussions. Perhaps the Minister will comment on what seems to be an omission here. Perhaps I have misunderstood, but if the Minister could check on this it would save my trying to construct an amendment for the Committee stage. It would be helpful if we could have this point cleared up.

I have referred to the question of jurisdiction in clause 2. This problem might be overcome if, perhaps by way of a statutory instrument, guidelines could be laid down for relationships between the MOD police and local constabularies. I suggest that it might be by way of statutory instrument not because I have tremendous enthusiasm for secondary legislation — invariably it is taken either on an inconvenient Wednesday morning or late at night when one would rather be doing other things, especially on Thursday evening when Scotsmen like to be on sleepers, getting back to their families—but because in this particular area it would be useful for us to have some form of secondary legislation. It is not a vital matter, but it would give us an opportunity to review jurisdiction at regular intervals and ensure that a balance such as I have been trying to look for could be achieved and sustained between the two forces.

As regards the provisions for the Police Federation, not too many trade unions are enshrined in legislation. I recognise that the federation's rights and responsibilities are quite clearly defined. Nothing in the representations made to us suggests that its members would like the power to go on strike or to withdraw their labour. My own belief is that this is a fundamental right in a free society and should not be given up at any price, but I respect the wishes of the individuals both in the Ministry and, more important, in the Police Federation. It is not something that they have been clamouring for.

There is, however, one matter on which I should like to have the views of the Minister. That is the question of representation in disciplinary cases. I am led to believe that, when disciplinary cases arise, within the service, the federation will invariably provide legal representation for the MOD police—some form of assistance in the shape of solicitors. It seems that there is some lack of clarity about the regulations in clause 3. Perhaps the Minister would give us his view on this, whether it is appropriate for the MOD Police Federation to provide, as it were, legal aid in the shape of solicitors or barristers and for it to be able to do so not in a kind of "one stage removed" arrangement, as I believe happens at present.

From what I can gather, clause 3 is not a bone of contention with the men and women involved. They are reasonably happy with it. On the question of impersonation, the only problem, suggested to me by a chief constable, is that of identification, in that people could be confused between MOD police and civil police. I have an open mind on this issue. The Police Federation forcibly put it to me that it would see any attempt to make its members appear different from the civil police as perhaps the thin edge of a wedge which might try to reduce their status and authority. MOD police find some consolation and comfort in looking the same as civil police because they consider themselves to be similarly motivated.

It had been put to me, however, that where there are major MOD establishments there are perhaps more police behind the wire than outside it, and confusion and difficulty could arise. I am merely rehearsing arguments advanced to me. I have no particular view on the matter, but I would be interested in the Minister's response. There is a plethora of organisations, financed both publicly and privately, all whom aspire to police-style uniforms. There are difficulties here. Perhaps we should look to these paramilitary security organisations and try to get their house in order rather than picking on a section of our own police force, the MOD police force. I have an open mind, but since the matter has been raised and this is a Second Reading debate, it would be useful for the Minister to give some idea of his views on the matter.

On the question of disaffection, my limited researches, which tended to involve discussions with one or two colleagues, suggest that relationships between the MOD police and the demonstrators at Greenham Common are very good. I would not say necessarily that the demonstrators get on with everybody else who is engaged there, but it seems that in that area disaffection does not arise. Although I have heard it said that some of the men may sympathise with the objectives of the demonstrators, it is not for me to draw any conclusions from that. The question of disaffection is not significant, but it has to be covered in the Bill. Otherwise, there would be difficulties. The loyalty and commitment of the MOD police are sufficient to withstand any of the inducements that are suggested here.

We give the Bill a qualified welcome. We are not wildly enthusiastic about it. We recognise, as suggested by Broadbent and the Select Committee, that there is a need for this consolidating measure. When we think about Samuel Pepys's recommendation 300 years ago, we have to say that over the years the MOD police have not suffered greatly and we, as the British public, have not suffered from the absence of consolidated legislation. On the other hand, this legislation provides us with an opportunity to review MOD police functions and to take advantage of the work of the Select Committee.

I notice that there are members of the Select Committee who are ready and willing to participate. It is useful that we benefit from their experience and that we take advantage of the reflections of Broadbent and his colleagues.

Therefore, I am happy that the Bill should come before us. No doubt we shall have a constructive and useful debate. I look forward to hearing the Minister's reply. If he can answer some of my problems, it will expedite the Bill's progress in Standing Committee.

10.25 pm

**Mr. Robert Key** (Salisbury): I start by congratulating my hon. Friend the Minister on two scores. The first is on his excellent introduction and potted history of the Ministry of Defence police. Had I known that he was going to be so wide ranging and deep in his analysis, I would have saved myself many hours of research. He has done a great service to many future generations of hon. Members.

Secondly, I congratulate my hon. Friend because, in the long history of the police force, and more especially the Ministry of Defence police, he is the first Minister of the Crown to introduce a debate in either Chamber on the subject. When the Metropolitan Police Act 1860 was put through Parliament, neither in the House of Lords nor in the House of Commons was there a debate at any stage. The measure went through the whole process on the nod.

When introducing the Bill in another place my noble Friend, Lord Trefgarne said:

> "The simple aim of the Bill is to provide the force with clear powers appropriate to its current responsibilities. . . . The Government are convinced of the need for a clear statutory basis for MDP which will incorporate a single unambiguous set of provisions defining their powers and jurisdiction." — [*Official Report, House of Lords,* 4 December 1986; Vol. 482, c. 947-48.]

I must start by saying that the Bill is very welcome. I congratulate the Ministry of Defence police, who have a difficult and stressful job. There is also the burden that is borne by the wives and families, particularly when their husbands are on duty at difficult demonstrations. As a Member with a heavily militarised constituency, however, I believe that I have a duty to ask some searching questions.

The first question relates to the primacy of Home Department forces and a single unambiguous set of provisions. There was, as we know, an accident with a military convoy in West Dean in my constituency on 10 January. There was very speedy attendance by the Wiltshire police. I believe that they were there in about four minutes. The local police had primacy in dealing with the public, in the sense that they dealt with the public, but they were side by side with armed marines who stopped, detained and interrogated my constituents. The county police did not know the instructions or rules under which the soldiers were operating. What happened to the information gathered by the military personnel? Was it passed to the Wiltshire constabulary? What happened to it then? It is not reasonable for the Wiltshire police to assume primacy in these circumstances when they do not know the rule under which their colleagues are operating at the scene of the incident. Where in the Bill is this unambiguity laid down? I cannot find it.

Similarly, residents of the villages of Shrewton, Tilshead, Orcheston and Chitterne are shortly to have a FIBUA—fighting in built-up areas—village built close by them unless the Ministry of Defence agrees to resite it. It is to be a 90-building military complex surrounded by villages. Who will have primacy in policing that area?

Before the Ministry of Defence police were constituted in 1973 there would have been no problem, because the former separate forces operated within clearly defined boundaries and premises, usually inside a security fence. However, since that time the Ministry of Defence police have interpreted their jurisdiction to include any persons, including civilians, who happen to be on Ministry of Defence land or premises, or passing through on public roads. For instance, Ministry of Defence police have taken breath tests for drink driving offences on public roads.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** From civilians?

**Mr. Key:** Yes, From civilians. Some commanding officers have issued instructions that all matters of crime should be reported first to Ministry of Defence police.

**Mr. Douglas:** In view of the important point that the hon. Gentleman has made, does he agree that one of the prime absences from the Bill is a complaints procedure against Ministry of Defence police?

**Mr. Key:** We must address that and other important points in Committee.

Many commanding officers have issued an instruction that all criminal matters must be reported first to the MOD police, and they have distributed circulars throughout married quarters in my constituency stating that that should happen. Before 1973, areas such as the mixed civilian MOD villages near Salisbury Plain, where the public have unrestricted access, were policed exclusively by the civil police. Today the policing depends on to whom the victim chooses to report the crime and

*[Mr. Key]*

whether the MOD police choose to deal with it exclusively. There is no tight definition of what is meant by petty crime. Where do we draw the line?

The anomalies are obvious. Two agencies may pursue the same offender. The opportunities for duplication and misunderstanding are legion. Greater liaison is not the perfect solution, although it is highly desirable. Functional division of responsibilities is confusing to police and the public, and it is most unsatisfactory that some person other than the chief constable of the county should police and decide the prosecution policy when that involves victims and offenders who have nothing to do with the MOD except that they happen to be passing through an MOD area or happen to be relatives of serving soldiers.

I hope that the Bill will address such problems. I still remain to be convinced on those details. In reply to my question on 24 July 1986 the former Minister of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Lee), gave the Government's response to the Broadbent report. In recommendation (ix) the Broadbent committee stated that an MOD police committee should be appointed, supported by outside professional representation. That was accepted by the Government and the committee is proposed in clause 1(5). However, can my hon. Friend assure us that his regulations will ensure representations from county constabularies? Will draft regulations be available for instance to the Standing Committee that will consider the Bill if it receives its Second Reading?

The Broadbent report also stated in recommendation (xvii) that each base should draw up orders concerning the responsibilities of the commanding officer and civil police on the lines of directives in force at the Clyde submarine base. That recommendation was also accepted by the Government, but where does that commitment appear in the Bill? Will it be a regulation excercisable by statutory instrument? As the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) said, that may well be a way forward.

Even more important, following the West Dean accident, in relation to escorting convoys the Broadbent report was clear that liaison with the local police force was good and must be maintained. The report stated that the area of concurrent jurisdiction should be reduced to a minimum through local agreements. The Government also accepted that recommendation, but where is it in the Bill? We will need to consider that point later.

The Broadbent report was also clear about CID operations. In recommendation (v) the report states that the scale and division of CID activity should be agreed between each civil police force and the MOD bases in its area. The Government did not accept that recommendation, which is very important for my constituents and to my county constabulary. We must pursue the question of CID investigations further.

The introduction of special constables is welcome, but I must sound a note of warning. All special constables must be of a high quality. In a county such as Wiltshire, with a comparatively small population, there is a limited pool of talent on which to draw. The MOD police specials will further reduce that pool. Civil specials are unpaid. Will MOD police specials be paid or unpaid? The MOD police already receive higher salaries than their civil counterparts, largely because more overtime is available. I shall not want to see financial divisions aggravated in any way.

Will my hon. Friend let me know at some stage—it would be unreasonable to expect a firm response tonight —the implications for this Bill of the private Member's Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Davyhulme (Mr. Churchill) to abolish section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947, with particular regard to county coroners? At present coroners carry out inquests relating to violent deaths of service personnel. They are assisted in that by civilian police. There is extremely good liaison with the Ministry of Defence, and coroners have a sight of the court of inquiry papers. It is important that the private Member's Bill should protect the rights of coroners to be assisted by civilian police and that a curtain of silence should not drop because possible proceedings for negligence are pending.

This is a sensible and necessary Bill and I look forward to my hon. Friend allaying my fears over the small print. The Bill will be good for my constituents and good for the nation. In these days of violent extra-parliamentary and undemocratic acts by certain groups in society, I can do not better than echo the words quoted by the then Minister, Mr. Bridgeman, when he introduced the Special Constables Bill in the House on 9 April 1923. He said:

> "the maintenance of public order and the suppression of all forms of violence are matters in which every member of the community is deeply concerned. From the earliest times the citizen has been and still is required to take his part in the preservation of the peace and the suppression of disorder. We consider that if the obligation of the citizen to the community in this respect were more widely recognised, the duties of the police would be materially lightened, their relations with the law-abiding portions of the community would be improved, and the burden of the maintenance of the police would be lightened." — [*Official Report*, 9 April 1923; Vol. 162, c. 944.]

10.31 pm

**Mr. John Cartwright** (Woolwich): I, too, should like to add my congratulations to the Minister on the clear way in which he explained the proposals in the Bill and on the fascinating picture that he painted for us. This appears to be a rare moment of all-party consensus on defence, because I also welcome the Bill. It has taken a little time to implement the recommendations of the Broadbent committee and to follow the advice of the Select Committee on Defence. The action before us in the Bill is welcome.

The Minister said that the measure was long overdue. For some time, there has been a clear need to bring up to date and to clarify the legal powers of the Ministry of Defence police. I have a good deal of constituency experience in dealing with Ministry of Defence police. I hasten to add that it is in a totally friendly way and in a non-professional capacity. The Minister mentioned Woolwich and the part that it played in the early years. Woolwich arsenal is still policed and protected by Ministry of Defence police.

In the heyday of the arsenal, 50,000 people worked in the royal ordnance factory and no doubt at that time a large number of Ministry of Defence police officers looked to the various activities on the site. Sadly, on the Woolwich arsenal site today there are just over 2,000 Ministry of Defence jobs and, as Ministers will know, as the Member for the area, I fight a continuing rearguard action to take other people's thieving hands off my defence jobs in Woolwich.

As a result of considerable rationalisation of activities in Woolwich, there are far fewer Ministry of Defence police in the area than there used to be. That causes the occasional problem. A number of houses in my constituency have been deliberately earmarked for MOD police. Unfortunately, some of those houses stand empty for much longer than they ought to. That is because they are no longer required, as the MOD police are not there in the numbers necessary to make use of them. The Ministry of Defence police play an important part in the community life in my constituency and I am certainly glad to pay my tribute to the important work that they do. In that sense, I am glad to add my welcome to the general support that the Bill has received.

There are some detailed matters that I should like to raise. The first concerns the Ministry of Defence Police Committee, which is provided for in clause 1(5). The committee is to advise the Secretary of State on Ministry of Defence policing, but as the Bill is drafted, the relationship between the Secretary of State, who appoints the committee, and the committee itself appears to be somewhat unequal. For example, the committee is required to report as the Secretary of State

"may from time to time require".

That seems to make the committee the poodle of the Secretary of State. If there is a case for an advisory committee of this sort, as surely there must be, it should have the powers to report at somewhat more frequent intervals and to draw the Secretary of State's attention to issues which it considers to be important. I cannot see the logic of creating an advisory committee, only to require it to operate only when the Secretary of State considers appropriate. In the spirit of workers' participation and industrial democracy, which I am glad to see is spreading through the Ministry of Defence, I should like to see the committee given more freedom and more power in its own right. It is important to involve the Ministry of Defence Police Federation in the membership and work of the committee.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) referred briefly to the complaints procedure. It is clear that the Ministry of Defence police will come into contact with members of the public; that is the nature of their job. They may well have to deal with members of the public when they are guarding defence establishments. They may have to deal with civilian employees who are working within the establishments. They will face the problem of dealing with demonstrations outside the establishments. In all these activities, there is always the risk that a member of the public will feel that he has been unreasonably or unfairly treated. In those circumstances, he may wish to exercise some right of complaint.

It seems that no provision is made in the Bill for complaints to be made against the Ministry of Defence police, and it would be helpful if the Minister were to explain whether the police force is to be covered by the ordinary Police Complaints Authority or whether some special machinery will have to be introduced. In the interests of natural justice, there must be some provision to deal with the sadly likely possibility that complaints will be made.

What procedures will be followed when members of the Ministry of Defence police have apprehended someone? In the Home Office department police, there are clear procedures governing methods of interrogation that are to be used, and the taking of fingerprints, for example. It would be helpful if the Minister could tell us whether the MOD police will be responsible themselves for interrogating someone whom they have apprehended and for taking fingerprints, or whether these matters will be referred to the civil police. If the MOD police will be exercising such powers, it is important to ensure that they will be following the same sort of procedures as those that are laid down clearly for members of the civil police force.

It seems self-evident that the Ministry of Defence police will have to be armed on occasions. They will be guarding extremely sensitive facilities and material. They may have to contend with many different types of threat. They will certainly have to contend with the threat of terrorism. It seems obvious that they will have to be armed from time to time. Again, it would be helpful if the Minister would tell us what the procedures for issuing firearms to members of the police force are, at what level that power will be excercised, what procedures are to be followed, and what sort of training in firearms will be available to members of the MOD police force. Is it to be given to every member, or will only a select team be given such training?

Jurisdiction has already been mentioned. The Minister explained that the original 15-mile limit around MOD establishments is being removed, and MOD police will have constabulary powers throughout the United Kingdom. In most cases, those powers will be exercised in relation to stated facilities in establishments, or in clearly defined circumstances. In most cases, that is clear and straightforward.

There are two exceptions. One comes in clause 2(3)*(c)*, already referred to in the debate. Under this, the powers can be exercised

"in relation to matters connected with anything done under a contract entered into by the Secretary of State".

I strongly support the view that that is an open-ended commitment, and an extremely wide power, not only in terms of the multiplicity of contracts into which the Secretary of State may enter, but also in the sense that a contract may involve a number of different operations in different parts of the country. That is a sweeping power.

If I heard him correctly, the Minister was saying that that power would be exercised in a limited number of specialised cases. That may be so, but, if that is the case, it would be better if the power were drawn rather more narrowly. However, even if it is to be exercised in that narrow way, there are difficulties, referred to by the hon. Member for Salisbury, in the relationships between MOD police and the ordinary, Home Department police forces. We hope that there will be good liaison, and that people will keep each other informed about what is going on. However, we know that, even in an individual police force, there are occasionally problems of communication, for example between specialist groups dealing with narcotics or serious crime, and ordinary members who may not be privy to all those considerations. If that can happen within one police force, there is at least the risk of difficulties between MOD police and ordinary police with such a wide power.

Under clause 2(3)*(d)*, the powers are to be exercised

"for the purpose of securing the unimpeded passage"

of Ministry of Defence property. I take that to mean that MOD police will be involved in guarding convoys as they travel. That will make sense, but it may mean that a convoy will be passing through more than one jurisdiction, and again there will be difficulties in liaison between MOD police and Home Department police.

*[Mr. John Cartwright]*

These are all important issues. I hope that the Minister can satisfy us on them, if not tonight, in Committee. I want to give the Bill a rather more enthusiastic response than it received from the Labour party Front Bench spokesman, whose support was rather grudging. This is a sensible Bill, which is overdue. It will receive our support, but I hope that we can tidy up some of its awkwardnesses.

10.45 pm

**Mr. John Watts** (Slough): I do not wish to detain the House for long. I am seeking information on a fairly narrow point which I would normally pursue by means of a parliamentary question. This morning when I attempted to table a question I was advised by the Table Office that it was out of order because it appeared to be related to business set down in the Orders of the Day, namely, this Bill.

I wish to know the circumstances in which Ministry of Defence police are required to investigate an allegation of assault by one civilian employee upon another at a Ministry of Defence establishment. I hasten to add that at this stage in the debate I do not expect a full reply from my hon. Friend the Minister and that I would be happy to receive a letter about the matter.

My interest arises from the unfortunate experience of one of my constituents who, in 1982, while working in an Ministry of Defence industrial establishment, was the victim of a severe assault by a fellow workman. Regrettably, the management of the establishment did not at the time consider it necessary to invite the Ministry of Defence police to investigate, but subsequent medical reports suggested that the man had sustained fairly substantial injuries — broken bones in the face and damage to the sinuses. The assault also had an unfortunate effect on the man's mental health and subsequently led to his early retirement on medical grounds.

That man did not appear to have the same access to the protection of the police as is available to a civilian in a civilian workplace. If someone was assaulted by a fellow worker in a factory on the Slough industrial estate, he would have little difficulty in calling in the Thames Valley police to investigate. In this instance, the man had no access to police by his volition and, because of a management misjudgment, the Ministry of Defence police were not involved, despite the fact that it had jurisdiction to investigate.

What are the precise instructions under which the management of Ministry of Defence industrial establishments operate? What are the circumstances and the internal procedures that require those managements to ask the Ministry of Defence police to investigate such an assault by one worker upon another?

10.53 pm

**Mr. Dick Douglas** (Dunfermline, West): We have had a very interesting debate. The Minister has been very courteous in presenting the Bill and has allowed a number of interventions.

I do not want to appear grudging about the codification that is before the House. The hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) suggested that he was more warmly disposed to the Bill than members of the Labour party, but I do not think that that is the case. We have given a guarded welcome to the Bill, but it is an important measure. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) has already said that we do not have many bites at this cherry and we must try to get the matter right.

In his introductory remarks, the Minister prayed in aid the report of the Select Committee on Defence on the security of military establishments and the Broadbent report. I asked him to state where the Bill was and was not in harmony with the Broadbent report. An important consideration is that of jurisdiction. In paragraph 51, in examining the historical view of the 15-mile radius around Crown property, the Broadbent report says:

> "We regard it as preferable to relate MDP responsibilities outside a base solely to the pursuit of specific enquiries relating to Crown property, as permitted by legislation or practice, and in consultation with the civil police. In this case a geographical limit becomes irrelevant."

There is some indication that, while we might concede the removal of the 15-mile limit, what is not being conceded is any ability of the MOD police to interfere in or in any way pursue matters outside the perimeter fence that might normally be the responsibility of the Home Department police. The Minister placed great stress on the fact that the Bill does not do that.

The Bill confuses the issue. It is not clear who will be responsible, in certain cases, not for matters of physical security or police services for the MOD inside the perimeter fence, but outside the fence dealing with such matters as disputes in married quarters. I heard of a horrific incident in Rosyth — it is only hearsay — involving the MOD police and a motor car. Certain activities were embarked upon on that motor car. There was no consultation with the Fife constabulary on that matter. There are other events in relation to Coulport in the west of Scotland. I hesitate to mention what happens in another Member's constituency, but the Ministry of Defence police put certain demonstrators, quarantined them so to speak, on land that they thought belonged to the Ministry of Defence; but subsequently I am told that the procurator fiscal in the Strathclyde area refused to prosecute.

We are dealing with fairly delicate matters. As I said to the Minister, the previous procedures have been followed reasonably easily because there has been little dispute. The Minister stressed the fact that there has been a good relationship between the MOD police and the Home Department police and it has been clear who has been the boss in certain areas.

Tangentially, I want to mention the bad drafting of the Bill. Clause 1(3) states:

> "The Secretary of State shall appoint a chief constable for the Ministry of Defence Police, and they shall operate under the chief constable's direction and control."

I am a long way from Govan high school or Hill Trust school, but it seems that the object has no relationship with the subject. Who are "they"? Surely it should say something such as "the membership shall". I suggest that as a drafting amendment. The Bill is loosely and badly drafted. In that key area of responsibility we are not clear as to the role of the chief constable or what is meant by "direction and control."

My hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan said that, where the Secretary of State appoints the chief constable, who is responsible, I assume, to the Secretary of State, there is a dangerous precedent. The Secretary of State—I know that this has been sanctified by previous practice—has at his disposal a police force with, if I read it properly, fairly extensive powers outside the perimeter fence.

One of the matters that the Minister raised was the MOD police having responsibility for traffic control. I return to paragraph 53 of the Broadbent report, which says:

> "With regard to special road convoys, it has been represented to us that MDP escorts should be conferred with powers to control traffic which they do not have at present. We question this requirement for the MDP. Taking into account the evidence from the Associations of Chief Police Officers of Scotland and of England and Wales we recommend that the civil police should provide a pilot for each convoy as the local force alone is aware of all movement factors through its area. This would avoid the need for the MDP to be involved in directing road traffic outside MOD Bases."

I shall not burden the House with further commentary from the Broadbent report, but the Bill specifically extends the MOD police powers in that regard. It is important that powers, such as the control of road traffic and the routeing of dangerous, sensitive cargo, should be under the firm direction and control—I speak only for Fife—of the chief constable of Fife. He alone will have the relevant intelligence on such things as demonstrations, peaceful protests and marches, and thus will be able to say, "Do not take that route. Do not take the Valley Field bypass. Go on the low road." That is an important consideration, to which the Minister should have regard.

The hon. Member for Woolwich, in his wise remarks, said that he thought that the committee established under the Bill should report fairly frequently. I suggest that, when the Bill becomes an Act, the Secretary of State be required to give an annual report on the MOD police to the House. That is the least that we can expect from a consolidation measure.

**Dr. Godman:** I want to ask my hon. Friend a question on the subject of the annual report in the light of his earlier remarks concerning traffic control powers. Would he expect, in such a report, some details concerning traffic movements and traffic control? That would raise all sorts of issues, one of which is the quality of training in traffic control procedures undertaken by MOD police officers.

**Mr. Douglas:** My hon. Friend kindly wants to lead me into those matters. I made it clear that I want to restrict the MOD police's role in relation to traffic control.

It would be wrong for me, at this juncture, to lay down what would be embraced in an annual report—that would be for the Committee to determine—but will the Minister concede that it is reasonable, given the nature of the consolidation measure, to try to introduce within the ambit of the Bill some form of annual report to the House?

My last point relates to what we might loosely call "mutual aid". Subsection (2)*(a)* states the places to which the subsection applies. Subsection *(e)* refers to

> "land where the Secretary of State has agreed to provide the services of the Ministry of Defence Police under an agreement notice of which has been published in the appropriate Gazette."

Paragraph *(d)* lists

> "land which is in the vicinity of land mentioned in any of paragraphs *(a)* to *(c)* above and on which a constable of the police force for the police area in which the first-mentioned land is situated . . . has asked the Ministry of Defence Police to assist him in the execution of his duties".

That is, loosely, mutual aid.

I do not want to mention the mining dispute, but in Scotland we saw mutual aid being used, and I have no doubt that that happened elsewhere. It was always clear that the chief constable requesting mutual aid would be in charge. There is no sign of that here. Paragraph *(d)* says that the initiative would come perhaps from the Ministry of Defence police and that is wrong. The Minister is giving me some comfort by nodding. I do not know what the nods mean, but I hope that he will bear what I say in mind when he replies.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** When it comes to aid being given to the Home Department police forces, there is no question but that that would have to be requested by them and the request would not come from the Ministry of Defence police.

**Mr. Douglas:** Can I press the Minister further? Will he clarify the fact that there will be no question about who will be in charge in the chief police constable's area?

**Mr. Hamilton:** I am happy to say that there will be no question about that either. The chief constable of the Home Department police force will have jurisdiction.

**Mr. Douglas:** I am grateful. We shall consider how to embody that in the Bill in Committee.

I give the Bill a guarded welcome. There are particular difficulties in modern times in policing defence establishments. As a member of the Select Committee on Defence, I saw some of the difficulties in relation to the royal ordnance factory at Enfield. Happily, the Ministry of Defence took up our recommendations and improvements were made.

When the Bill has been improved in Committee, it will give status to the Ministry of Defence police and make it clear that their role is restricted to activities strictly related to MOD property and to areas within the perimeter fence and that when they come outside the perimeter fence their responsibility and duties are devolved to the Home Department police of the particular area in which the bases reside.

11.7 pm

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** (Bury St. Edmunds): I approach the Bill very much in the spirit of the concluding sentences of the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas). I have two interests to declare. First, in my part of East Anglia I probably have more military power than in any other part of the country. There are the United States air force bases at Mildenhall and Lakenheath, the Royal Air Force base at Honington and I share with my right hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, South (Mr. MacGregor) the Thetford battle area. So we have quite a lot of military and military police in my area.

My concern is that the bases should be properly protected against intruders of any kind, against thieves, and, above all, against the occasional demonstrators who turn up for no useful purpose and do unnecessary damage to the Ministry of Defence's property. I want to see the Ministry of Defence police effective and therefore they must have the proper statutory powers. It is amazing that, as my hon. Friend the Minister implied, we have gone on for so long without a Bill of this kind.

My second interest is well known to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have represented the Police Federation in the

*[Sir Eldon Griffiths]*

House for many years and there has been no Bill touching on police powers to which I have not made some contribution.

Therefore, I welcome the Bill. It is overdue, but it is a good piece of legislation. I am concerned only about the interface between the activities of the military police and those of the civilian police. In congratulating Sir Ewen Broadbent who, with his committee did a first class job, I have to say that their consideration of the matter seems to have been a good deal more profound than the Bill implies when one reads it for the first time.

The Bill sets out clearly the powers and privileges that the Ministry of Defence constables will henceforth exercise, and that is good. However, it does not define their duties or their responsibilities. It does not, for example, state in any place that they are subject to the codes of conduct that are placed upon all of our civilian police, in respect of the way in which they treat citizens, whom they arrest, detain, hold in custody, stop, search or question. Those codes of conduct should apply if the military police are to exercise jurisdiction against civilians outside Ministry of Defence property. However, nothing in the Bill suggests that those codes of conduct would apply.

There is nothing in the Bill to state that the discipline code of the civilian police applies to the Ministry of Defence police. I am sure that it does, but the Bill does not say so. As has been mentioned, nothing in the Bill deals with the complaints procedure. I suppose that if a civilian wished to complain about the actions of the military police, he would have full access to the Police Complaints Authority. However, that is not made clear in the Bill.

I should like to know more about the powers of the Ministry of Defence police when they are in hot pursuit, because it is not clear how far they may go. I should like to know much more about the arrangements for firearms and the training that goes with that. I should also like to know more about the operations of the CID.

However, my primary concern is that the parameters should be clearly defined, and that does not appear to have been done. I referred in an intervention to the extensive powers of anything to do with contracts that have been entered into by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. That power goes too wide and should be defined more closely in Committee.

Finally, I am delighted that the military police are to have the statutory right to establish a Defence Police Federation and I hope that that federation will enter into the closest of relations with the police federations in England and Wales, and Northern Ireland. I am sure that both bodies will wish that to happen. However, it is important that similar arrangements as exist for the police federations as set up by their own Acts of Parliament should apply to the Defence Police Federation also. It is especially important that we are clear as to whether the voluntary funds of the Defence Federation may be used to engage legal counsel to defend its members when they are had up on disciplinary charges, if those charges involve the risk of dismissal or demotion. That should not relate to any other circumstances because that would not apply to the Police Federation either, but in the cases to which I have referred, the powers should be the same.

I welcome the Bill and regret that I shall not have the opportunity to take part in the Committee stage, all being well. Hon. Members have raised several questions to which my hon. Friend the Minister will wish to respond in his usual courteous manner.

11.13 pm

**Mr. Bruce George** (Walsall, South): We spend a great deal of our time in this Chamber scrutinising the police. It appears that their every action is the subject of parliamentary questions or debates. Their activities are seen on television and, if they make mistakes, as they very often do, those mistakes are paraded in the courts, in front of television cameras and in television studios.

I do not wish to be seen to be anti-police, far from it, because any political party that is perceived as being anti-police will, rightly, incur the wrath of their electors. However, my hon. Friends and I are very concerned about the work of the police, and rightly so.

How much time do we spend in this House talking about the work of the military police and the Ministry of Defence police which appear to be somewhat confused in this debate, as though they were elements of the same organisation? Of course, they are distinct.

How much time is spent debating the private security industry, which is of great interest to me? All are important in crime prevention and, sometimes, in crime detection, yet we seem to have a top heavy interest in the Home Department police to the detriment of a large body of people — perhaps 250,000 — who are engaged in the private security industry in some form. I wish that our interest was a little more even handed.

I welcome the Bill as it gives us a brief opportunity— I hope that the Committee experience will be brief too——

**Mr. Douglas**: Volunteer!

**Mr. George**: I willingly volunteer to serve. There are no Whips present, but no doubt they will eagerly accept my offer to serve.

The MOD police involves just under 5,000 men and women who perform a difficult task. In some ways, it is more stressful work than that of the Home Department police, but it is done in the midst of great ignorance, suspicion and, in some cases, hostility.

The debate has revealed our ignorance. I am not an expert, but I have taken the trouble to talk to people, so I can shed some light on some of the misapprehensions that have been paraded. The MOD police and its Police Federation do not withhold information from us—we are simply unwilling to ask questions. To listen to some hon. Members, one would think that the MOD police operate as some sort of snatch squad who crouch behind barbed wire fences waiting for an opportunity to pounce on some innocent bystander and subject them to the authoritarian disciplinary code of the MOD police.

Others appear to argue that our constitutional rights can best be preserved if the MOD police know their duty and stay behind their line as we are obliged to when we speak. That would be appallingly inefficient.

I ask the Minister to resist pressures that may come from the police who want to preserve their pitch and keep the MOD police behind their barriers. There is enough work for all forces of law and order. Demarcation disputes should be decided by the MOD. I hope that it will be reasonable and not be bounced by some police officers who may want to perpetuate the image of the MOD police as a second-class force.

If anybody is asking, I have no connection with the MOD police.

**Sir Antony Buck** (Colchester, North): I have no financial interest save for the fact that I represent a garrison town. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that what matters here is close co-operation between the civilian police and the MOD police at what might be described as grass-roots level? In my constituency, that seems to be working pretty well. I think that the hon. Gentleman will agree that that is what we should concentrate on.

**Mr. George:** I am grateful for that intervention. The hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) talked about an interface. It is vital that the different arms of crime prevention are co-ordinated as efficiently as possible.

This is the debate that they tried to ban. What was to be an innocuous debate suddenly assumed greater importance. We heard from the Prime Minister this afternoon that the affairs of the MOD police were not the concern of this House. Perhaps the right hon. Lady had not seen the Order Paper. No doubt she was subsequently enlightened.

I am delighted to say that we occasionally have the responsibility to legislate. That does not happen often with defence issues; perhaps only twice a year do we come across a Bill dealing with defence matters. It is therefore important that we are allowed to debate the affairs, including the deployment, of the MOD police.

Were the Prime Minister right, we would be undertaking an illicit activity, and no doubt the doors to the Chamber would be pushed in as ferociously as was Duncan Campbell's door at the weekend, and we should be duly admonished for entering an area outside our responsibilities. It is clear that we are discussing a matter that is within our responsibilities, and I trust that we shall be able to assist the Ministry of Defence in improving this modest but important measure.

I had intended to embark on an historic analysis of this issue, but in view of the mickey-taking indulged in by hon. Members speaking following the Minister, it would be unwise of me to pontificate on historical matters. *[Interruption.]* It is regrettable that those of us with an historical bent are treated with derision.

Suffice it to say that when the MOD was unified—at least, unified in theory—it took seven years before the forces of the separate services were brought within the orbit of the MOD police. Despite the important contribution that another place has made to the deliberations on this legislation, there has emerged a series of contradictions and anomalies. We are now endeavouring to bring some order into the legislation, as my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) pointed out, using his Scots logic, at the same time rightly admonishing the draftsmen for their misdemeanours. The Bill will tidy up the statute book to a degree, and the end product of our labours will, I believe, be beneficial.

I am delighted to say that in the last couple of years the MOD police, now 4,800 strong, has increased in numbers. When the House of Commons Defence Committee in 1983 made two inquiries into the MOD police, the numbers were much lower, I would like to think that that Committee was instrumental in bringing to the attention of all concerned the degree of overstretch that was then suffered by the MOD police.

Recruitment is proceeding well, with about 700 personnel being recruited annually. The personnel serving in establishments work sometimes singly and sometimes in groups of up to 250. They are deployed at 150 MOD bases, including at Royal Ordnance factories, in public limited companies, at the Royal Mint at the headquarters of bodies such as MI5 and MI6, but more of that later.

The MOD police perform a wide range of demanding tasks, including deterring terrorists. Consider their role at the Royal Ordnance factories, which could be targets for terrorists. The Defence Committee, I recall, visited Enfield and saw a vast array of guns and armaments of all kinds. I am pleased to say that such establishments are better guarded now than they were when we paid our visits in 1983.

The MOD police have many mundane tasks to perform, such as checking the entries and exits to buildings. They also perform sensitive tasks such as patrolling MOD property which could be visited by those whose political persuasions might not be four square with those of the MOD. There is a criminal investigation department and a marine department; and it is a wide array of powers and responsibilities and functions that we are addressing.

When the Select Committee on Defence made its two important reports some four years ago, we looked at how the Ministry of Defence police were operating, because we had focussed our attention on one specific area, namely, the Royal Ordnance factories. We brought the attention of the MOD to a number of areas that concerned us very much. We said in our report:

> "The MDP have argued for many years that the complicated body of legislation from which their present powers derive should be consolidated into a single measure. With the added legal complication of the residual MDP presence at the privatised ROFs, such an act could clarify and, where necessary, redefine the MDP's powers; we believe that the case for it is stronger than ever and we recommend that the Government introduce the necessary legislation within the present Parliament."

They were not quite that quick—1983-84—but what the Government did they did quite typically: they set up a committee of inquiry, the Broadbent committee, which duly reported and 17 of those 24 recommendations were approved. I hope that the Minister, if not now then in Committee, following the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, West, will tell us which were not accepted and why. It would be very helpful.

So the Broadbent committee reported, the Ministry of Defence took a little time, and this legislation was produced, which virtually everyone present this evening has endorsed and which the Ministry of Defence police have certainly endorsed. There appear to be some potential disputes with certain senior police officers over matters of jurisdiction and identification, but no doubt these will be resolved in Committee.

**Mr. O'Neill:** The impression seems to have been created that Members on the Opposition Front Bench are somewhat grudging in our welcome. The word I would prefer to use is "guarded". We are never very sure what we are letting ourselves in for until we look at the Bill rather more closely than we do on Second Reading. Perhaps my hon. Friend will accept that our welcome is guarded rather than grudging.

**Mr. George:** I must read *Hansard* tomorrow. If I used the word "grudging", I shall humbly apologise.

*[Mr. George]*

I would like to return to the question of the MOD police and the royal ordnance factories, because it is very important and comes within the scope of the legislation. Anyone who is interested in seeing Ministers and senior civil servants undergoing the equivalent of the rack, as most of us surely are, should read with interest the report of the Select Committee on Defence on physical security of military installations in the United Kingdom. This report contains a devastating critique of one decision, namely the decision to privatise security in the royal ordnance factories. The committee said that the

> "first proposal crystallised in late 1983 and, in our view, was extremely ill-considered".

The Ministry of Defence had the good grace to withdraw the proposal to privatise security at the ordnance factories. Instead, it established a temporary regime to cover the transitional period between the old-style royal ordnance factories and the soon-to-be-flogged-off and privatised Royal Ordnance plc which, I understand, currently has four companies sniffing around, with the object of purchasing: the Ministry of Defence police were to be retained. The MOD police are still subject to threat. The MOD, perhaps as a result of pressure from the royal ordnance factories, are considering reneging on what I thought was their initial commitment, and perhaps the MOD police will be phased out from the guarding of factories that will eventually be privatised. I hope that the Government will enshrine in this legislation, in Committee, what I thought they had given as an assurance to the Defence Select Committee, that the MOD police will remain. After all, the MOD police will operate in the privatised dockyards. Even when those companies are privatised, the MOD police will still be operating. If they are operating under a private regime, what they will be guarding will be the same.

The Royal Ordnance factories, with their range of arms, explosives and ammunition, offer immense attractions to terrorists and extremist organisations. I want the Minister to say, in Committee or in this Chamber this evening, that he will not permit, if not privatisation of security, that the hammering that the contract security industry secured in the initial decision will result in the MOD resuscitating the lunacy of handing over the guarding of the Royal Ordnance factories to contract security. But it is clear that the Royal Ordnance factories will probably lack their own guard force. That would be totally wrong for a number of reasons. Despite their relatively small numbers, the MOD police are uniquely suited to guard the Royal Ordnance factories at the present time. How?

The MOD police possess constabulary powers, which any in-house security force will not possess. They enjoy the confidence of the work force. I am not saying that there is no in-house security force that does not have the confidence of the working people they are operating with, but I say without any fear of contradiction that the reputation of the MOD police in the premises they guard is high. MOD police are empowered to use firearms. They do not carry them, but they have access to them and they are trained in using them. Therefore, their possession of and access to arms is a deterrent to any terrorist or extremist who wants to break into an ordnance factory.

The Minister can well argue that companies like British Aerospace have their own guarding force. Nevertheless, while it is very difficult to seize a tank or an aircraft, it is very desirable to seize what is contained within the premises of an ordnance factory. The MOD police are disciplined. There is a complaints procedure that can be activated against them, they have the deterrent value of having arms, they are well-trained by an 11-week training programme, which is almost as long as the police training programme, and they come from the same pool of recruitment as the police.

There are many arguments why the MOD police should remain in the privatised Royal Ordnance factories. If the Minister does not wish to believe me, I suggest that he consults paragraph 81 and onwards of Volume 1 of the second report from the Defence Select Committee, which uses the phraseology that,

> if it is in the MOD's mind to establish an in-house security force, certain criteria must be used.

I suggest that the Defence Committee, in putting down these stringent criteria, realised that only the MOD police would be able to satisfy them. The Minister should consult with his colleagues and enshrine within this legislation the survival of the MOD police within Royal Ordnance factories. This Bill will consolidate previous dispersed legislation into a single Act. It will confer upon the MOD police powers to operate outside MOD establishments but only in specified places. This is not in any way the threat that some people see. Allowing the Ministry of Defence police to move outside the perimeter is sensible and efficient so long as it is clearly defined where they may operate outside their own establishments. It seems a nonsense if a crime committed within a Ministry of Defence establishment cannot be investigated by the CID branch of the MOD police because the person who they wish to interview lives two miles outside the perimeter fence. It is logical and sensible for this to happen.

After all, for some 125 years the Ministry of Defence police and their predecessors have been allowed to operate within 15 miles of the establishment that they have been guarding under the Metropolitan Police Act 1860. So this is not being brought in suddenly by the Ministry of Defence to allow these men to wander around the countryside arresting innocent people. They will be constrained. I do not think that there will be the slightest threat about which fears have been expressed from both sides of the House this evening.

There will be a police committee under the Secretary of State for Defence. It will contain Ministry of Defence personnel and outsiders and will be responsible for efficiency, complaints and discipline. Will there be a representative of the Defence Police Federation on the committee? In another place the spokesman for the Labour party, Lord Graham, asked if the new committee would have a relationship analogous to the relationship between the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the Police Federation. If there is to be equality, and if the MOD police are to be held in the same high respect and esteem as their fellow police officers, there should be an analogous relationship. I hope that the Minister will clarify that.

The similarity of uniforms was referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill). Yes, the Ministry of Defence police look remarkably like ordinary police, but in many ways they are ordinary police operating within certain premises. I do not see why they should be expected to wear yellow epaulettes like traffic wardens. I speak in no way disparagingly of traffic wardens, who are pursuing a different career pattern with different responsibilities. But the MOD police are recruited from the same source as civilian police, they have an 11-week training programme, they have training in firearms, they have a CID department, they have a marine department, they have an excellent communications centre and in many ways they do the same job as the civilian police. I cannot see why they should be expected to dress up like private security guards simply because some police officers feel that there should be a distinction. I do not think that anyone has complained for many years about the uniforms of the MOD police. It would be detrimental to their morale if they were perceived somehow as being second class and different. That needs to be clarified.

The complaints procedure also needs to be clarified. From listening to the debate one might get the impression that the MOD police operate as a force immune from public criticism. Several hon. Members have received from the Defence Police Federation a brief; I did not intend to read from it, but, because of the confusion, it may help if I quote from the section on discipline, complaints and administration:

> "Members of MDP, as well as being subject to the provisions of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, 1984, and the Crown Prosecution Service, are governed by the same discipline and complaints regulations (with some very minor amendments) as other police officers with assistant chief constables presiding at disciplinary hearings relating to the less serious charges. The more serious cases are presided over by the chief constable.
>
> The MDP is accountable to the Secretary of State for Defence in the same way as the Metropolitan Police force is accountable to the Home Secretary. There is an MOD administrative back-up which is also, in some ways, similar to that provided by the receiver for the Metropolitan Police, namely dealing with administration, aspects of personnel management, finance, logistics, and relations with the Ministry of Defence and Members of Parliament. Like other chief constables, CCMDP is independent of political or civil service control in operational matters including crime investigations."

The MOD police would be wise to amplify upon that section of the brief in Committee so that Committee members are in no doubt about the complaints procedure involving MOD police. That would be very helpful.

Further to what was said earlier, I must explain that there were no MOD police involved in the convoy incident in Wiltshire. Perhaps the MOD police were confused with the Marines or whoever else was present.

Another issue was also raised about MOD police breathalysing ordinary citizens on public highways. I advise hon. Members who may believe that to accept that there are many roads that may appear to be public roads but which are owned by the MOD. The MOD maintain, clean and light those roads. I am advised that Queen's Avenue in Aldershot is such a road. Roads may run through MOD premises which come within the control of the MOD police. Therefore, if someone is under the influence of excessive amounts of alchohol or believed to be so and committing an offence, he may be breathalysed and apprehended. That is not an example of MOD police somehow usurping the functions of the civilian police and causing constitutional anxieties.

In conclusion, I want to raise an issue upon which I seek the Minister's advice. I referred to this point at Prime Minister's Question Time this afternoon. It has come to our attention that within the MOD there are proposals to eliminate MOD police from the guarding and policing of blocks housing MI5 and MI6 offices. If that is so, I must tell the MOD that that would be inadvisable. Perhaps those policing functions are to be devolved upon a contract security firm. I do not believe that the MOD would be silly enough to do that. However, that is possible. It is more likely that the MOD or the Home Office would state that the Property Services Agency security guards could do the job in place of the MOD police. That may be cheaper, because that security force already comprises security guards. They have no constabulary powers. If a crisis threatens, their job is to get behind a barrier and wait for the Metropolitan police to arrive to do the job. That is in no way an imputation of their bravery, that is their job. I argue that buildings as sensitive as MI5 and MI6 officestare qualitatively different from any other premises guarded by MOD police at the present time. Security of this order cannot be compromised. A couple of weeks ago the Prime Minister said that two things were above party politics. One was national security and the other was defence.

If the object is to save money, how much money will be saved by moving out the Ministry of Defence police? Their criticism of this prospective decision is not that they will lose jobs, because I understand that officers will be redeployed. It is made for reasons of national security. It is far more desirable to have men with training, expertise, discipline, a complaints procedure and all the other attributes of the Ministry of Defence police guarding these premises than to change the arrangements. I hope that this decision will be reconsidered and reversed.

We are debating a matter of great importance and I am pleased that, judged by the standards of attendance for late night debates, attendance is reasonably good. This issue affects more than the Ministry of Defence police. I am delighted that the affairs of this dedicated group of men and women are being debated in the House. Committee proceedings and further proceedings in the House will facilitate greater understanding of the work of the force and that is surely to everyone's advantage.

11.46 pm

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** May I start by appologising to the House? I have been told by people not a million miles from my private office and the Dispatch Box that I said in my speech:

> "Obviously, it is not the responsibility of the Home Department police to pursue serious threats which materialise, but the MDP will often make the initial, immediate reaction to good effect."

I should have said that it is the responsibility of Home Department police, and I should like to put the record straight on that.

The hon. Members for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) and for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) mentioned the difficult problem of traffic control on the public highway. Broadbent recommended in paragraph 111 that convoy procedures should be reviewed, and this is being done. He qualified this by adding:

> "If the local police provide escorts for road traffic duty the MDP would not need powers to control road traffic".

At the moment, when the MDP are deployed on convoy duties they are usually accompanied by Home Department police force constables, who direct the traffic as required. Because the convoy may cross many boundaries, the continuous assistance of Home Department police forces cannot be guaranteed at all times. Therefore, the Ministry of Defence police need to be able to direct traffic, if necessary, pending the arrival of local police forces.

*[Mr. Archie Hamilton]*

The hon. Member for Clackmannan also spoke about the Police Committee and the fact that the chief constable was not a member of that committee. I can assure him that the chief constable will be in attendance at committees, playing the same role as chief constables in Home Department police forces. The hon. Gentleman also spoke about accountability. The Ministry of Defence police force is responsible to a Cabinet Minister, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence, via the Ministry of Defence Police Committee, which will have outside members. Therefore, it is accountable to Parliament. Moreover, the members of the force are on oath to administer the law in the community in which they serve, and they have the same duties and responsibilities for administering the law within Ministry of Defence establishments as their Home Department police force colleagues in the community.

The hon. Member for Clackmannan also mentioned discipline. The Defence Police Federation has asked us to amend the Bill to allow it to represent MDP members at disciplinary proceedings and to allow legal representation in disciplinary proceedings in the same way as in the Home Department police forces. I think that that also answers the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths). The appropriate amendment is being drafted and will be proposed in Committee by the Government. This will bring the MDP into line with Home Department police forces.

The hon. Gentleman also spoke about uniforms and I think that this was also mentioned by the hon. Member for Walsall, South (Mr. George). The Ministry of Defence police is a civil police force with full constabulary powers. It is correct that its officers should wear recognisable police uniform for the benefit of the public. Their uniform, is distinguished by cap badges.

My hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury (Mr. Key) reminded us of the recent convoy accident. As the hon. Member for Walsall, South observed, armed marines were at the scene of the accident. He said—I must take his word for it—that they did not understand the rules of local police primacy. That may or may not be the case, but I would argue that if the Ministry of Defence police had been present they would probably have understood the rules. Before we become too carried away by all the complications, my hon. Friend the Member for Salisbury would do well to talk to some of the more junior police officers in Wiltshire and ask them about co-operation with the Ministry of Defence police. Our evidence—this was mentioned by the hon. Member for Walsall, South—is that co-operation is much better at grass-roots level than above. It seems that chief constables are likely to feel that co-operation is less good.

It has been said that chief constables are not represented on the Police Committee. The chief of Her Majesty's inspectorate and Her Majesty's Inspector of Police in Scotland will both be on the committee. They were both former chief constables. Although existing chief constables will not be represented, it should help that former chief constables will be members of it.

The hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) and my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds spoke about complaints against the police. The Ministry of Defence Police Committee will not be responsible for public complaints against the Ministry of Defence police, although it will take account of any that are substantiated and recommend changes in its methods. An independent complaints procedure is operated, under which the Police Complaints Authority is advised of all complaints and is obliged to supervise the more serious inquiries.

The hon. Member for Woolwich suggested that the Ministry of Defence Police Committee would be a poodle of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. I think that it has been proved that there will be some high-powered people on the committee, and I do not think that it will be anyone's poodle.

The hon. Member referred to the Defence Police Federation attending the meetings of the Police Committee and asked whether it would have any voting rights. The Department and the Ministry of Defence police staff associations have agreed that there may be occasions when the associations, including the Defence Police Federation, should have access to meetings of the Ministry of Defence Police Committee. The associations may also make written representations to the Committee. No vote will be taken at these proceedings.

The hon. Member for Woolwich and my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds talked about firearms. The use of firearms is always a serious matter because of the possibility of injury, or even death, that arises from their use. This includes innocent people who are not involved in the offence to which the use of firearms is related. Firearms are issued to Ministry of Defence police officers only if they are fully qualified to use the types of weapon that are to be carried and only when the order for their issue has been given by the chief constable after authorisation by the Secretary of State.

Reference has been made to special constables within the Ministry of Defence police. The requirement for a special constable scheme is being reviewed. If it is decided to adopt such a scheme, the Bill will provide for it in clause 1(1) without the need for an amendment.

The hon. Member for Dunfermline, West spoke about the Broadbent report and said—I think that this is a summary of the report's recommendations—that it was preferable to limit the activities of the Ministry of Defence police to Crown property. The hon. Gentleman suggested that the Bill confuses the issue of responsibility outside the perimeter fence. Let us suppose that someone who lived in a married quarter close to a Ministry of Defence establishment was assaulted and telephoned the Ministry of Defence police in the knowledge that its officers were nearer and likely to come to him or her rather sooner than would the nearest police force of the Home Department. In those circumstances, it would be only right if the Ministry of Defence policeman responded to the call and went to the aid of the caller. It is obviously critical that he communicates with the local Home Department police force and it would be wrong if he said, "No, put down your telephone, I am not going to help, although I can be round quickly. Ring up the Home Department police force, which may take longer." That would be irresponsible, and it would be in such circumstances that people would look to the MOD police to come to their aid.

I am glad that the hon. Member for Walsall, South shares my love of history. He made the same point about whether the Police Federation would attend Police Committee meetings, and I hope that I have cleared up that point. He asked whether the MOD police would continue to operate in Royal Ordnance factories. The Government agreed that the MOD police would be retained for a minimum period of three years and that their retention would be reviewed after 18 months. The arrangements for this review have commenced, and it would be premature to anticipate the outcome. The security threat, the present physical security arrangements and the views of the civil police will be considered before a decision is taken, as naturally will be the wishes of Royal Ordnance plc, and any comments made by the Police Federation, other trade unions concerned, the Chief Police Officers Association, and the Select Committee on Defence.

The hon. Member for Walsall, South also raised the difficult question of the MDP guarding Security Service buildings. I am not responsible for answering questions on the Security Service. However, I can say that Ministry of Defence property may be guarded either by the MOD police or by the guard force. The criteria for the type of protection essentially depends on the neccessity for constabulary powers. For obvious security reasons, I am not prepared to say which type of guards are used at any of our properties, and I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will understand.

This has been a constructive debate. I thank all hon. Members for their contribution and I hope that the House will give the Bill a Second Reading.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).*

## Mrs. E. B. Hutchinson

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

11.57 pm

**Mr. Bernard Conlan** (Gateshead, East): The matter that I wish to bring before the House may involve either total incompetence and uninterest by the Foreign Office or a complete and utter unconcern on the part of the Spanish Government for the basic rights of justice for people who visit Spain. It may be a combination of both those factors.

Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson of Gateshead, constituents of mine, were holidaying in Malaga at the beginning of 1983. On 26 March, they were involved, as pedestrians, in a road accident in which Mrs. Hutchinson died, and Mr. Hutchinson received serious injuries. Mr. Hutchinson suffered damage so severe that he could not recall anything about the circumstances of the accident. Mrs. Hutchinson's body was returned to Tyneside for the funeral.

Subsequently, solicitors were consulted by Mr. Hutchinson, and a Spanish lawyer was obtained to represent the family's interest at any court proceedings. Whether there have been any court proceedings is not known. There has been complete silence from the Spanish authorities, and no information can be obtained.

The number two magistrates' court in Marbella, which appears to have responsibility for proceedings arising out of the accident, adamantly refuses to release police reports or any other information relating to the case. Yet Mr. Hutchinson has a clear, unimpeachable case against the driver of the vehicle if culpability can be shown. In addition, the coroner at Gateshead has a statutory duty, even though death occurred overseas, to conduct an inquest into the cause of death.

Both Mr. Hutchinson and the coroner have been denied all appropriate information, and that information must be in the hands of the court in Marbella. The pretence is that

"there may be a criminal proceeding still pending".

Criminal proceedings pending after four years?

Her Majesty's consul in Malaga has tried, all this time, to obtain the information that is required; and I pay the highest tribute to him for his work. However, he has been unable to get access to the documentation on the case. The consul has done his very best, but he has constantly come up against a wall of silence.

The Foreign Office has been involved for a long time in correspondence with the solicitors who act for Mr. Hutchinson, the coroner and myself. Indeed, the coroner has displayed a degree of patience and endurance the like of which he should not be expected to bear.

The Spanish judicial system prevents the imparting of information even in cases where individual injustice is at stake. I have mentioned the efforts of our consul in Malaga and also mentioned the involvement of the Foreign Office, but that is not all. I am sure that the House will be interested to learn that no less an august body than the International Police organisation — commonly known as Interpol — has also been involved but again with the same result—no information.

Recently, I approached the Spanish ambassador in London and I asked if he could do anything to break the conspiracy of silence. The ambassador, in a most polite and courteous reply, said:

*[Mr. Bernard Conlan]*

> "in Spain the Judiciary is wholly independent of the Executive, therefore, it would not be appropriate for me to request the Court to do something which under Spanish law is inappropriate."

I can fully understand and appreciate the delicate balance between the courts and Government, but I cannot understand the fantasy of the denial of justice.

The millions of British people who are delighted to take their annual holiday in Spain may wish to consider the risks they are obviously taking should a Hutchinson type tragedy occur. Although most sensible people take out holiday insurance, I wonder if the insurance companies here would pay out in the absence of information on the cause of accident or death. My guess is that they would not. Therefore, the insurance premiums that holiday-makers are paying are a waste of money.

Spain is a full partner of this country in NATO and the EEC. What a partner?

As I have already made clear, the consul in Malaga has done his utmost to unravel this sorry mess. The same cannot be said for the Foreign Office. Why has the Foreign Office not taken the initiative to raise the issue at a level higher than the consul? Why has the British ambassador in Madrid not been asked to lend his weight? Why should it be necessary for a matter such as this to be raised in the House of Commons? Those questions need to be addressed. I hope sincerely that the incident involving the death of Mr. Hutchinson's wife, which has haunted him for four years, is not simply small fry in the complicated rounds of international diplomacy.

I want to say to the Under-Secretary of State that the effective representation of this country overseas means the full protection of millions of British people during the time they are out of the country. It means ensuring and protecting the rights, liberties and privileges of our people who are overseas for whatever reason. Above all, it means ensuring that justice is obtained.

The Hutchinson family has been decimated by the tragic events of 1983. It is time that their worries, concerns and anxieties were brought to an end.

With the greatest respect to the Under-Secretary of State, who I know is responsible for the consular service, I believe that this matter should be dealt with by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. He should take up the issue of the lack of information regarding the tragedy that has befallen the Hutchinson family with his opposite number in Madrid.

12.8 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Tim Eggar):** I am grateful to the hon. Member for Gateshead, East (Mr. Conlan) for raising this sad case and for drawing the House's attention to the delays that occurred in the attempts to find out the circumstances in which Mrs. Hutchinson so tragically died. I should like to express my sympathy to her family not only for their sad loss but for the anguish and uncertainty to which the delays must have given rise.

Let me immediately put it on the record that I do not accept the criticism that the hon. Gentleman has made of the role that the Foreign Office has played centrally in London, although I am grateful to him for the kind remarks that he made about our consul in Malaga, whom I met in June when I was in Spain; he has been our consul there for a number of years and has carried out his job extremely conscientiously.

I ask the hon. Member to bear with me while I go through the chronology as it appears to us. Our consulate in Malaga was first asked in July 1983 by Her Majesty's coroner for Gateshead to request from the court at Marbella copies of the accident report and other relevant information. The consul wrote to the court and the court replied that it could not meet the consul's request, as the passing of copies of their proceedings was expressly forbidden by Spanish law. The coroner was informed of that on 22 July 1983 and advised to make inquiries through Interpol. That advice had already been given to the coroner by the consular department of the Foreign Office in London.

As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the coroner also received a negative report from Interpol, which stated that the Spanish court would not divulge information unless it was requested through a rogatory commission, which is also known as a letter of request, and stating also that the rogatory commission would normally be sent through diplomatic channels.

In January 1984, in response to the information from Interpol, the coroner consulted the Foreign Office about the procedures for a letter of request. On 27 January 1984, he was advised to consult the Master's secretary's department of the Royal Courts of Justice. That is the usual channel through which letters of request reach us for onward transmission to the appropriate authorities in foreign countries. In other words, that is the normal procedure that is followed.

The hon. Gentleman wrote to my hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney)—the then Under-Secretary of State—on 23 February 1984 about the case and expressed his concern about the lack of information. My hon. Friend replied on 12 March 1984 and repeated the advice that the coroner should consult the Master's secretary's department. That advice was again repeated in the reply of my noble Friend the Baroness Young on 23 September 1986. It was not until 8 January 1987 that we learned that the Master's secretary's department had been unable to assist the coroner, for what I understand were technical legal reasons.

Meanwhile, as a result of a further letter from the coroner, the consul in Malaga approached the court in Marbella again, in January 1985. The consul was informed that proceedings against the driver of the car involved had not yet been completed and that the papers were with the public prosecutor's office in Malaga. No date for a hearing had been fixed. The court again confirmed to our consul that it was not permitted to reveal the contents of the proceedings.

That information was passed both to the coroner and to the Hutchinson family's solicitors. The consulate repeated its advice to the solicitors — which had previously been given in April 1983—that a local lawyer be instructed to protect their client's interests.

At the request of the coroner, the consul approached the court again in August 1985. The result was the same again. The reply was that no date had been fixed for a hearing, and no information about the case could be given to the consul since the local lawyer acting for the family was fully aware of the position. However, the Spanish court was either unwilling or unable even to provide the name of the local lawyer to which it had referred.

As a last resort, we have, as the hon. Gentleman knows, agreed that the coroner may submit a letter of request direct to the nationality and treaty department of the Foreign Office for onward transmission to the Spanish authorities. That is, in other words, as an alternative to going through the Master's secretary. But we have to say again that there is no guarantee that the Spanish court will accept a letter of request which is submitted in that rather unorthodox way. The truth is that we are unable to force the Spanish court to provide us with the information which the hon. Gentleman and his constituents require.

Let me turn for a moment from the particular case which the hon. Gentleman raised to the general. This problem of getting documents from Spanish courts is, of course, tragic, but this instance is far from being an isolated one. I frequently write to hon. Members on both sides of the House having to give a similar message. The diffculty of obtaining information from Spanish courts is of long standing.

If the local police make inquiries into an accident, a theft or some other incident, their reports are passed to the appropriate court and become part of that court's documents. Those documents are, under Spanish law, confidential to the court, and while interested parties and their legal representatives may apply for access, but not for copies, that ability to obtain access is specifically not extended to consuls. It is for that reason that we have consistently advised the hon. Gentleman's constituents' solicitors to engage local Spanish lawyers.

I am aware that the hon. Gentleman has been in correspondence with the Spanish ambassador about this case since the coroner sent to our consul in Malaga a copy of the Spanish ambassador's letter of 3 December 1986 to the hon. Gentleman. In that the ambassador made it clear, as the hon. Gentleman stated, that the confidentiality, even secrecy, of the summary of evidence held by a Spanish court is the key to the way in which the Spanish legal system operates.

In that letter, the ambassador also referred to article 23 of the Anglo-Spanish consular convention of 1961, under which British consuls in Spain have the right to approach all Spanish authorities, including the judiciary. It was by virtue of that specific article that the consul was able to make the various approaches to the court which I have already outlined. Nevertheless, as the ambassador made clear, the Spanish judiciary is wholly independent of the Executive, as, it is in Britain. As a result, Spanish courts, in accordance with their properly constituted rules, almost invariably refuse, in my experience and that of our consuls, to make court documents available to consuls. That is the position.

When British visitors abroad find themselves in difficulties, it is local law and procedures which must apply. Therefore, I cannot repeat my advice too strongly of the advisibility of appointing a local lawyer to protect the interests of British citizens when they have difficulties in Spain. As I am sure the right hon. Gentleman is aware, our consul can provide lists of suitable lawyers, but consuls are not legal officers and it is not part of their function to offer legal advice; nor can they represent British nationals in court. I know that the hon. Gentleman is fully aware of that, but there is sometimes misunderstanding on that point outside the House.

The hon. Gentleman understandably asked that the general position that I have described and about which he has expressed concern should be raised by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary. I am delighted to advise the hon. Member that, although the specific case of his constituent was not raised by my right hon. and learned Friend, he did raise with the Spanish Foreign Minister when they met in London a few days ago the problems that we were having in Spain.

In addition, six months ago I made a week-long visit to Spain and had extensive discussions not only with our consuls, including our consul in Malaga, but also with the Spanish authorities in Madrid on consular matters generally. I did not raise specific cases, but I discussed the general problem that we are having in getting speedy resolutions of cases before the Spanish courts involving British citizens.

I must advise the hon. Gentleman that the Spanish feel as strongly as we do about the division of responsibility between the Executive and the judiciary. I know that the hon. Gentleman will be fully aware of the reaction that would ensue in this country if the Spanish ambassador, or any other embassy, sought to put pressure on the English judiciary to resolve a matter other than through the normal course of events. We should rightly regard that as intolerable, and we must take account of that factor when we make representations to the Spanish authorities.

I should like to assure the hon. Gentleman that I expect to see His Excellency the Spanish ambassador within the next few days and I shall raise several consular cases with him, specifically and in general, to try to improve the ways in which we can effect a good liaison between the Foreign Office and the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs to see if there is anything that we can do to unblock delays and increase the speed with which such cases can be processed.

I should like to explain briefly what consuls can and cannot do. Consuls can issue emergency passports. They can contact relatives and friends and ask them to help with money and tickets. They can advise people on how to transfer funds. In an emergency, they can advance money against a sterling cheque for up to £50, provided that the cheque is supported by a banker's card. From 1 January this year, under new regulations, they can, in exceptional circumstances, make an advance of £20 against a signed undertaking to repay, to travellers who have no funds to get to an airport for a departure in the next few hours.

They can, as a last resort, and in exceptional circumstances, make a repayable loan for repatriation to the United Kingdom, but there is no law that says that consuls must do this, and they will need to be satisfied that there is absolutely no one else a traveller knows who can help with funding. They can provide lists of lawyers, interpreters and doctors. They can arrange for next of kin to be informed of an accident or death and advise on procedures. They can contact British nationals who are arrested or in prison and, in certain circumstances, can arrange for messages to be sent to relatives or friends. They can give some guidance on organisations that are experienced in tracing missing persons.

There are a number of things which consuls cannot do. They cannot pay hotel, medical or any other bills. They cannot pay for travel tickets except in exceptional circumstances. They cannot undertake work that is more properly done by travel representatives, airlines, banks or motoring organisations. They cannot get better treatment for British nationals in hospital or in prison than is provided for local nationals. As I have already mentioned,

*[Mr. Tim Eggar]*

they cannot give legal advice, nor can they instigate court proceedings on behalf of British nationals or interfere in local judicial procedures to get them out of prison.

Consuls cannot investigate a crime or conduct any other kind of investigation which is the preserve of the competent local authorities. They cannot formally assist dual nationals in the country of their second nationality. They cannot obtain work or work permits for British nationals. I say that, because there is some misunderstanding of the activities that consuls can undertake.

I should also like to say something about publicity in consular cases. Publicity in a particular case is a matter of judgment, and one for consultation with individuals or interested parties, often tempered by the advice of their local lawyers. Individuals may not always be aware of the effect that publicity may have on a case, or of any local nuances which may be read into it.

Members of the public are, of course, quite free to air their views in the media, but they would be well advised to consider what the effect might be. We are, naturally, concerned that all avenues should be considered and pursued as appropriate, but the ultimate decision on publicity must be, and always is, for the individuals concerned. Once they have made a decision about whether to pursue publicity, it is highly desirable, and reasonable for us to expect, that they should be prepared to acknowledge the decision that they have taken.

We recognise that the case to which the hon. Member has drawn the House's attention is extremely distressing. We understand the sense of frustration that he and the family must feel. I assure him that we will continue to do all that we properly can to assist his constituents, but, as I have already explained, what we properly can do is very limited.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty six minutes past Twelve o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Wednesday 28 January 1987*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

### PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## Hon. Member for Upper Bann (Imprisonment)

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to inform the House that I have received a letter, dated 26 January 1987, from the Clerk of Petty Sessions, Lisburn, in the following terms:

> "I have to inform you that Mr. Harold McCusker, Member of Parliament . . . was convicted at Lisburn Magistrates' Court on 27th November 1986".

The letter goes on to set out the offence in detail and to say that the hon. Member for Upper Bann (Mr. McCusker) was fined £50 and ordered to pay other sums, and, in default, to be imprisoned for seven days. It concludes with the words:

> "These amounts were not paid and a warrant to enforce the order was issued on 19th January, 1987.
>
> I have now been informed that Mr. McCusker was arrested and lodged in prison today."

I shall cause the text of the letter to be printed in the *Official Report*.

*Following is the letter.*

Dear Sir,

I have to inform you that Mr. Harold McCusker, Member of Parliament of 33 Seagoe Road, Portadown, Craigavon, Co. Armagh was convicted at Lisburn Magistrates' Court on 27th November, 1986 of the following offence:—

He on the 10th day of April, 1986 on the public road at Ballinderry Cross Road, Ballinderry in the said district and county court division did use a mechanically propelled vehicle, Registration Mark NIJ 3803 for which a licence under the Vehicles (Excise) Act (N.I.), 1972 was not in force. Contrary to Section 8(1) of the said Act. And whereas he is further liable under section 9(1) of the said Act to pay an amount equivalent to all arrears of duty owed by him and calculated as amounting to £16·66 from the first day of March, 1986 to the 30th day of April, 1986.

He was fined £50, ordered to pay £16·66 arrears of tax and £3·00 costs in 28 days and in default to be imprisoned for 7 days. These amounts were not paid and a warrant to enforce the order was issued on 19th January, 1987.

I have now been informed that Mr. McCusker was arrested and lodged in Prison to-day.

### PRIVATE BUSINESS

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS BILL

*Read a Second time and committed.*

BRIGHTON MARINE PALACE AND PIER (FINANCE, &C.) BILL

*Read a Second time and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.*

BRITISH RAILWAYS BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

*To be read a Second time tomorrow.*

HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL

*Read a Second time and committed.*

LONDON REGIONAL TRANSPORT BILL

WHITCHURCH BRIDGE BILL

*Read a Second time and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.*

BEXLEY LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL *(By Order)*

CITY OF WESTMINSTER BILL *(By Order)*

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

*Order for Second Reading read.*

*To be read a Second time tomorrow.*

ADVOCATES' WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL.

*Considered; to be read the Third time to morrow.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Rover Group

1. **Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on progress toward achieving separate and distinct destinies for the various subsidaries of the Rover Group.

**The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Paul Channon):** Rover Group has successfully concluded negotiations for the sale of Leyland Bus and the majority of Unipart. Negotiations are taking place for the disposal of majority interests of Jaguar-Rover-Australia and of Istel. As I told the House on 2 December 1986, commercial discussions on Leyland Trucks are being taken forward. The best way to develop the other businesses in the group will be considered in the context of the Rover Group's corporate plan, which I am studying.

**Mr. Taylor:** In thanking my right hon. Friend for that helpful reply, may I remind him that Jaguar, the first company to be liberated from the group, has just announced vacancies for 700 more men, and that last time he spoke in the House about Land Rover's future he looked to the prospect of either a trade buyer or privatisation? Since no trade buyer appears to be in prospect, may we look forward to privatisation?

**Mr. Channon:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for pointing out to the House the enormous success of Jaguar, not just recently but for the past few years, as a splendid example of what can be done in the private sector. My hon. Friend is entirely right to remind me of what I said about Land Rover. The company is to be retained within the Rover Group while preparations are made for its later flotation or trade sale. I shall bear in mind my hon. Friend's preference for a flotation.

**Mr. Park:** Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that as each part is sold off the remainder will find it progressively more difficult to become viable?

**Mr. Channon:** No, Sir. I do not think that I could agree with that. Many of the separate bodies that have been sold off have been loss-making and therefore will not make the situation worse.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that many of us accept that some of the privatisation schemes have been good for the future of the British motor industry, not least for Jaguar, and that the continuing entity of Austin Rover is of crucial importance? Does he agree that we must consider the fact that Austin Rover is building up a good export record, has a great future as long as it is given a fair wind, and is not a lame duck but an emergent swan?

**Mr. Channon:** I agree with what my hon. Friend has said, as I so often do on matters relating to the motor industry. Austin Rover's export record is encouraging, as was its market share last month. I am sure that my hon. Friend is looking forward as eagerly as I am to discussing the corporate plan.

**Mr. Wigley:** Is the Secretary of State satisfied that the Rover Group, even as now constituted, shows enough interest and involvement in matters of public interest as well as in its own profit, especially in the context of exports, to which he has referred, where Rover parts may be used for exporting things built up from them? If there is a change in the company's structure, can the right hon. Gentleman ensure that that aspect is properly safeguarded?

**Mr. Channon:** I shall certainly consider what the hon. Gentleman has said. However, the directors of Rover Group have a fiduciary duty to the company. I shall have to examine in detail what the hon. Gentleman has said and write to him about it.

**Mr. Grylls:** Is my right hon. Friend confident that the proceeds from the sale of those different businesses will be sufficient to make it unnecessary for Austin Rover to ask the taxpayer for further funds?

**Mr. Channon:** I wonder whether I can persuade my hon. Friend to curb his natural impatience for news and wait until he hears the result of the Government's study of the corporate plan. I shall certainly bear in mind what my hon. Friend has said.

**Mr. Terry Davis:** Why will the Secretary of State not admit that Jaguar's success has everything to do with the efforts of its management and work force and nothing to do with its ownership? Why will he not tell Mr. Graham Day to get on with the job of getting Austin Rover's share of the domestic market back to its level of 23 per cent. eight years ago instead of simply accepting the present level of 15 per cent. and declaring more redundancies among the people who work at Austin Rover and its suppliers?

**Mr. Channon:** I certainly agree that Jaguar's success has been due to the efforts of its management and work force, but it is quite wrong not to take its corporate structure into account as well. The fact that Jaguar has been privatised has been a major factor in the company's success.

As to the second part of the hon. Gentleman's question, I hope that he will join me in helping today to achieve the aim which he and other hon. Members have in mind, which is to increase Austin Rover's share of the domestic market. I am very glad to say that at the moment it is running above the level that the hon. Gentleman stated.

### The North (Industrial Initiatives)

2. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the initiatives he has taken since 1983 to assist industry in the north.

**The Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry (Mr. Giles Shaw):** Recognising its problems, we re-designated many parts of the north of England as assisted areas following the 1984 review of regional industrial policy. In total, 30 travel-to-work areas are assisted in my Department's three regions in the north of England, thus benefiting from regional schemes of assistance. These are automatic regional development grants, selective financial assistance and the activities of the English Industrial Estates Corporation. In addition, the efforts of my Departmenet's Invest in Britain Bureau and the three regional development organisations in the north of England have helped to secure nearly 220 separate decisions by foreign companies to invest in the north in the last three years.

**Mr. Favell:** The amount that has been done to help the north is impressive, as my hon. Friend has listed. As a fellow northerner, will he remind the House that Liverpool's greatness was built on the entrepeneurial spirit of Liverpudlians, Manchester on the commercial enterprise of Mancunians and Newcastle through the industrial enterprise of Novocastrians, not through Left-wing Socialists in town halls, who have done so much to destroy the reputation of the north for self-help and enterprise.

**Mr. Shaw:** I fully endorse my hon. Friend's wise analysis. As a fellow northerner—one from Yorkshire—I have to comment that a Labour-controlled local authority in south Yorkshire has recently declined to assist a small business because it did not consider that it would be socially useful to do so.

**Mr. O'Brien:** Will the Minister take on board the seriousness of the situation in the north, especially in the Dewsbury, Wakefield and Pontefract travel-to-work area where there is 16 per cent. unemployment? We have a 238-acre industrial site which is privately owned, but nobody will take up the offer to develop it. Will the Minister give the Wakefield area some assistance in veiw of the rising unemployment there, especially among the young?

**Mr. Shaw:** The hon. Gentleman knows that I am aware of the problems in parts of west Yorkshire and I concede that there are problems associated with attracting new industries to areas that have suffered structural decline. The coal industry, for example, has suffered decline. The hon. Gentleman knows that considerable time and effort must be expended to secure an improvement, and we are doing that.

**Mr. Fallon:** Will my hon. Friend confirm that, as a result of initiatives, the number of people in work in the northern region has risen by some 40,000 since 1983? Is he further aware that the only threat to industry in Darlington is the prospect of a Labour Government scrapping Trident, cancelling Sizewell and putting up inflation and the cost of of borrowing?

**Mr. Shaw:** I understand my hon. Friend's comments fully and I can confirm that in my trips to Europe and elsewhere I try to stimulate inward investment. It is the continuation of the Government's policies that firms are most concerned about.

**Mr. Wainwright:** Is the Minister aware that the Department's failure to restore the grants that were so greatly reduced by his predecessors has resulted in a number of non-European companies moving production from west Yorkshire to other parts of the European Community? For example, Case International is transferring a great deal of its tractor manufacturing to France. Will the Minister take some action?

**Mr. Shaw:** I am aware that there have been significant changes, but the hon. Gentleman will recognise that the proportion of the working population, especially in northern parts, has been increased by the redevelopment of the map under RDG2. I am aware of what the hon. Gentleman said about the Case works and have written to the chairman to ask for clarification of his intention.

**Mr. McQuarrie:** We hear about the north-south divide, but it appears that we now have a north-north divide. In reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) my hon. Friend the Minister did not refer to Scotland when talking about the north. Does he take account of Scotland, and is he prepared to discuss the restoration of development area status to parts of Scotland? Is he aware that there is high unemployment in my constituency?

**Mr. Shaw:** I hate to take issue with my hon. Friend on a matter on which he is expert, but as far as I am aware we do not have responsibility for regional policy in Scotland. That is a matter for my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

**Mr. Nicholas Brown:** Will the Minister confirm that no region has done more to help itself than the northern region, where co-operation between the regional Trades Union Congress, the regional Confederation of British Industry and local authorities is far advanced? What is the Department's view of he Northern Region Development Company, which has been set up by those organisations on a tripartite basis?

**Mr. Shaw:** I greatly welcome the creation of the Northern Region Development Company. It is an admirable example of local authorities reaching agreement after many years of not doing so, and forming with other local bodies and industry a base for promoting the northern region. I trust that the company will continue to prosper. We wish it well.

**Mr. Phillip Oppenheim:** Can my hon. Friend tell us a little about the situation in the north which the Government inherited in 1979? Is it not true that under the Labour Government 70 per cent. of manufacturing job losses were lost in the north and that the Labour Government submitted a paper to the European Community in 1978 saying that the situation in the north was disastrous because of the general state of the British economy?

**Mr. Shaw:** My hon. Friend is quite correct. There has always been a view that there were significant problems which the Labour Government did not address carefully. The regional development policies pursued by the Government play a significant part in improving conditions in the northern region. Some 9 per cent. more money is going into such policies this year.

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Will the Minister confirm that during the seven years of Conservative Government manufacturing employment has fallen by 34 per cent. in the north, by 35 per cent. in the north-west, by 36 per cent. in Wales and by more than 30 per cent. in Scotland? Will he confirm that the real value of manufacturing investment in the past seven years has fallen by 31 per cent. in the north-west and by more than 40 per cent. in the northern region? What practical purpose will be served by halving the value of regional development grants yet again? How can he talk of recovery when he is destroying the means of recovery?

**Mr. Shaw:** There is plenty of room for arguing about the basis of the hon. Gentleman's figures and I shall not confirm any of them. I can confirm, however, that we have spent £419 million in the current year. That is a substantial increase on what was spent in 1979. I can also confirm that we are dedicated to improving conditions in the northern parts of Britain to enable the imbalance of unemployment be eliminated.

### Manufactured Goods

3. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet the Confederation of British Industry to discuss the trade deficit in manufactured goods.

**The Minister for Trade (Mr. Alan Clark):** My ministerial colleagues and I meet the CBI regularly at the National Economic Development Council and on other occasions and a variety of subjects are discussed. I have no plans for a separate meeting on this subject.

**Mr. Davies:** When the Minister next meets the CBI through the forum which he has mentioned, the NEDC, will he discuss with it last month's deficit in manufacturing trade of £753 million? Will he discuss with it also the consensus that seems to exist that our trade position will worsen and that next year we shall have a deficit of about £3 billion in our overall balance of payments? Given the deterioration in Britain's manufacturing trade, what proposals does the Minister have for the time, which will shortly arrive, when North sea oil is expended?

**Mr. Clark:** Stripped of their doctrinal slant, I share some of the hon. Gentleman's views. I accept that a manufactured import can mean, all too often, a job exported. That is all true, but, in a free society, consumer choice—taking consumers as both firms and individuals—is paramount. The trade gap is the aggregate of the many individual consumer choices and it points in the direction of a preference for the foreign product.

**Mr. Hickmet:** Has my hon. Friend seen the CBI report published today which shows that output and export opportunities for industry are the highest for many years, and perhaps since the war, and that the prospect for British exporters, as a result of beneficial exchange rates and the economic and industrial policies pursued by the government, is the best for many years? Is not the only danger that we shall return to the bad old ways of the policies pursued by the Labour party when it was in Government, should the country be so unfortunate as to have a Labour Government after the next general election?

**Mr. Clark:** My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the opportunities and prospects. The export performance of British industry is strong. There is, however, a trade gap which is accounted for, as I said to the hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies), by the aggregate individual preference for foreign imported goods. When British manufacturers are perceived by the domestic consumer as competitive, we shall see the gap being corrected.

**Mr. Hoyle:** When the Minister meets the CBI, will he discuss with it, along with the Secretary of State, the Department's plans to try to persuade Honda to take a large share-owning in Rover, along with the scrapping of the Metro Mini? Would those plans not mean the demise of Rover as a group that can design, engineer and manufacture its own products?

**Mr. Clark:** I do not know the basis on which the hon. Gentleman makes his accusations. He has heard my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State express his confidence in the increasingly creditable performance of Austin Rover and its prospects for the future, a view which has been echoed by my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Hickmet).

**Mr. Robert Atkins:** May I confirm my hon. Friend's view by drawing his attention to the report of the speech delivered to the Welsh CBI on this very issue by the Leader of the Opposition, suggesting that the next Labour Government would not, within their policies, be able to achieve any increase in manufacturing jobs? Does this not fly in the face of some of the noise, cant and humbug that we hear from the Opposition Benches?

**Mr. Clark:** I did not see the announcement. Perhaps it is part of the new image of candour and open speaking cultivated by the Leader of the Opposition. How long that will last remains to be seen.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** Will the Minister confirm that the sum of the Government's record in manufactured trade is that they inherited a surplus of £3 billion and have managed to convert it into a deficit of £6 billion? Is the Minister aware that this morning's figures show that the visible trade deficit last year quadrupled to £8·5 billion, yet Conservative Members can only say "So what?" Is he aware that the only other country that manages to combine an oil surplus with a deficit on visible trade is war-torn Iraq? As a well-known British patriot, what possible pride does he take in that parallel?

**Mr. Clark:** The hon. Gentleman is a master craftsman in bandying statistics. I know that he has expressed reservations in a most elegant and amusing way about the City of London. He may care to ponder on the fact that the total foreign exchange earnings surplus in the City of London last year was £8·5 billion, which exactly matches the deficit on manufactured account.

## Electronic Data Systems

4. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list his Department's current contracts with Electronic Data Systems.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. John Butcher):** My Department has no current contracts with Electronic Data Systems.

**Mr. Dalyell:** With regard to EDS contracts under discussion, has any Minister had cause to refer matters in relation to Electronic Data Systems and immigration rules to the Director of Public Prosecutions? What would other companies abroad think if major domestic Government contracts, of great value, went to this particular American company and if Plessey and Racal and a number of other British companies were intimately involved in competition?

**Mr. Butcher:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for bringing certain matters to the attention of Ministers regarding the company's alleged view on how its employees treat our immigration controls. In the first instance, the allegations would be a matter for my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. If they were proved, we should need to consider whether that affected any particular EDS bid.

**Mr. Eastham:** Has it been drawn to the Minister's attention that some of the employees have been encouraged to falsify their work applications? If that is the case, will those forms be called in and examined by the Ministry, and will prosecutions take place?

**Mr. Butcher:** The manner in which any follow-up inquiries are made will, of course, be a matter for my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. My Department's remit is to consider its contractual arrangements with different suppliers and, of course, to offer some guidance to the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency on the current bid for the major Government data network contract. I note what the hon. Gentleman has said and will ensure that his views find a place in the right quarter.

## British Steel

5. **Mr. Hickmet** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the prospects for British Steel.

**Mr. Channon:** The prospects for the United Kingdom steel industry, and for the British Steel Corporation in particular, are more encouraging today than at any time for at least 10 years. BSC is now operating profitably and the Government intend to return the corporation to the private sector during the course of the next Parliament.

**Mr. Hickmet:** I thank my right hon. Friend for his most encouraging reply. He will be aware that the British Steel Corporation works at Scunthorpe are the jewel in the crown of the BSC. Bearing that in mind, what does my right hon. Friend think about the Labour party policy in relation to imposing a 1 per cent. levy on the total turnover of companies for training purposes? What are his views about Labour party proposals to use the nationalised industries, such as BSC, to recruit persons for social reasons?

Bearing in mind that state aids to the steel industry in Europe were stopped in December 1985, does my right hon. Friend agree that those proposals pose a tremendous threat to the future of BSC? Surely the answer is to give the ownership of the industry to the very people who work in it so that they can have a share in its increasing prosperity and its future running.

**Mr. Channon:** I agree with my hon. Friend. It is essential that this industry be returned to the private sector at the earliest possible date. My hon. Friend referred to the

Labour party's proposals. I am in some difficulty about the 1 per cent. training levy on turnover, because we do not hear about it. *[Interruption.]* I notice that Labour Members are sensitive about it. It would cost an additional £30 million to £40 million, which would need to be taken out of the corporation's hard-earned profits. I do not know whether it will be 1, 2 or 3 per cent.

**Dr. Bray:** Is the Secretary of State aware that, as this is a technologically advanced industry, it will gain, not lose, from a properly organised training scheme? Is he further aware that, under the management of this Government, the British Steel Corporation has reduced expenditure on research and development by 45 per cent. in real terms since 1979 and has failed to take advantage of funds available from the European Community? Can he give an assurance that a privatised steel industry, if the Government are in a position to secure that result, will maintain manufacture at the five integrated sites?

**Mr. Channon:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the assurances given on many occasions about the five integrated steel sites. I have to disagree with him about a training levy on turnover. It would cost an additonal £30 million to £40 million, if that is what is proposed. I wish I could get it straight from the Labour party whether it is proposing this. Some days it says yes, some days it says no, and some days it says double. I notice that no one is leaping up to tell us what the truth is. I shall look into the point that the hon. Gentleman makes about research.

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** Is not the best thing for the British Steel Corporation, rather than distracting the management with privatisation, to help it to consolidate its recent success and to open up new markets, particularly in Europe, so that it can build and grow in its present form?

**Mr. Channon:** I agree with what the hon. Gentleman says about consolidation and helping the corporation in its efforts to do that. I was surprised to hear the hon. Gentleman, on behalf of the alliance, speaking against the privatisation of BSC. That is a strange posture for the hon. Gentleman to adopt, but, as he has done so, the electors will have to take note of it.

**Mr. Holt:** While it would be churlish to disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Hickmet) as to which steelworks are the best, those in my constituency are certainly another jewel in the crown of BSC. None of my constituents will allow the remarks of the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wriggleworth) to pass unnoticed. They will realise that the alliance is against the privatisation of British Steel, which must and will come about, to the benefit of my constituents.

**Mr. Channon:** I am glad to have my hon. Friend's robust support. My hon. Friends the Members for Glanford and Scunthorpe (Mr. Hickmet) and for Langbaurgh (Mr. Holt) will, I am sure, play a major part in the privatisation of British Steel.

**Mr. Crowther:** When the Council of Ministers considers in a few weeks' time the further massive round of capacity cuts that are being worked out between the Commission and the steel makers through Eurofer, will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind what the Select Committee on Trade and Industry has said many times, that the British steel industry has taken more than its fair share of cuts and should not have any more imposed on it? In view of what the right hon. Gentleman said about the competitiveness of the British steel industry, is he prepared to stand up and defend it against further reductions?

**Mr. Channon:** I have always taken a great deal of notice of anything that the Select Committee on Trade and Industry has said, and I shall certainly pay attention to what it says on this topic, as on others. I have made it clear that if Eurofer makes formal proposals to the Council of Ministers, the BSC contribution would have to be consistent with the strategy announced in August 1985, to retain the five integrated works for at least the following three years, and must not prejudice decisions of the strategy for the five integrated works thereafter.

**Mr. Williams:** Does the Secretary of State realise that that is not enough? Is he aware that if there is the cut envisaged by Brussels of 19 million tonnes, or the smaller, 12 million tonnes cut to which he has already referred, and we took a share in that, eventually that would represent a death threat to one of our major steelworks? Will he give a clear assurance that he is telling Brussels, here, now, and unequivocally, that we will accept no further cuts in our hot rolling capacity?

**Mr. Channon:** I have already told the House. Indeed, as I understand it, there are no formal proposals before the Council of Ministers and no decisions have been taken. If any proposals were to come forward they would have to be consistent with what I have just told the hon. Member for Rotherham (Mr. Crowther). I repeat the assurances that have been given on many occasions from this Dispatch Box.

### Hotels (Telephone Charges)

6. **Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has received any representations from consumer organisations concerning the level of charges imposed by hotels for the use of telephones by hotel guests.

**Mr. Butcher:** No, Sir.

**Mr. McCrindle:** Is it not disgraceful that some leading British hotels are applying mark-ups of anything up to 300 per cent. on direct dialled telephone calls? Does my hon. Friend agree that that must act as a deterrent to foreign visitors, not least Americans, since the practice is much less widespread in America? Will he join me in suggesting to visitors that they should ask for a list of the charges before making calls and, if the charges appear to be unreasonable, they should consider using a public telephone box?

**Mr. Butcher:** Not only do I agree with my hon. Friend, but am glad to say that the British Hotels, Restaurants and Caterers Association, to which most sizeable hotels belong, recommends that where a charge is made it should be clearly stated in the hotel tariff. In order to ensure that hotel clients are better informed about the level of telephone charges, the hotel industry's voluntary code of booking practice introduced a provision in 1985 requiring hotels that make additional charges on telephone calls to state in writing on a card alongside each telephone the fact that such charges are made. I shall draw my hon. Friend's other comments to the attention of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Employment.

**Mr. Butterfill:** Is my hon. Friend aware that similar mark-ups on telephone charges are made by private hospitals and nursing homes?

**Mr. Butcher:** It is for the establishment to decide whether that is a deterrent to future customer loyalty.

**Mr. Waller:** For consumer choice to operate, does my hon. Friend agree that it is vital that adequate information should be made available to consumers such as hotel guests? As mark-ups on telephone charges in British hotels seem to be so much higher than in almost every other country, would it not be right to insist, through the introduction of legislation if necessary, that hotels should publish a list of their charges and end a justifiable cause of dissatisfaction?

**Mr. Butcher:** As I have said, there is a voluntary code of practice that recommends that sort of procedure. I shall draw my hon. Friend's comments to the attention of our hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Employment.

### Share Dealings

7. **Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on progress in current investigations into share dealing in the City.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard):** All the investigations are being pursued as rapidly as possible, but I cannot estimate how soon they will be completed. It would not be desirable to report on progress of investigations before they are completed.

The inspectors appointed to investigate certain dealings by Mr. Geoffrey Collier have submitted their report to my right hon. Friend, and a summons has been served on Mr. Collier. As announced on 7 January, Mr. Brooke and Mr. Kennedy have been asked, in the light of that report, to investigate other possible contraventions.

**Mr. Cohen:** Are all the big firms involved in the Guiness illegal dealings fully co-operating with the Department of Trade and Industry investigations? If not, why do the Government not use their muscle to compel them to co-operate? If they are co-operating, why, when the Minister says that he wants prompt action, is it going to take up to a year, perhaps more, to bring some of the culprits to justice? Is it not the case that the Government just want the scandal to die down and are lightweight in tackling big City fraud?

**Mr. Howard:** I reject utterly the hon. Gentleman's last suggestion. The inspectors appointed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and myself are independent of the Department of Trade and Industry. They are distinguished professional people. They are making full use of the sweeping powers available to them under the Companies Acts and they will bring the complicated investigations to a conclusion as soon as they can in a manner consistent with full, thorough and effective inquiries.

**Mr. Tim Smith:** Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that if the serious frauds office proposed in the Criminal Justice Bill is to do its job effectively it must have substantial powers? Is it not extraordinary that at a time when it is protesting strongly about insider dealing and other fraud in the City, the Labour party is doing its best to undermine the serious frauds office by stripping it of its powers?

**Mr. Howard:** There is a good deal in what my hon. Friend says. There is a marked contrast between the attitude taken by Labour Members when it comes to asking for powers to deal with matters such as insider dealing and the attitude taken by their Front Bench spokesmen on the Criminal Justice Bill, where the Labour party seeks to whittle away the powers which the Government would like to give to the serious fraud office to investigate allegations of serious fraud.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Will the Minister confirm that today I have given him privately the name of a licensed security dealer in the City who is trading fraudulently; who at this very moment is trading shares in the City? Does the Minister accept that, if he fails to take action today to close down the activity of that company and people lose money by buying in, he will have acted negligently and people can fairly look to the Government for compensation?

**Mr. Howard:** I can confirm that the hon. Gentleman was in touch with me earlier today, and I have made urgent inquiries as a result of that conversation. My Department is fully aware of the case to which he refers, and I can assure him that such steps as may be necessary will be taken.

**Mr. Dorrell:** Does my hon. and learned Friend agree that one of the principal lessons of the events in the City during the past 12 months is that there is a need for a substantial review of the rules governing disclosure of share bargains at the moment they are completed? Without such a review, is it not the case that the takeover panel is not only toothless but is in danger of being blindfolded? Will my hon. and learned Friend take steps to initiate such a review?

**Mr. Howard:** There are powers now available to deal with such matters. Of course, we shall be ready to learn the lessons, which no doubt will have to be learnt, as a result of recent events.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** As the Minister resisted Labour amendments to put the takeover panel on a statutory basis, is he satisfied with its performance during the Guinness bid last spring? If so, can he explain how it was that the takeover panel found nothing suspicious about £500 million chasing about one third of the Guinness stock? After that fiasco, how can he leave the supervision of takeovers to a voluntary self-regulating body with no serious powers of investigation and no statutory powers of discipline? Why does he not now accept that the public interest must be protected by an independent public watchdog?

**Mr. Howard:** The takeover panel has hitherto performed effectively. We shall seek, as I said a moment ago, to draw any lessons that are to be learnt from recent events at the appropriate time. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will have something to say about the takeover panel during the debate later this afternoon.

### House of Fraser

8. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has yet completed his consideration of the new information supplied to him by Lonrho plc in December 1986 about the circumstances in which House of Fraser's purchase by the Al Fayed family was approved; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Channon:** No. The material submitted on behalf of Lonrho plc concerning the purchase of House of Fraser by the Fayed family is voluminous and is still receiving careful consideration.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** While I understand that it will take some time for my right hon. Friend to consider the startling new information provided by Lonrho, will he say in general whether he or the Monopolies and Mergers Commission has any power whatsoever to direct the unscrambling or the alteration of a takeover or merger if information that was provided at the time of approval proves to be inaccurate or misleading?

**Mr. Channon:** If it appears to me that material facts are brought to my notice or made public that were not disclosed at the time, I have a discretion whether to make a reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. If the commission makes an adverse finding, I have discretion to remedy or prevent the adverse effects identified by the commission through the normal powers available to me, including, in appropriate cases, the power of divestment. I make it clear that I make no comment about this particular case.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Is the Secretary of State aware that Harrods, under the former management, paid roughly £20 million per year in corporation tax to the Treasury? Is he further aware that, since the takeover by the Al Fayeds and the registration of the company in Liechtenstein, they no longer pay taxes to the British Government because they choose to offset their liability against borrowings to borrow for the purchase of Harrods? Is that not a disgrace? Did the Secretary of State not know, when the original decision was taken, that that was likely to happen, and in taking that decision did he not, in effect, write of £20 million worth of revenue to the Exchequer annually—inflation proofed?

**Mr. Channon:** I think that I would be far wiser not to comment on what the hon. Gentleman says today. I am considering all the information supplied to me by Lonrho in December 1986. I shall consider carefully everything that is said in the House and that is supplied by Lonrho.

**Sir Alex Fletcher:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Al Fayed family was greatly assisted in acquiring the House of Fraser and Harrods because Lonrho sold it a 30 per cent. stake in the House of Fraser?

**Mr. Channon:** My hon. Friend makes another important point, but, again, I would prefer not to comment on the details of the case until I am in a position to consider the whole problem carefully.

## Small Businesses

9. **Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assistance his Department gives to small businesses seeking to sell their goods abroad.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** A comprehensive range of help for exporters is available through the British Overseas Trade Board. The board's objective is to stimulate more small firms to export successfully and many of its services are designed to meet the particular needs of the small business.

**Mr. Amess:** Is my hon. Friend aware that many small businesses in my constituency of Basildon wish to take advantage of the strategic importance of the town in selling their goods and services abroad? However, they feel that his Department mainly helps larger firms. Will he please say what he is doing to try to dispel that impression?

**Mr. Clark:** My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to that. I am sorry to hear what he tells me about small firms in his constituency, because, in fact, some 70 per cent. of the clients of the British Overseas Trade Board are drawn from the category of firms with a turnover in the range of £1 million to £10 million. In fact, the BOTB established a small firms committee in 1985. The co-chairmen are both board members, and the committee commissioned a report to identify the export potential of firms in that range.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** Does the Minister accept that one of the real problems for the smallest businesses is the inability of key members of the company to spend long periods abroad? What liaison is there between his Department and the Foreign Office to enable companies to secure adequate and effective agents abroad so that they can sell their products?

**Mr. Clark:** There is an arrangement whereby, for a minimal fee, small firms can have a full range of advisory and representational services arranged by post in the country where they intend to operate. We have just adjusted the scale of fees in that service to comply more realistically with the different degrees of importance and complications of the markets involved.

**Mr. Richard Page:** Is my hon. Friend aware that a small and, dare I say, distinguished group of hon. Members are discussing with the BOTB methods of setting up pilot schemes to help small firms on a pro-active basis? Will he ensure that those pilot schemes receive full publicity to make sure that they are given every opportunity to help smaller businesses?

**Mr. Clark:** Yes. I congratulate my hon. Friend and other of my hon. Friends in the group who are pushing that idea, to which we attach much importance. In principle, we are willing to help found, on a pilot basis, a small number of export enterprise centres away from the main regional offices of the BOTB. At present we are looking at a scheme in Chelmsford, with Essex county council, but, of course, as my hon. Friend will appreciate, that is dependent to some extent on getting a certain level of private participation as well.

**Mr. Madden:** Is the Minister aware that in surveys conducted by the Bradford chamber of commerce business leaders have blamed the Government's interest rate and exchange rate policies as the major constraints on their businesses? Does he agree that the best thing that he could do to help businesses would be to modify those policies and introduce policies of investment-led economic expansion rather than the minimal measures that he has been discussing so far?

**Mr. Clark:** The hon. Gentleman may be a little behind the times. As he knows, or as the Bradford chamber of commerce will tell him if he were to ask, the exchange rate policy—if that word applies—or at least, the results of exchange rate fluctuations, have been an effective devaluation of the pound which has been a great help to British exporters. It varies from 18 to 40 per cent. against the deutschmark, and that is the subject of particular attention in the CBI quarterly report to which reference was made earlier this afternoon.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels:** As I represent many small businesses in Leicester, I thank my hon. Friend for the help that his Department has given to those businesses. Does he agree that the major problem that has been highlighted in Bradford is high rates, which, in cities such as Leicester, kill jobs? That causes particular problems for small textile firms that are exporting. These firms would welcome putting "Made in Leicester, England" on their labels, but as a result of new regulations they may not be able to signify the country of origin. These companies are proud, as I am, to have goods made in Leicester.

**Mr. Clark:** I am glad of the opportunity to dispel immediately the mistaken idea that it is no longer legal to put an origin mark on products. Although we are no longer allowed as a Government to require manufacturers to include that mark, it is highly desirable that all manufacturers should put that mark on, because that will allow the consumer to make the appropriate choice and reinforce the consumers' understandable preferences in that area.

**Mr. John Smith:** As the Minister is presumably aware of the major cuts that have been made in the number of staff and the budget available to support exports, especially for small firms, and, in particular, the suspension of the market entry guarantee scheme, the reduction in the number of overseas trade fairs supported by the Government and the reduction in the number of outward missions supported, can he tell the House what possible sense it makes for a country with Britain's appalling trade deficit in manufactured goods to withdraw support for small firms seeking to exploit export markets?

**Mr. Clark:** Very understandably, the right hon. and learned Gentleman did not quote the figures. He simply uttered the concepts. The budget has been increased and will be increased by £1·5 million next year. The number of firms helped in their attendance at trade fairs over the past year was 7,000. The market entry guarantee scheme is neither appropriate to, nor utilised by, small firms.

## EC-USA (Trade Dispute)

10. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is satisfied with the progress of efforts to resolve the current trade dispute between the European Community and the United States of America; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Further negotiations have taken place between the Community and the US Administration during the last few days. On 26 January the Council agreed, with the full support of the United Kingdom Government, that these should continue with the aim of securing early settlement of the dispute.

**Mr. Howells:** Does the Minister agree that unless the grain dispute between Spain and America is settled satisfactorily in the short term it could cost European taxpayers up to £300 million in compensation, and that the Americans in turn could impose a levy of 200 per cent. on some of our exports from the EEC?

**Mr. Clark:** The hon. Gentleman is quite right to remind the House that the possibilities of escalation are very serious. However, conversations continue and I understand that there will be further contact between Commissioner de Clercq and the United States trade representative Mr. Yeutter this afternoon. I suggest to the House that it is not especially desirable to discuss the details of various negotiating ploys at this stage.

**Mr. Galley:** My hon. Friend will be aware that the "Buy American" provision in some of the protectionist legislation is having a seriously adverse effect on the machine tool industry in my constituency and elsewhere. Does he appreciate that many sectors of British industry are fed up and have the impression that Britain plays fair and other countries do not? Will he express in the strongest possible terms to the United States Administration our anger at their growing unfair protectionism and to the EEC Commission the regret of British industry at the Commission's lack of action?

**Mr. Clark:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I frequently express our indignation at this in our meetings with representatives of the United States Government. Although my hon. Friend's remarks are not strictly relevant to the EEC-United States dispute, and the United States is entitled under GATT to compensation for loss of trade, there is no doubt that the manner in which the negotiations were opened by the Americans illustrates their increasing propensity for taking unilateral action in trade, irrespective of their obligations under GATT. There have been several examples of this, of which the "Buy American" provision in respect of machine tools is one. The super fund, the customer user fee, tax discrimination in respect of light aircraft and the semiconductor arrangement with Japan, in their different ways illustrate the unilateral exercise of United States muscle. They are undesirable and the subject of legitimate protest.

**Mr. Carter-Jones:** Is the Minister aware that he would have the support of the entire House if he did not allow the negotiations to prevent his Department from providing speedy support for the A330 and A340 Airbus? Is he aware that his Department's support of the A320 Airbus, which preserved that high technology, is likely to be repaid in the very near future?

**Mr. Clark:** Yes, Sir. The two subjects are not easily taken together, but I endorse and support everything that the hon. Gentleman said. He is right to say that the A320 has been an outstandingly successful aircraft. There is no doubt that its encroachment on a market that has hitherto been dominated by the United States is giving rise to much heart-searching among Americans in an attempt to stifle it.

**Mr. Roger King:** Trade wars have a habit of escalating. Can my hon. Friend confirm that with the west midlands and the midlands generally poised to start the export of the Rover Sterling and Range Rover cars in the next few weeks, the prospect of a trade war extending to cars would place the future of the British car industry in jeopardy?

**Mr. Clark:** I understand why my hon. Friend makes the point, but we are still a long way from escalating the war out of agriculture. Our objectives are, naturally, to reach a compromise and to prevent another round of escalatory measures, even within the confines of agriculture.

**Mr. Stuart Holland:** While allowing for the loss of United States exports to the European Community following the accession of Spain and Portugal, may I ask whether the Minister agrees that the underlying pressures for protection in the United States are aggravated by increasing imports into the United States from American companies abroad? Will he urge the United States authorities to restrain the punitive protection that they are imposing on individual United Kingdom companies, such as Burroughs, and in sectors such as gin?

**Mr. Clark:** The United States economy is already in such disarray that it would not be appropriate for me to urge measures or sanctions upon its representatives during our negotiations.

### Merger and Competition Policy

11. **Mr. Greg Knight** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he hopes to complete his review of Her Majesty's Government's merger and competition policy.

**Mr. Channon:** My Department is still receiving evidence, and it will be some time before the review is completed.

**Mr. Knight:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the proper way to proceed in this matter is to take account of all the representations that are received before reaching any conclusions and not to make snap judgments merely to satisfy the bleating Opposition? However, does he accept that there is a need for clear and unequivocal guidelines so that companies know where they stand and are not subject to decisions made at random or on an unpredictable basis?

**Mr. Channon:** My hon. Friend's latter point is entirely right. Recently, I met representatives of the CBI to discuss the matter and they urged on me the need for as much predictability as possible and for consistency in the application of policy. I am determined to achieve that. I also agree with the first part of my hon. Friend's question. On these very important issues, it is essential to take considered decisions and not to be rushed into action.

**Mr. Eastham:** May I impress upon the Minister the great urgency for reconsideration of monopolies and mergers policy? I draw to his attention the activities of a company in the north-west called Valuedale which are causing great concern to the Simon Engineering Organisation and a great deal of loss of confidence, which will affect its investment policies for the future. Is it not about time that successful companies should not have to suffer the pressures that they encounter with the parasites that have climbed on to their backs?

**Mr. Channon:** I know of the hon. Gentleman's concern about this case. It is shared by my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) and others. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will make his point of view well known in his part of the world. I am sure that those responsible for deciding—the shareholders—will take very much into account what he has said. It is for the shareholders to decide. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman will do what he can to influence them.

**Mr. Dykes:** Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that competition in retail and marketing benefits consumers by lower shop prices? Therefore, in his review, will he exercise great care when he receives complaints about dumping from manufacturers and retailers who are less efficient than most?

**Mr. Channon:** I do not think that this issue has much to do with dumping, but I shall certainly examine the point that my hon. Friend has raised.

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** Is the Secretary of State aware that widespread dissatisfaction and uncertainty over the Government's monopolies and mergers policy are caused partly as a result of recent events, but also because of the general history of the monopolies and mergers policy? Therefore, will he bring forward the results of his review as quickly as possible?

**Mr. Channon:** I do not accept that there is all that much uncertainty. The decisions have been consistent. In 1984 my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State announced that references would be made primarily on the ground of competition. That has remained the policy, and it is well understood.

## High Court Injunction (Mr. Speaker's Order)

**Mr. Peter Shore** (Bethnal Green and Stepney): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. May I exceptionally put a point of order of great importance to you and to the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker? It was my clear understanding at the end of yesterday's debate that the House of Commons, in accepting the manuscript amendment of my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), agreed that your ruling on 22 January prohibiting the showing of Mr. Duncan Campbell's film in the precincts of the House would last until the Committee of Privileges reported and the House itself debated the Committee's report. This morning, in the BBC's "Today" programme, the Leader of the House, answering questions from Mr. John Cole, said the following — "The Speaker has indicated"—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman prefaced his remarks by saying that this is an exceptional case. This is a matter of great importance to the whole House of Commons. I shall deal with it now.

**Mr. Shore:** The Leader of the House, in response to a question by Mr. John Cole, said:

> "the Speaker has indicated that his ruling concerning the showing of the film in the Palace of Westminster will continue as long as the injunction."

That, indeed, was the central issue of yesterday's debate when the House specifically rejected the connection between your ruling of 22 January and the court's injunction, Mr. Speaker. As the Leader of the House is also Chairman of the Privileges Committee, to which the matter has now been referred, it would be extremely important if you, Mr. Speaker, were to guide the House and, in particular, were able to reaffirm the words you used in column 273 of *Hansard* when, in reply to the Solicitor-General last night, you said:

> "my instructions of 22 January will remain in force until the House itself can make a decision following the report of the Committee of Privileges". — [*Official Report*, 27 January 1987; Vol. 109, c. 273.]

**Dr. John Gilbert** (Dudley, East): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. For the purposes of clarification, could you confirm that your instruction of 22 January in no way referred to the operations and work of Select Committees in connection with their power to send for persons, papers and records?

**Mr. Speaker:** Normally, I do not take points of order at this stage unless they arise strictly out of questions, but it seems to me that this is a matter of considerable importance which the whole House would wish to have clarified. Therefore, I exceptionally agreed to take them now.

May I reaffirm what I said yesterday at column 273 of *Hansard*, namely, that my instruction of 22 January will remain in force until the Committee of Privileges reports to the House and the House has made its determination thereupon, unless in the meantime that injunction has been removed.

May I say to the right hon. Member for Dudley, East (Dr. Gilbert) that I have also been asked, by him and by other hon. Members, whether my instruction of 22 January applies to Select Committees. The House will be aware that I have no authority to intervene in the operations of Select Committees, which are given their powers directly by the House. Accordingly, my instruction relates to Members acting on their own responsibility and not to Select Committees.

**The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen):** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. On the first point raised by the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore), of course I fully endorse the interpretation that you gave, Mr. Speaker, and if any remarks of mine on the BBC indicated otherwise, it was wholly unintended.

As to the second point, thank you for giving us this ruling, Mr. Speaker, which we will wish to study carefully.

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker, and given what you have said about Select Committees, I take it that the Committee of Privileges will be free to see the film, which it will have to do to discharge its task. I take it that nothing that the Lord Privy Seal said on the radio this morning would indicate that the Government wish to interpose an objection to the Committee of Privileges seeing the film when you yourself have waived any objection to it.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is a decision for the Committee of Privileges and not for me.

## Training and Employment Measures

3.36 pm

**The Paymaster General and Minister for Employment (Mr. Kenneth Clarke):** I wish to make a statement on a new package of training and employment measures. I apologise in advance to the House because the statement is on the long side, but these are important matters. This is a large package and I know that the House would wish to be fully informed sbout it.

Unemployment has fallen for five consecutive months and is now down by more than 100,000. Vacancies are standing at their highest levels this decade. Our unit wage costs are now rising more slowly than the rate of inflation and are beneath those of our principal overseas competitors. We shall shortly enter our seventh successive year of economic growth.

All this, building on the firm foundation of the million new jobs the economy has created since 1983, can only be good for employment. But with some skill shortages already emerging and unemployment at its present level there is no room for complacency. The Government have therefore reassessed the scope and direction of the employment, enterprise and training measures within existing departmental programmes. As a result my noble Friend the Secretary of State for Employment is writing to the chairman of the Manpower Services Commission to ask the commission to undertake further measures that will give priority to our task of motivating and training unemployed people, particularly the younger generation, to fill the jobs that are now becoming available.

First, restart is a success. By the end of March this year the Manpower Services Commission staff should have interviewed all the 1·25 million people who will have been out of work for over a year. This has been an enormous task. I would like to pay tribute to our staff in the MSC, not only for the forty thousand interviews a week that they have undertaken but for the enthusiastic and sensitive manner in which they are completing their task of offering advice and help to long-term unemployed people.

We can see already that this programme is bringing help and assistance to the long-term unemployed. In the latest figures, long-term unemployment fell in three months by 7,000 when in the previous year it had risen over the same period by 25,000. I am confident that this improvement will be maintained as the programme develops and as the economy continues to strengthen.

No other industrialised nation provides such a package of individual help to each and every long-term unemployed person. But even this is not enough. Last October we announced that the Manpower Services Commission would pilot, in nine areas, restart interviews being offered to those out of work for six months or more. We thought that the earlier the help was received the more effective it would be. The results of these pilots have convinced us of the need to extend the restart counselling in two ways.

First, there will be an additional earlier interview. From the end of March, everyone who becomes unemployed for more than six months will be invited to attend a restart interview. But we have decided to go further, and our second extension is to offer a restart interview at regular six-month intervals. In the future there will be regular contact between Manpower Services Commission staff and unemployed people, to help them, at different times and in different ways, back to work.

The counselling interview is, of course, only the first step—although a vitally necessary one—in the process of getting the unemployed back into work. That brings me to the second of the new measures I am announcing today.

Last October we also announced that the Manpower Services Commission would commence piloting an entirely novel training scheme designed specifically to meet the needs of those who have been out of work for six months or more. This scheme has three essential elements. It applies to those who have been out of work for the requisite period, it takes place on employers' premises and it must lead to recognised vocational qualifications.

The Manpower Services Commission has considered the pilots and last week the commission endorsed the report of a working party on the shape of the new scheme. We wish to accept its recommendations in full.

The commission is concerned that quality should be pre-eminent, and I agree completely. It is further concerned that quality should dictate the speed of any extension, and I again agree, as I agree that qualifications from recognised examining and validating bodies must be part of every individual programme. Indeed, these will be conditions of the job training scheme which will be available for people who come to their first six-month restart interview.

The reskilling of Britain is vital if we are to maintain our current economic progress and achieve the decline of unemployment. We have therefore decided that the new job training scheme should be expanded on a national basis to coincide with the extension of the restart programme from March this year provided that the Manpower Services Commission can maintain quality in each area. With that very important proviso we will ask the Manpower Services Commission to provide up to 110,000 places by September of this year. This will mean that in a full year nearly a quarter of a million unemployed people will be given high quality training in skills that will enable them to compete, and to compete successfully, for jobs in today's labour market. This will offer a fresh start in particular to the under-25s. They must be our priority.

I have visited too many areas with high unemployment and heard too often many employers complain that they cannot find people with the right skills. I hope that this new training measure will play a major part over the next few years to provide the skills necessary to maintan our place in the world. It will, if the Manpower Services Commission can maintain the necessary quality of provision. I have every confidence that it can achieve that.

The job training scheme is for adults. My third announcement concerns young people. We are already ahead of most other countries in the steps we have taken in the last four years to train school leavers, but there is a further step that I can announce today. The successful introduction of a two-year YTS last year enabled us to guarantee a place to every unemployed 16-year-old school leaver. Indeed, this year out of 475,000 school leavers, only 2,376 were still awaiting the offer of a place on this training programme by Christmas.

We therefore now propose to extend the guarantee of a place to every unemployed 17-year-old school leaver. This will mean that each and every unemployed young person under the age of 18 is now guaranteed high quality training leading to a recognised qualification. This

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guarantee is unequalled by any of our principal competitors. For the first time, from this Easter there will be no unemployment under 18 and anyone under that age who remains unemployed will have chosen to remain unemployed.

Finally, there will be a further increase in the enterprise allowance scheme which is our scheme for subsidising the first year of self-employment for someone previously unemployed. Over the last three and a half years more than 200,000 unemployed people have started to work for themselves under this programme. Self-employment is rapidly increasing in all parts of the country. Far from a north-south divide, I might point out that the increase in the number of self-employed since 1979 has been greater in Yorkshire and Humberside — 77 per cent. — than it has been in any other region. The 43 per cent. increase in the northern region is close to the 46 per cent. increase in the south-east.

We are presently expanding the enterprise allowance scheme towards an annual target of 100,000 unemployed people setting themselves up in business. We are raising that target and next year it will be increased to 110,000 —an expansion of 10 per cent.—but here again we shall be asking the Manpower Services Commission to pay attention to quality and to the amount of help the new business men and business women will have to help them succeed.

The measures we have announced today constitute a major redirection of our labour market programmes to help the unemployed back into real jobs. Unemployed people need practical help to get back into work, not empty promises to create millions of jobs on local authority payrolls. They need help and training to compete successfully for the jobs which are already becoming available. We need to have a work force with tomorrow's skills to compete in tomorrow's world. That is what these new measures will help accomplish, and I commend them to the House.

**Mr. John Prescott** (Kingston upon Hull, East): The House and the country will be in no doubt that a general election is near, following this further example of a Government who are obsessed with reducing unemployment figures rather than creating real jobs. Not one real job is proposed in the package announced this afternoon.

The Government's statement must be seen against today's political background and seven years of Tory policies on employment and training. Despite the many fiddles with the unemployment figures, the registered unemployed total stands at 3·25 million, with 30 people for each vacancy and with the worst trained labour force of any developed economy—[HON. MEMBERS: "Get to the point."] That is what I am doing. A major deskilling of our labour force has occurred since 1979, with this Government abolishing 16 of the 23 training boards and closing 30 of the skillcentres. That has contributed to a massive shortage of every sort of skill in this country, and has affected very many of our companies, based on the evidence that they have given.

Training is regarded by many companies as a cost rather than an investment, with the result that we now have a deplorable record of expenditure on training compared with our major competitors. They invest seven times—even as much as 14 times—more than Britain on the training of their labour forces.

This much-heralded job training scheme was born at the Tory party conference last October, much to the amazement of the Manpower Services Commission, and is built on a training pilot scheme that affected 10 areas in the United Kingdom and involved 1,000 people. There was little assessment in the 10 weeks that it operated before now being launched into a scheme affecting 110,000 places in six months — twice as many as the MSC thought it could handle. Is the Paymaster General convinced that those places, even on the terms that he set out, can be provided by industry under present circumstances?

I must make it clear immediately that, of course, we welcome the counselling and advice that are given to the long-term unemployed. I have suffered periods of unemployment — [HON. MEMBERS: "You soon will again."] — that have not been suffered by Tory Members. We welcome any advice that can be given— *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is an important statement of great interest to the House.

**Mr. Prescott:** We are used to Tory yobbos in the House by now, Mr. Speaker. The debate is being broadcast on the radio and the electorate can judge who is giving serious consideration to the problems of the unemployed.

The restart programme is largely about marshalling people into dead-end schemes of limited effect. Can the Paymaster General confirm that the estimated 250,000 places in one year, which he mentioned in his statement, can be found? Can he estimate the effect that he thinks the scheme will have on the figures for the registered unemployed?

Secondly, what is the estimated cost of the schemes, and will extra resources be devoted to them? Can he assure us that they will not be at the expense of the existing alternative training schemes, as the expansion of the youth training scheme was at the expense of the adult training schemes?

What level of allowance is to be paid to people on the schemes? Are we correct in believing that it will be precisely the same as the levels of benefit? Will it include, as the MSC report requested, at the very least out-of-pocket expenses and help with extra training requirements for the individual?

Are these job training places now to be provided at half the cost of the existing community programme, thus breaking any attempt to adjust payments to proper levels of pay? [HON. MEMBERS: "Read it again."] The community programme made a clear commitment to bear some relationship to trade union rates of pay. Nothing in the scheme bears any resemblance to such pay and it is a major step to the workfare programme for which many Conservative Members have been calling.

Will the schemes be compulsory? Will there be a loss of benefit to those who are offered places on such schemes, or will they be allowed to take alternative employment schemes which pay more than these schemes without facing penalties?

Is not the limited six hours a week for job training on a six-month scheme completely inadequate to make any contribution to the high quality training, as the Paymaster General has claimed? Will more resources be made available for monitoring the schemes and for judging the qualifications and standards achieved by them? What are the estimated effects of—[HON. MEMBERS: "Get on with it."] The Paymaster General made a lengthy statement which raised many questions which I am entitled to ask. I hope that I will be given time to ask those legitimate questions to which not only we but the long-term unemployed want replies from the Paymaster General.

Finally, it is typical of the Government's arrogance to assume that jobs provided by local authority services, such as house building and helping the mentally handicapped and old people, as in the statement about local authority jobs, are simply a payroll contribution. They are as real as the jobs done by anyone working in industry. However, that shows the true political nature of the statement, which cruelly exploits the desire of the unemployed to have work. It does nothing to reduce the deskilling of our labour force. It is one further attempt to massage the unemployment figures downwards and it is a major step towards an industrial conscripted labour force working solely for their meagre benefits.

**Mr. Clarke:** At one point the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) read a prepared part of his question explaining his concern about the level of training and skill in our economy.

**Mr. Barry Sheerman** (Huddersfield): The Minister read his.

**Mr. Clarke:** He obviously accepts, as we do, that we need to improve our record of training, that in some parts of Britain and in some industries skill shortages are emerging and that some of the unemployed need further training to polish up existing skills or to acquire new ones to improve their chances of entering the labour market.

Therefore, I cannot for the life of me understand why he cannot bring himself to welcome the announcement of a major training scheme, aimed particularly at the under-25s, providing on-the-job and off-the-job training in specific skills for those who have been out of work for over six months.

The hon. Gentleman asked me a number of questions about the way in which the scheme will work. Perhaps I shall be able to reassure him because I think that the scheme will, on the whole, receive a widespread welcome in industry and among the general public. First, he asks whether the places can be provided. He is apparently worried about our setting a target—it is a target—of 110,000 by September. Of course, that is quite an ambitious target and we shall achieve it only if we have a good quality scheme and maintain that pace of progress. A quicker rate of progress was achieved when YTS was first introduced. In the first eight or nine months of the YTS programme, 400,000 places were provided. We are proceeding at a slower rate than that. We have a good flow of managing agents coming forward to take part, a good flow of employers who are interested in the scheme, and of bodies that are responsible for qualifications. We believe that we must go ahead and aim at that sort of figure, and I am confident that the MSC will get there.

The hon. Member asked about the cost and the extra resources. Obviously, the cost of the YTS programme depends on the extent to which we achieve the rate of progress that the Government would like to see. If we reach the sort of figure that I am talking about, the cost will be about £200 million, some of which would be switched from programmes elsewhere and will therefore be new money to the Manpower Services Commission. Some of that money will be found by switching funds within my Department's budget. [HON. MEMBERS: "How much?"] My Department is spending £4 billion on schemes of one kind or another, £3 billion of which is spent on schemes run through the MSC. [HON. MEMBERS: "How much new money?"] For the MSC that figure is over £100 million.

I know that Opposition Members are stronger on the amount of money that they wish to spend than they are on how they should spend it. They are committed to a £6 billion programme, but they have not explained how on earth that is meant to take 1 million off the unemployment figures. We are talking about new resources for the Manpower Services Commission and that will be achieved by switching resources within Government. That is how we shall proceed.

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): More window dressing.

**Mr. Clarke:** The level of allowance received by each trainee will depend on his personal circumstances, because we shall ensure that those people who are at the moment receiving benefit will not lose money as a result of going on to the scheme. Therefore, as the level of benefit will vary, so will the average available allowance, which will be equivalent to the benefit that trainees were getting. The amount received by a young single man, will differ from that received by a married man with children who is a householder. In answer to the hon. Gentleman's query, there will be an addition for travel and out-of-pocket expenses incurred by those who take part in the scheme.

The hon. Gentleman also asked whether there would be any element of compulsion. There is no element of compulsion in any work, or training scheme in this country. We wish to encourage those who come to the restart interviews to go on to the scheme. Nobody will lose his benefit entitlement solely as a result of refusing to go on the job training scheme. As we have had to explain on previous occasions, it is true, in this as in every part of the employment world, that people who continue to receive benefit must demonstrate that they are available for work. That has always been the rule.

The hon. Gentleman was concerned about the quality of the training and the amount of knowledge that could be acquired in six months. Of course, some skills can be acquired and tested in six months, but others require longer. We are now moving over, not only in this scheme but generally, to training based on a measurement of standards, rather than time-served training. Of course some standards cannot be achieved in six months, but one can take a step towards those standards and devise skills tests suitable for the scheme, if existing skills tests cannot be accomplished within six months—but many can.

We are in contact with the agencies that determine qualifications, such as the Business and Technician Education Council, the Royal Society of Arts, and the City and Guilds of London Institute, which will welcome this announcement wholeheartedly. We shall discuss with those bodies how the training course can achieve a quality that will lead to a recognised qualification, or to a step that is definitely towards qualifications, in the period that we are discussing.

The hon. Gentleman also asked about the effects of the scheme on the unemployment figures, which features so

*[Mr. Clarke]*

largely in the barracking from his hon. Friends. Its effect on the unemployment figures will depend on the extent to which we successfully continue to reduce unemployment. It is a sad truth, from the point of view of Opposition Members, that, as the number of unemployed people steadily reduces, the figures go down. I realise that Opposition Members are worrying as the election gets near. [HON. MEMBERS: "They are on schemes."] If Opposition Members are asserting that the growth in new jobs in the economy and the reduction in unemployment are directly related to our schemes, they are grossly exaggerating the size of the Department of Employment's schemes, and their mathematics is gravely in error. I did not give my statement a political tenor.

**Mr. Sheerman:** As if you would.

**Mr. Clarke:** It was the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East who mentioned the run-up to a general election. It is quite clear to me that, in the run-up to a general election, Opposition Members are getting into a desperate panic about the obvious reduction in unemployment figures, to the extent that their only reaction to employment and training measures is to attack each and every announcement that we make, simply because they are frightened that we are demonstrating that unemployment is now going in the right direction.

**Mr. Peter Thurnham** (Bolton, North-East): I welcome the fact that existing funds are being used more productively for these positive measures. Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the job training scheme in Preston, contrary to what the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) said, has been so successful that everybody who wanted a place was able to get one, and a job afterwards?

**Mr. Clarke:** I quite agree with my hon. Friend. I think that the people of whom we should take notice are the unemployed who need help to get back into work, and employers who are happy to train people. We should take their opinion and experience, and not that of a panic-stricken Opposition. We have found in our pilot areas no lack of people who wish to be trainees on the course. Nor did we experience any lack of managing agents or employers who are willing to provide the training required. It is the success so far of the pilot schemes that has led us to say that we must go national as quickly as quality allows.

**Mr. Malcolm Bruce** (Gordon): Is the Paymaster General aware that we share his anxiety at the skills shortages which are emerging in the United Kingdom? To the extent that the scheme will help solve that, we welcome it. It will also provide some outlet for the long-term unemployed.

The Minister will be aware that there is worry and scepticism about the value of such training schemes in terms of meeting skill requirements and providing long-term jobs. Can he therefore give an assurance that the MSC will not advance these schemes simply to meet Government targets if it cannot be assured that they are meeting proper skill and training requirements? Can he give an assurance that unemployed people will not be forced into schemes which they do not think are relevant to them? Can he assure us that they will not suffer any loss of benefit in those circumstances? Will he explain why the Government can find substantial sums of money for training schemes such as this when they are cutting aid to industry and regional development grants, which would help to create the new industrial base and jobs that would help the unemployed in the long term?

**Mr. Clarke:** I think that I can give the hon. Gentleman the assurance that he asks for in the first part of his question. I agree that it is important to emphasise that we are offering unemployed people training which is of genuine use to them and a potential employer. It is important to realise that the training will be geared to the individual's needs. The person concerned will be assessed —his or her needs will vary considerably according to educational attainment, the level of skills that have been achieved and the type of previous job. Each person will be offered a place for a varying length of time. It might be three months or as long as 12 months. Six months is an average that we have in mind.

Each training programme will be geared to the needs of the individual and aimed at a qualification which, I accept, may not always be achieved, but the idea is that there will be a recognisable marked step towards a qualification. It will be attainable by the individual and useful to him. We agree with the MSC that we should go ahead as quickly as achieving that level of quality requires.

I note the hon. Gentleman's comments on other Government programmes to bring new investment and industry to the regions. I agree that they are important. We have cut spending in that area because we have targeted it more sensibly. We have concentrated on jobs and chosen not to subsidise capital developments everywhere, which was always wasteful and ineffective. We are now getting near to having doubled expenditure in real terms on training and employment because we give it a very high priority.

**Mr. Ralph Howell** (Norfolk, North): I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend on this most excellent statement. It will be well received by people throughout the country. I congratulate him on being able to offer a new training scheme place to everyone aged under 18. Will he explain why we are to continue to give people who turn down such a place the option of drawing benefit? I congratulate him on the success of the restart scheme. Will he consider urgently the introduction of a pilot workfare scheme?

**Mr. Clarke:** I agree with my hon. Friend about the public reaction to the announcement. There will continue to be incredulity outside the House at the reaction of the Official Opposition to such an announcement. Anybody aged under 18 who says that he is unemployed after this measure has been introduced has decided of his or her own volition to be unemployed and not to take a training scheme place. Certain benefit arrangements already apply to youth training scheme trainees, but I do not think that it is right to say automatically that somebody should lose benefit just because he or she declines to take part in a scheme. It is important to emphasise that anybody who continues to claim benefit has to continue to demonstrate, as Parliament has always required, that he or she is available for work and is taking active steps to find it.

As for my hon. Friend's advocacy of workfare, he knows that I am not persuaded that it would be right to start providing programmes for unemployed people as a condition of receiving benefit. We are offering extremely attractive training schemes and work experience, and I cannot believe that sensible people will continue to turn them down. All the evidence suggests that, with YTS, the number of 16-year-old school leavers who choose to stay out of work now is very low. The number of unemployed school leavers by Christmas this year was far lower than in previous years.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind the House that this is an Opposition day and that a very large number of right hon. and hon. Members want to take part. I ask for brief questions, please.

**Mr. Ron Leighton** (Newham, North-East): Would the Paymaster General give an account of his recent meeting with the MSC? Can he confirm that it went to see him to express its concern and reservations about the standard of training in the job training scheme and about the speed at which he wants to produce it?

**Mr. Clarke:** The Manpower Services Commission has written to my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State setting out its views, and he has written back agreeing about progress under the JTS. The MSC endorsed the report of its sub-group, which asked for an extension of JTS, saying that it should be extended as quickly as quality allows. That is the arrangement on which we are proceeding.

We are in complete agreement with the MSC in the correspondence that we have had, subject to one or two Trades Union Congress reservations about the level of allowances. We are, however, in agreement on JTS. That includes the TUC commissioners who are Ron Todd, Roy Grantham and Ken Graham—not insignificant figures in the Labour movement. I find it difficult to engage in this exchange of correspondence with the MSC and then come here and meet a band of hooligans carrying on about everything that we propose.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Peacock** (Batley and Spen): May I thank my right hon. and learned Friend on behalf of people throughout the country, and especially people in my constituency, who will welcome this news? We recently had an opportunity to see more than £20 million of investment in manufacturing in my constituency—and we need the skills to go with it. Many people will welcome the opportunity to take part in a training course which will lead to a recognised and approved qualification. All will welcome the fact that £100 million will be spent on training rather than on keeping people at home.

**Mr. Clarke:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I was with her in her constituency yesterday visiting two firms that are engaging in major investment and expansion.

**Mr. Prescott:** It is a marginal.

**Mr. Clarke:** It was a marginal seat in which a great deal of investment is taking place. New jobs are being created. The choice for an unemployed person is between being paid benefit for doing nothing and being paid an allowance for good quality training. I have no doubt that most unemployed people know which is in their best interests.

**Mr. Hugh Brown** (Glasgow, Provan): Which industries in Glasgow and the west of Scotland are suffering from skills shortages?

**Mr. Clarke:** I agree that skill shortages are most acute in parts of the south and the midlands. The shortage tends to be limited to certain industries further north. In areas that have suffered rapid change, particular skill shortages are found. There is no general skills shortage in west central Scotland, but one can find employers in all parts of England—I have not been to that part of Scotland for about 12 months—who cannot find people with certain skills.

Employment is increasing throughout the country and unemployment is falling. The skill shortages that are obvious already in the south-east will become more apparent elsewhere. In the 1990s we shall obviously require a more skilled labour force than we had in the 1950s and 1960s. It is a positive policy to raise the level of skill of those who have been out of work for six months or more so that they are more able to take the jobs that are emerging. In doing so, we shall provide a much more skilled work force for future generations.

**Mr. Michael Hirst** (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): May I urge my right hon. and learned Friend to disregard the Opposition's pathetic reaction? They seem always to denigrate every effort that is made to improve skills and job prospects. May I welcome the further expansion of the enterprise allowance scheme? Does he agree that this will give young people especially the opportunity to acquire skills and to go into business on their own account?

**Mr. Clarke:** I realise that we have many schemes and that their numbers become bewildering. Through our Action for Jobs campaign we try to present the differences between them. Of all the schemes, I commend the enterprise allowance scheme most firmly to overseas visitors and to others. It is the most successful scheme and it has enabled many to set up in business on their own account. The majority of them survive and go on to provide jobs for others. For every 100 people we subsidise who go into self-employment, about two or three years later there are 190 jobs in the economy that are not being sustained by public funds. That is why we are expanding so rapidly. The scheme supports the welcome growth in self-employment in our community.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** (Dundee, West): I represent a part of one of the areas that has been involved in one of the pilot projects for the scheme. Having listened to the Minister and having had experience of the pilot project in Dundee, it seems that there are two different worlds. It is clear that the Minister does not live in the world of which Dundee is a part.

Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that our experience in Dundee is that the scheme was introduced far too rapidly to allow the necessary liaison that was required between trainers, the unions and the possible employers? The only real employment that we in Dundee see in the immediate future lies in the numbers of those who are looking for places whom the skillcentres will have to take on. The Minister has talked about an expansion of 110,000 places, but I suggest that when he returns to this issue in two or three months, he will confirm that only those who were looking for places were taken on. Experience in Dundee shows that he has succeeded only in dramatically reducing—from 12 to one—job choice or the menu that could be offered to unemployed 18 to 25-year-olds. He has ensured that it is no longer possible to offer the community

*[Mr. Ernie Ross]*

programme or the restart scheme to these people. Dundee's experience is that the Minister's offer is not a very good one and is not a real improvement.

**Mr. Clarke:** Over 1,000 people are engaged in the pilot projects for the job training scheme and they appear happy with the training that they are receiving. About one in six drop out, some for the good reason that they have obtained a job elsewhere or have been taken on by the employer who began to give them on-the-job training. Our experience in Dundee and elsewhere does not match the hon. Gentleman's description. We shall have to ensure as we go along that we achieve quality and maintain it. I accept that some wrinkles may have to be removed.

The hon. Gentleman has said that there was not time for liaison between the unions, the trainers and the employers. The House will recall that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East contended that we were proceeding at a terrible rush. It should be understood that the unemployed are facing a serious problem and that, if someone has been out of work for six months or more, he will consider unemployment to be 100 per cent. It is obvious why the Opposition wish to delay making progress. They seem suddenly to have lost their sense of urgency in tackling the unemployment and training problems.

**Mr. Geoff Lawler** (Bradford, North): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that all the evidence is that most young people would rather do something useful with their time than spend it idly? This means that the extension of the JTS will be welcomed. Does he agree that the description of the YTS as a dead duck by the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) shows how out of touch he is with the views of trainees and of young people generally? There are skill shortages in Bradford, for example, where there is above average unemployment. There is a shortage of joiners, skilled sewing machinists and Asian chefs. Will my right hon. and learned Friend seek to ensure that JTS placements are sensitive to the needs of the local economy?

**Mr. Clarke:** I agree with the first part of my hon. Friend's question. I declined to enter to into a discussion with the hon. Member for Glasgow, Provan (Mr. Brown) about his constituency in the west of Scotland, and I am grateful to my hon. Friend for using his knowledge of Bradford to explain what the problems are there. It is an essential feature of the JTS that the employer provides on-the-job training. This helps to ensure that training is provided in areas where employers feel that there will be scope for employment. It is training that is aimed at the jobs market in the locality. I agree with my hon. Friend that that is a vital feature of the scheme.

**Mr. Allen McKay** (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Will the Minister assure us that none of the schemes will be used as a source of cheap labour? If they were used in that way, they would be killed stone dead. I admit that some of those who are participating in the schemes are happy with what they are doing, but I am concerned about the training element. I trained for seven years, during which time I was seconded to various places. I was given day release and I participated in sandwich courses in training for a skill. For what skills will people be trained in the Barnsley area, when there is currently 22 per cent. unemployment and a decline in traditional industries? What has the Minister in mind for the area?

**Mr. Clarke:** I have already said that the allowance will be set at a level that will not cause a loss of income for any of those who take part in the scheme. It will include travelling expenses for example. The quality of training will depend on the particular skill, how long it will take to acquire it and how the training is organised. We shall begin by designing a training programme for an individual. Depending on the skill involved, some individuals will achieve proficiency in six months. Others will be taken in the direction of a good qualification in six months.

We shall be considering with the RSA, BTEC and all the other validating agencies how we can ensure that the scheme produces a level of skill or is a worthwhile step towards a qualification that can be attained with work experience afterwards. The seven years that the hon. Gentleman spent training for his trade is not the norm in obtaining trade skills. There are many skills in the economy that can be learned in the way that I have described.

**Mr. Paul Marland** (Gloucestershire, West): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that there are two aspects of this afternoon's proceedings that should be much more widely known outside the House? First, before his important statement, there was only the meagrest handful of Labour Members in their places. Secondly, Labour Members have shown breathtaking contempt for well tried and tested training schemes.

**Mr. Clarke:** I agree with my hon. Friend, but the few Labour Members present include some of the noisiest. I have no doubt that they are able to make up for the absence of their colleagues.

**Mr. Martin Flannery** (Sheffield, Hillsborough): This a serious subject — *[Interruption.]* — despite the laughter that is coming from the Government Benches. I want to ask the Minister, if Conservative Members will be quiet and listen to what I consider to be a reasonable question, whether he and some of his colleagues who are making all the noise will visit the great industrial cities of the morth to see the extent of the brutalising and terrible unemployment that the Government have created, and try to understand the pervasive cynicism that dominates young persons who are out of work towards the umpteen schemes that have been introduced to take them off the unemployed list so that they can be treated as working people? Does the Minister realise that we understand that this is obviously another method of massaging the unemployment figures, no matter what he says, that everyone knows this except those who are blind and those who will not accept it, and that there is no hope of getting young people back to work by this means.

**Mr. Clarke:** I was in one of the great cities of the north yesterday.

**Mr. Flannery:** Come to Sheffield.

**Mr. Clarke:** After leaving Batley and Spen, I went to Leeds, not Sheffield. I announced support for a new venture capital fund for inner-city businesses, I provided money to enable some training and work experience to start, based on the Jamaica Society headquarters, and I financed a training scheme for youngsters who get into trouble. I realise the scale of the problems and so do my right hon. and hon. Friends, many of whom, like Labour Members, represent our great northern cities.

I agree with the hon. Member for Sheffield, Hillborough (Mr. Flannery) that one of the problems is cynicism. There is an element of opinion that takes the view;"Oh! It is all a waste of time," They say that it is all PR, all a con trick and that nothing can be done by the schemes. The Labour movement in Sheffield, and some parts of the Labour movement elsewhere is responsible for encouraging that feeling. They tell people to march behind the old banners and listen to the music of the old bands. They come here to barrack the training schemes. Unemployment is falling more quickly in the north than in the south and eventually the cynicism of the Labour movement in those great cities will be exposed.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** (Surrey, South-West): Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that, in recent years, a series of reports from the MSC and NEDO have consistently highlighted the need for further job training to improve our skills base? Does he agree that anyone with a serious interest in the future of our industry and a true concern for the needs of the unemployed can only regard those sniping jeers of the Labour party as showing a callous disregard for the needs of the unemployed and the needs of industry?

**Mr. Clarke:** I agree with my hon. Friend. In addition to our job training schemes, we must press employers and others to step up our training efforts in other ways. We must improve our record in adult training and today's announcement heralds an important new scheme that will give training to those who have been unemployed the longest and need it most.

**Mr. Greville Janner** (Leicester, West): How much new money do the Government intend to pout into this scheme? Surely the answer is that they intend to spend no new money. Is it not right that this scheme, like so many other Government schemes will reduce the number of people on the register of unemployment without creating even one real job or even one real apprenticeship?

If there is no new money and if there is no reduction in true unemployment through the creation of jobs, is this not just one new string on the Government's election fiddle —to be recognised precisely for that by the electorate?

**Mr. Clarke:** The total level of public expenditure will not be raised by today's announcement. New money has been given to the MSC; it has been switched there from other programmes and other departments. It is quite absurd for the hon. and learned Gentleman to argue that, unless one increases public expenditure as a whole, nothing has been done.

I said earlier that the empty hole in the middle of Labour party policy is that it is extremely clear that the party will borrow £6 billion to finance its employment measures but it cannot explain what those measures will be. The only measure of which we are aware is the Southwark scheme. Perhaps the Labour party intends to build upon that scheme, which provides that three quarters of all jobs to be created in Southwark will be local council jobs provided by an already over-manned local authority.

These Government schemes do not contain a job, but they steer the unemployed towards the growth in real jobs that is taking place. There are now over 1 million more jobs in the economy than there were in 1983 and we are witnessing a steady and continuing increase in the number of jobs in the economy. The people we are dealing with today—those out of work for more than six months—are especially disadvantaged when it come to getting those new jobs, and that is where today's schemes fit in.

**Mr. Spencer Batiste** (Elmet): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that the important announcement he has made today will be widely welcomed in the industrial cities of the north where this scheme and its predecessors have substantially contributed to the record job creation of the Government since 1983? Does he accept that the Labour party's clearly hysterical and negative opposition to his proposals is clear evidence that the only genuine commitment of the party opposite is a commitment to failure and hoplessness?

**Mr. Clarke:** My hon. Friend may have noticed that Opposition Members are getting quieter, no doubt as they reflect upon the import of this statement. No doubt Opposition Members will also reflect upon what measures they will put forward to deal with the problems. Unless they come up with something soon they may, eventually, be grudgingly driven to agree that they do approve of restart, YTS, JTS and the enterprise allowance scheme that we are expanding today.

**Mr. Jim Craigen** (Glasgow, Maryhill): The right hon. and learned Gentleman seemed surprised—his words—that skill shortages were emerging. Why, after seven years, have the Government's training policies got it wrong? How many of the unfilled vacancies will be filled as a result of the training policies he has announced today?

**Mr. Clarke:** I am not surprised by the emergence of skill shortages, as I am afraid that the history of the British economy is that, whenever we enter a period of expansion, that expansion is restrained by skill shortages. That is already beginning to happen again, especially in the south. That is why we have been pursuing the adult training strategy in recent years and have increased the number of people supported by adult training programmes, encouraged employers to expand their training efforts and introduced YTS for young people. YTS is the best training scheme of its kind introduced by any advanced industrial country for young people previously unemployed.

The scheme announced today is the latest addition to those programmes. I think that, with the change of climate in British industry, we now realise that to expand the economy we must provide the skills that are needed by industry. This scheme is a positive response to the needs of industry and the needs of the unemployed. How many vacancies will be filled depends on the success of the MSC in expanding the scheme as we wish and maintaining the quality required to produce people that industry need to fill the jobs that are becoming available.

**Mr. Tom Sackville** (Bolton, West): Does not my right hon. and learned Friend agree that if Labour Members persist in attacking every new measure designed to make jobs through training places and to address the problems of skill shortages, they will give a clear impression to people outside that the last thing that the Labour party want is a reduction in unemployment.

**Mr. Clarke:** I always think they have got round to supporting YTS, which the TUC has certainly supported for a long time, until intemperate remarks are occasionally

*[Mr. Clarke]*

made by Labour Members. I thought that the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East began to say that he approved of all this counselling and advice, which is rather different from the response that he gave, two months ago, to the restart programme——

**Mr. Prescott:** It is the motive.

**Mr. Clarke:** Oh, it is the motive—he fears that we are doing the right thing for the wrong reason. I think that steadily, Labour Members will come round to understanding that no responsible Opposition party can go to an election or look beyond it by solely promising to dismantle all the employment and training schemes which it has been bitterly opposing for the past three years.

**Mr. Allan Roberts** (Bootle): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that I am inundated with the parents of young people who are on those schemes, and indeed by those young people themselves? They come to my advice bureau and write to me every week, to complain about four things — first, the inadequate supervision; secondly, the lack of any kind of real training; thirdly—this is very serious — the exploitation of many of the young people by employers who, for instance, force them to work unacceptable overtime on the threat of being sacked; fourthly — the real thing that they complain about—the fact that, at the end of the scheme, there is no lasting or permanent job in an area like Merseyside for someone who has been through this so-called training. Why do the Government borrow money to pay the equivalent of the nation's weekly food bills—unemployment and social security benefits — and not borrow to build things like council houses which would create real jobs, provide real apprenticeships and create jobs in the private as well as the public sector?

**Mr. Clarke:** Within YTS, which appears to be what the hon. Gentleman is describing, we have now established a system in which training is provided only by approved training organisations. The monitoring quality of the training is satisfactory and those principles will be applied to the new JTS.

I suggest to the hon. Gentleman that it is no good getting up to produce that sort of criticism of YTS—it is somewhat out of date—and apparently suggesting, as an alternative, that there should be no training provided and where it is provided people should be encouraged not to take advantage of it. I do not agree with the idea that, in Liverpool, the only prospect for employment is achieved by giving money to Liverpool city council to build more council houses rather than adding to the skill level of the unemployed. I cannot believe that people in Liverpool agree with that idea.

**Mr. Roberts:** I meant Sefton.

**Mr. Tony Baldry** (Banbury): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that a large proportion of the unemployed are under 25, unskilled and unqualified? Any scheme that gives people the opportunity to gain skills on employers' premises and gain real vocational qualifications must be worthy and welcome to anyone who wants to see the unemployment level come down and the number of skilled people in Britain rise?

**Mr. Clarke:** It is also worth bearing in mind that a minority of the people under 25 do have some skill. About a quarter have an A-level or the equivalent, but what they need is for that skill to be topped up in a situation that will make them more attractive to employers. Those people should have a three-month training programme that would readily convert them into employable people in the local community, but, at the moment, for six months they have found themselves unemployable. That is why we have an individual training arrangement from three months to 12 months, fitted to the individual person, to try to give him or her a skill that will be useful in the labour market.

**Mr. Michael Grylls** (Surrey, North-West): Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that there will be a warm welcome for the expansion in the enterprise allowance scheme, which has been uniquely effective in encouraging people, often those who have lost jobs in the large-scale older industries, to set up their own businesses? The hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), in a rather snide remark, said that these are not real jobs. If he said that to those 300,000 people who have set up these new businesses, he would get a pretty dusty answer. Will my right hon. and learned Friend keep under review, under the scheme, the adequacy of the training to prepare people to set up their own firms? That, over the long term, could improve the success rate of those new businesses?

**Mr. Clarke:** My hon. Friend has considerable expertise in small businesses, and in particular I endorse his last point, that it is important to keep up the level of support. It is no good giving an unemployed person £40 per week and letting them run their business on their own. We have taken steps to make sure that not only the initial counselling sessions, but steady advice, are available, as that greatly improves the success rate. I agree with my hon. Friend about the reaction of Labour Members. They make wild remarks, in trying to denigrate the figures, about so-called "skivvy schemes" and the figures of those whom they say are unemployed, but ignore the 110,000 people who will run their own businesses, who, according to the Opposition, should be included among the unemployed. It rather makes clear what their intention is towards both reality and the presentation of it over the next few months.

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): Is not the miserable reaction of Labour Members to my right hon. and learned Friend's excellent statement yet more evidence that what is good news for the unemployed is thoroughly bad news for the Labour party? Will my right hon. and learned Friend take this opportunity to nail yet again the lie that is being spread by the Labour party, that the YTS and the job training scheme do not lead to permanent jobs?

**Mr. Clarke:** Over 60 per cent. of those who participate in YTS go on into employment. That is the average—some schemes are less successful, and some are very much more successful, and it is possible to get a good scheme with up to 100 per cent. placement from those taking part. I agree with my hon. and learned Friend that that point needs to be made, not just to win the political argument but because we do not want young people and their parents to be deterred from taking part in good schemes by political propaganda. My hon. and learned Friend will have observed that, in the political battle, we seem to have driven our opponents from the field.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): Now that every 16 to 18-year-old will have the opportunity of education, training or employment, is it not mind-boggling to everybody, except for the menagerie of ostriches on the Benches opposite, that they should still have an option of state-supported idleness? Will my right hon. and learned Friend think further that 16 to 18-year-olds who are not looking for employment do really need a kick up the backside?

**Mr. Clarke:** We are not proposing to change the rules of entitlement to benefit, nor that the refusal to take part in the scheme should, in itself, disqualify anyone from benefit. The fact remains that Parliament has always said that people, to get benefit, must demonstrate that they are unemployed, seeking work and taking active steps to obtain it. We must insist on that, despite the fact that yet again, we are always criticised by the Labour party when we try to make that rule more effective.

**Mr. Sheerman:** The Paymaster General and the House know that the Labour party supports the creation of real jobs and proper skills training. However, the background of today's statement is seven years of the collapse of proper skills training, and the fast creation of schemes that have more to do with getting people off the register than with providing proper training. The register effect has been the main thrust of the Government schemes over the past few years. We know for certain that in west Yorkshire, we call those schemes shoddy, as they do not provide jobs and training. *[Interruption.]* The hysterical over-reaction from the marginal seats represented on Conservative Benches persuades me that the Paymaster General should answer the following questions.

He has rather evaded the first question. Have all the guarantees for which the MSC sub-group asked been met? Everything that I have heard this afternoon shows that they have not been met. There are no genuine extra resources. There is no effective monitoring, the quality will not be assured, and people will be worse off on this scheme. In the pilot areas, one of which is in my constituency, if one goes on a job training scheme, one cannot go on a community programme and get a proper rate for the job. Is that to be the case in the expanded scheme?

Secondly, why has the scheme been piloted for only nine weeks before the decision was made? Is the right hon. and learned Genteman aware that, in every pilot area that we have contacted in the past week, the people running it have said that there is chaos? There is withdrawal of labour and a resignation of supervisors because people are so discontented with the programmes.

Thirdly, will the right hon. and learned Gentleman answer this question, because it is most important? Is it not the case that, in the pilot areas, this has led to an undermining of the youth training programme and of the community programme, and that agents are fighting for placements?

Fourthly, is three weeks' training in six months' experience what the Government stand for? The motto of the Government is, "Good figures, shame about the jobs, tragedy about the training."

**Mr. Clarke:** In that series of questions, I was searching to find whether the hon. Gentleman agrees with the MSC letter to us and with the recommendations of the sub-group, because that was not clear, Obviously, the hon. Gentleman cannot answer that question today. The implication was that he does. He said that we had not complied with them. I am not surprised if that is his position, because that group includes some powerful figures in the trade union movement, acting on behalf of the TUC. The MSC is an independent commission, better placed than I am to comment on the impact on its other programmes, such as community programmes, about which the hon. Gentleman makes the wildest allegations about the impact in the pilot areas. I remind him of the sub-group's report, which was endorsed by the MSC, which begins by saying:

"the commission should now make arrangements for measured and deliberate extension of new JTS to all MSC Areas."

The MSC does not take the hon. Gentleman's view that we should not go ahead. It recommends that we should expand now and says that measured expansion, meeting certain requirements, particularly of quality, is needed.

My noble Friend has written back to the MSC agreeing with its letter and its recommendations, and setting a target that we believe to be realistic and compatible with its wishes and ours. That is the best test of how this statement will be judged in the light of day. That is a measure of the importance that those seriously interested in the subject attach to this. We shall achieve a good quality scheme from the base on which we are insisting.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sorry that I have not been able to call all hon. Members who are rising. I think that they were called during Question Time today.

**Mr. John Butterfill** (Bournemouth, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman was called on Trade and Industry Questions.

**Mr. Butterfill:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I accept what you say, but is it correct to curtail what is obviously a matter of great interest simply because the Labour Benches are so denuded and——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. That is very unfair, because the hon. Gentleman will know that hon. Members on his side had greater opportunities this afternoon.

## Girobank

4.38 pm

**Mr. Allan Roberts** (Bootle): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and urgent matter, namely,

> "Proposals of Girobank management in a secret document to build a new headquarters in the south-east of England as an alternative to the Bootle centre, causing major job losses in Bootle on Merseyside, an area with 30 per cent. unemployment."

The item is specific because the secret report exists and was prepared on the advice of the Government and the Governor of the Bank of England. It is an urgent matter because if the second headquarters for Girobank is built in the south-east of England there would be major job losses in Bootle on Merseyside, which already has massive unemployment. A total of 7,000 people are currently employed at the Girobank headquarters in my constituency and many of those jobs would disappear to the more prosperous south-east.

It is urgent because the report should be published and fully discussed, especially with the Girobank work force and unions and with the community on Merseyside and everybody else connected with the issue. It is urgent because without a debate in the House the report could be acted upon and a site agreed in secret. That would strengthen the major divisions that exist already between the north and the south.

It is important and urgent to have a debate so that the Government can come clean. We need to know whether it is a plan to prepare the way for the privatisation of Girobank if the impossible happens and the Tories win the next general election. The proposals are an attempt to stigmatise as militant the work force at Girobank, which has not had a major industrial dispute or strike since it was established in my constituency in the mid-1960s by my right hon. Friend the Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn). It is also urgent and important that it should be discussed because Girobank is growing. It is a huge success for the country, for Merseyside and for Merseyside's image. It is important that that is not destroyed and that there are not major job losses in this hard-hit area.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

> "The proposed establishment of another Girobank centre in the south-east of England, the consequence of which could lead to the loss of up to 7,000 jobs in Bootle, an areas with 30 per cent. unemployment."

I have listened with great care to what the hon. Gentleman has said but I regret that I do not consider the matter that he has raised as appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20. I hope that there will be other opportunities for him. I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

## BILL PRESENTED

### PROTECTION OF SHAREHOLDERS

Mr. William Cash, supported by Mr. Graham Bright, Mr. Colin Moynihan, Sir Alex Fletcher, Mr. Richard Ottaway, Mr. Michael Grylls and Mr. Spencer Batiste, presented a Bill to make provision for each public company to establish a shareholders' committee, for the allocation of a director in each public company to such a committee; and to prescribe the functions of the auditor, company secretary and solicitor of each such company in relation to that committee: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 20 February and to be printed. [Bill 58.]

### WELSH AFFAIRS

*Ordered,*

That the matter of the Public Expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56-II) as it relates to Wales, being a matter relating exclusively to Wales, be referred to the Welsh Grand Committee for its consideration.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

## Leasehold Reform

4.43 pm

**Mr. Terry Lewis** (Worsley): I beg to move,

> That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Leasehold Reform Acts 1967 and 1979 to prevent the establishment of further leasehold agreements; to establish new formulae for calculating the sale value of an existing lease to an occupier of long lease residential property; to remove from leaseholders the obligation to seek permission of the ground landlord when carrying out improvements to the property; and to establish the right of long leaseholders to obtain insurance and other services from sources of their own choice.

This is the second occasion in just over a year that an amendment to the 1967 and 1979 Acts has been attempted under the Standing Order No. 19 procedure. For similar reasons to my own, my hon. Friend the Member for Gower (Mr. Wardell) made a considerable plea for reform of the Acts a little over a year ago. Like my hon. Friend, I recognise that significant improvements to an archaic law were effected in 1967 and 1979, but, as in most things, the unscrupulous and greedy always find new ways to exploit the ordinary citizen. It is that new exploitation of home owners in my constituency and in the constituencies of other hon. Members from all parts of the north-west and in Wales that moves me to try again to curb the exploiters and to return to home owners the benefits and security which they thought house purchase had given them. Equally, I want to give home owners the freedom to which they are entitled, and to protect them from exploitation which seeks to deny them that freedom.

I return to the subject of leasehold reform again today because of the activities of several estate management companies operating mainly in the north-west. I have named two of these companies in the House recently and condemned their dubious practices in so far as they concern home owners who are leaseholders in my constituency. Since then the existence of a number of similar companies has been brought to my attention. The unacceptable practices to which I refer, therefore, are clearly taking place over a wide area.

Against that background, the starting point for any debate on this issue has to be the very existence of long leaseholds. It is ludicrous in 1987 for leaseholds originally of 999 years to be allowed to continue. It is even more ludicrous for the law to allow new ones to be created. I hope that this debate will move opinion in the House to a position where such leaseholds will no longer be seen to be acceptable.

Until that position is reached, however, many house owners are currently being subjected to varying degrees of harassment which will be deplored on both sides of the House. It is on these current matters that I wish to address the House today.

The leasehold system, as we all know, militates against the interests of the person whose equity in the land is the greatest. The ground landlord, whose financial interest is minimal, is in the strongest position in law. Unfortunately, there now appears to be a widespread growing abuse of this power. I shall explain to the House what is happening all over the north-west, affecting many thousands of home owners.

Estate management companies, many of them interrelated to each other, are buying up the leasehold interest in homes of unsuspecting owners. The first the home owner knows of that is when he or she receives a letter and a questionnaire concerning the property. The letter is usually threatening in tone, and I have a great deal of evidence to show that these letters have caused considerable worry to the elderly, and, in some cases, much younger owner-occupiers. There is even a covert threat in some of the letters suggesting that failure to purchase the lease could render the home owner homeless.

The answers to the questionnaire inevitably lead to estate management companies demanding that the property be insured with an insurance company of their choice. That is denial of the freedom of the individual if ever there was one, and it is clearly encouraged by the archaic clauses enshrined in most of the long leases to which I refer.

The next, and potentially the most costly, demand on home owners is that improvements to the property carried out by them should be carried out only after having obtained the permission of the estate management company—at a price, I might add.

Because many home owners have made alterations to their property, the new companies holding the leasehold are demanding exorbitant sums of money for bestowing retrospective permission. To illustrate this, I should like to refer to correspondence that I have received from a person who has been caught up in the consequence of a change of ownership of his lease.

In February 1985, the person to whom I refer received a letter from the ground landlord that ownership of the lease had been transferred, by sale, to a third party—an estate management company. In April 1986 the new company wrote to the home owner enclosing the now familiar questionnaire and asking for a payment of £400 for the sale of the leasehold, plus £185 legal costs, plus of course VAT. That was on an annual ground rent of £20. In the correspondence the new ground landlords said that they were prepared to consider retrospective consent for alterations done in the past without the permission of the previous ground landlords. They then went on to say that failure to notify any alterations could result in their refusing consent, which would, they threatened, make the property unsaleable.

On 31 May 1986 the house owner wrote to say that an extension had been built in 1984 without application to the then ground landlord. On 6 June 1986 he received a letter demanding £150 to cover the company's fees for considering the question of retrospective permission being given. I am not surprised that the company also said that it was not prepared to enter into any correspondence or discussion concerning the matter. This practice might be just inside the law as it now stands, but I contend that it is a form of highway robbery. At least Dick Turpin had the decency to wear a mask.

The home owner to whom I have referred is awaiting a reply to a letter that he wrote protesting at the amount of money being demanded. He is also being harassed into insuring his own home with a company of the new ground landlord's choice. It is estimated that this will cost him an extra 17 per cent. a year on his premium.

The matters that I have raised today clearly show that many home owners are being denied the full rights of home ownership. They are being denied the right to make improvements to their property on their own terms. They are being denied the choice of insurers and are being harassed into buying the leaseholds by threats of dire consequences. In all this they, the home owners, are not supported and sustained by existing legislation.

*[Mr. Terry Lewis]*

I contend that it is now time to make changes. The House must legislate in favour of the home-owning individual if the property-owning democracy is to have any real meaning. My Bill will redress the balance between home owner and ground landlord. It will establish a reasonable figure for the sale of the lease and limit the costs involved. It will, where the home owner wishes to remain a leaseholder, free him or her from the need to apply for permission to alter, extend or otherwise improve the property. It will give the home owner freedom to choose the insurer of his or her choice.

My Bill will also give security to those who are currently being harassed, sometimes within the laws, which give them too little protection. Parliament should change that. My Bill will help.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Terry Lewis, Mr. Gareth Wardell, Mr. Ron Davies, Mr. Robert Litherland, Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones, Mr. Tony Lloyd, Mr. Ken Eastham, Mr. Peter Pike, Mrs. Ann Clwyd, Mr. David Young and Mr. Lawrence Cunliffe.

### LEASEHOLD REFORM

Mr. Terry Lewis accordingly presented a Bill to amend the Leasehold Reform Acts 1967 and 1979 to prevent the establishment of further leasehold agreements; to establish new formulae for calculating the sale value of an existing lease to an occupier of long lease residential property; to remove from leaseholders the obligation to seek permission of the ground landlord when carrying out improvements to the property; and to establish the right of long leaseholders to obtain insurance and other services from sources of their own choice: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 3 April and to be printed. [Bill 57.]

# Opposition Day

[6th ALLOTTED DAY]

## The City and Industry

**Mr. Speaker:** I inform the House that I have selected the amendment in the name of the Prime Minister.

4.52 pm

**Mr. John Smith** (Monklands, East): I beg to move,

> That this House, noting the continuing failure of the City to serve the industrial needs of the nation and concerned by the increasing evidence that the City is unable to regulate itself, urges the establishment of a statutory independent commission to supervise financial services, including Lloyd's; deplores the damage to British industry arising from the Government's complacent policy towards takeovers which, by encouraging predators, inhibits investment in capital equipment, research and development, and training; condemns the short-term perspective of the financial market which results in the denial of finance for long-term investment in British manufacturing industry; and calls upon the Government to abandon its irresponsible policies and to recognise that the provision of capital investment in manufacturing industry is essential to economic recovery.

In this debate today we focus on three interlinked and serious matters of public concern — the failure to regulate the City, the takeover mania, which provides such fertile ground for current scandals, and, the victim of both, British industry. In a challenging editorial on 15 January the *Financial Times* observed:

> "The central issue raised by the Guinness affair concerns the conduct and ethics of the City of London—it already seems clear that this is the most serious challenge the present system of self-regulation on the conduct of takeover bids has had to face. With each revelation the chances of business being allowed to continue as before grow ever more slim."

The article continues:

> "Self-regulation can only work if the people being supervised have a sense of obligation towards the system which is greater than their desire to win their own way in any particular case."

It thus neatly demonstrated some crucial points about the present situation from a standpoint which even the present Government could not criticise as being politically biased against them.

First, there is a very serious situation and concern should properly be expressed about it. Whatever the Governor of the Bank of England may seek to say in defensive semi-exculpation, it does concern the City of London. Secondly, it challenges the system of self-regulation which still is at the heart of Government policy. I need only quote the Prime Minister at Prime Minister's Question Time a few days ago when she said:

> "we should go further with the present system before we conclude that we should go to a statutory one."—[*Official Report*, 15 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 406.]

I have noticed how apologists of the Government's policies have laid more stress on some statutory aspects of the Government's approach and less on self-regulation as the scandals have deepened. But, as the Prime Minister reminded us, it is still essentially a self-regulatory system and in the case of the takeover code and panel it is wholly self-regulatory.

Thirdly, the whole basis of a self-regulatory approach is that the obligation to observe and enforce the rules overcomes the instinct for gain. No reasonable observer of the Guinness scandal could have confidence that such objectivity had been demonstrated.

We therefore argue with force and conviction that the Government should move to establish an independent statutory commission without delay. From the start the Labour party has argued that the enforcement mechanisms of the Financial Services Act were inadequate and we sought in the proceedings on the Bill to give statutory force to the takeover supervision mechanism, at present left on a self-regulatory basis.

Let us examine some of the salient issues thrown up by the Guinness affair. The most startling thought is that, but for revelations flowing from Mr. Boesky's plea bargain with the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States, Mr. Saunders might still be riding high and one of the most audacious coups in our financial history might have been accomplished with ease and without penalty. Fortunately, as one revelation tumbled out after another, it is now clear that in the Guinness bid for Distillers a careful plot was laid and executed to gain control of Distillers by fair means or foul—clearly more emphasis on foul — and that the system existing to protect the public failed miserably.

It all started of course with the former Distillers directors who approached Mr. Saunders as a white knight —to put it mildly, an error of judgment. Not only that, they agreed to pay him the expenses of the Guinness takeover bid. The former directors of Distillers clearly did not rise to their responsibilities. Equally, the directors of Guinness—those in place at the time at any rate—failed in their responsibilities by abdicating control of their company to the ruthless Mr. Saunders. In the bid Mr. Saunders gave undertakings about a new company to be chaired by Sir Thomas Risk and undertook to locate the headquarters in Scotland. The former undertaking was incorporated in the bid under the Stock Exchange listing regulations. I raised this matter at the time with the chairman of the Stock Exchange Council who told me that the council would be satisfied with the proposal by Mr. Saunders, and his variation from his undertakings could be sanctioned by a general meeting of the company.

In my submission the Stock Exchange Council failed to exercise its responsibilities by permitting the departure by Mr. Saunders from his undertakings and allowing there to be a shareholders' meeting at which, because of his voting power — and when some of the 2·1 million missing shares were used — Mr. Saunders won with ease. The Stock Exchange Council was a pushover for Mr. Saunders.

Then the takeover panel, the apogee of self-regulation, failed to act effectively when complaints were made to it by Argyll about manipulation of the Guinness share price. That was another pushover for Mr. Saunders. At this time the Department of Trade and Industry thought it sufficient for these matters to be handled by these self-regulating organisations. Because there were no real restraints on Mr. Saunders, he and his confederates — well placed in the prestigious City institutions — were able to operate freely. An interesting insight into the prevailing attitudes is given in Mr. Gerald Ronson's letter to Sir Norman Macfarlane when he returned £5,800,000 to Guinness.

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): Marked "swag".

**Mr. Smith:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his apposite intervention. I quote from the *Financial Times* of 12 January which gives Mr. Ronson's letter in full. Mr. Ronson tells us:

> "Shortly before January 23, 1986, a representative of eminent brokers acting for Guinness called on me to seek Heron's support for the Guinness bid for Distillers. It was explained to me that the general opinion (which I must say I shared) was that it was in Distillers' as well as Guinness's best interests that the Guinness bid should succeed. I was told that the price of the Guinness shares was likely to be distorted because the rival bidders, Argyll and/or its supporters, were believed to be selling Guinness shares short and thereby depressing the market price. I understood that with the approval of the Guinness senior management (and Ernest Saunders in particular — whose skill and integrity were always regarded as of the highest) efforts were being made to support the Guinness share price by persuading Guinness's friends to buy in the market.
>
> In all this I naturally assumed that the Guinness senior management had had the benefit of the high quality professional advice available to it. It was, in effect, as I understood it, designed as a legitimate corrective to the tactics of the other side. I was told that in the event that Heron suffered any loss it would be covered by Guinness. This did not seem to me at the time to be in any sense unusual or sinister, particularly as it was public knowledge that Distillers itself had agreed to cover the expenses of Guinness in rescuing it from Argyll's bid. So it was agreed that Heron would give support to the extent of £10 million."

Mr. Ronson goes on to say that that support was increased to £25 million. He continues:

> "It was by then also agreed that in the event of the Guinness bid being successful we would receive a success fee of £5 million. These arrangements were expressly confirmed to me by Mr. Saunders. In due course our invoices were rendered in the total funds mentioned above, and these were, as you will know, paid.
>
> I have been and wish to be completely frank. I did not focus on the legal implications of what had occurred, nor did it cross my mind the City advisers and business people of such eminence would be asking us to join in doing something improper."

We know better now. The eminent stockbroker referred to at the start of that quotation is said, in the *Financial Times* of today, to have been Mr. Tony Parnes who is an associate of Alexanders Laing and Cruickshank. Interestingly, the *Financial Times* also tells us that he was nicknamed "the animal". He also acted as personal stockbroker to various persons, including Mr. Gerald Ronson himself.

The interesting phrase

> "I did not focus on the legal implications of what had occurred"

will not have escaped notice. Many people are behind bars for failing to focus on the legal implications of their actions. Inventive though I thought I was as counsel at the bar, that never occurred to me as a useful phrase in a plea in litigation. No doubt it will pass into the lexicon of memorable phrases, together with being "economical with the truth".

At least Mr. Ronson has confessed. But did not many others, apparently eminent or otherwise, also fail to focus on the legalities of their activities? The Guinness affair has shot like a searchlight through the present system of self-regulation and shown it to be hopelessly inadequate.

**Mr. Alan Howarth** (Stratford-on-Avon): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has spent a considerable time describing to the House circumstances of alleged malpractice in the City—[HON. MEMBERS: "Alleged?"]— and those are, indeed, very important points. By contrast, he moved hastily on in an earlier section of his speech in

*[Mr. Alan Howarth]*

which he called for the establishment of a statutory independent commission. Will he be good enough to tell the House, if not now, perhaps in a few minutes, exactly what the system that he envisages would be, and precisely how and why it would work more effectively to regulate the City than the system that is currently being introduced?

**Mr. Smith:** If this is what the hon. Gentleman is genuinely inquiring about, he will have seen the amendments to the Financial Services Bill that were voted down by members of the Conservative party. We argued consistently throughout the lengthy proceedings on that Bill.

Since then the Guinness affair has shown how inadequate the present arrangements are. The Government's response has been to talk tough, but they have come up with one new firm proposal. The maximum sentence for insider dealing is to be increased from two to seven years. It may be that that is wise, although I should be surprised if such a sentence were ever imposed. However, it is almost totally irrelevant to our concerns. The notion that conspirators will pause in the ante-room of crime because of the possibility that they might get five years instead of two is simply not credible. For the most part, they believe that they will be undetected. They have good cause to believe that they will be undetected. On past showing, that belief is justified. What we need is not the window dressing of irrelevant sentences but an effective system of statutory regulation and detection of abuse.

In the past few days there has been rustling in the undergrowth about changes in the takeover panel and the code. Perhaps as one of his offerings today the Secretary of State will make tentative noises. I remind the House that the Labour party sought to give statutory force to the code in an amendment to the Financial Services Bill, which the Government voted down. In that context, may I ask the Secretary of State why, in 1984, rule 37 was dropped from the code? That rule prohibited anyone.

> "with a commercial interest in the outcome"

from buying and selling shares during a bid unless approval was obtained from the panel. Such a rule seems highly apposite to the activities of Mr. Meshulam Riklis, the distributor of Dewar's whisky in the United States, about whose activities Argyll complained to the takeover panel. Needless to say, the complaint was rejected. Why was such a rule abandoned?

**Mr. Anthony Beaumont-Dark** (Birmingham, Selly Oak): I think that most of us agree with the right hon. and learned Gentleman that some of the things that have gone on in the City are not just unacceptable but disgraceful to any right-thinking person. However, the right hon. and learned Gentleman, in looking at the Securities and Exchange Commission, assumes that those things could not happen if we had one. Mr. Boesky was unmasked after four years and Mr. Levene after two years. Why would any statutory system be any different when the crooks in our City were unmasked after a very few months?

**Mr. Smith:** As the hon. Gentleman knows, that was after information was received. I would not advocate something precisely the same as the SEC simply because we do not have the conflict between federal and state laws to handle which there is in the United States. Opinion has been moving strongly, especially in the more sensible parts of the City, in the direction of an independent statutory system in the United Kingdom. I do not believe that the takeover panel and code can rest any longer on a non-statutory base. That was the point that I was addressing.

I should like to ask the Secretary of State about the scope of the Department of Trade and Industry inquiry. Will it cover the activities of the trustees of Distillers' pension fund? It is widely said that, following Guinness establishing control, the pension fund bought Distillers shares at a high price, perhaps as a way of indemnifying those who had bolstered the price at the instigation of Guinness. They bought well above the ruling share price and, of course, since then the price has fallen steeply. The losers will be the employees who are the beneficiaries of the fund. I should like the Secretary of State to tell us whether the inquiry covers that and whether the beneficiaries' losses will be made good.

Clearly, there was some sunny optimism on the part of the Government that their proposed new system would deal effectively with the City. That confidence has been waning. Let me remind the House of how that confidence was expressed as long ago as March 1986, some time before these events occurred. I draw attention to an interview that the Prime Minister gave, which is reported in *The Listener* of 20 March 1986. The right hon. Lady was interviewed about high salaries in the City, and the article states:

> "the Prime Minister herself admits: On salaries in the City, I am the first to say this does cause me great concern. I understand the resentment. And if I feel strongly about what they are taking—"

note "taking"—

> "in the City compared to what Cabinet Ministers are taking then look at how the people who are struggling to get work feel. But I think it will change later this year when we get this terrific competition and all the fresh air in the City."

It is at least worth asking if confidence in that "terrific competition" has been justified.

I want to consider the position regarding mergers, monopolies and takeovers. The frenetic and highly profitable activity in the City has of course been fuelled by the Government's complacent policy on takeovers. The essence of the Government's approach, as I understand it, is that referrals should only be made on competition grounds and that the shareholders alone should decide the fate of important companies. The Opposition completely reject that approach. However, we observe that, even if the decision were properly left to shareholders alone, it would be difficult for them to reach sensible decisions if markets can be rigged as easily as the Guinness case demonstrates.

The Government seem unwilling or unable to grasp the fact that those affected by takeovers are not simply shareholders. Long-standing and dedicated employees and communities to whose prosperity crucial industrial companies are vital are also affected. They are often affected more directly and more adversely as these companies are suddenly taken over. That is why it is important that wider considerations including the interests of employees and the effect on our industrial economy must be included in any sensible policy on monopolies and mergers, and that is what the Opposition advocate.

The effect of unrestrained takeovers goes to the centre of some of our industrial problems. It is too easy for the acquiring company to take the takeover route as a substitute for an investment, which takes time and involves risk. By maximising short-term cash flow, funds can be found to buy up companies made vulnerable because they have taken the long-term view. Small and medium sized companies in particular which have made long-term capital investment, put money into reasearch and development, invested properly in training, are given a low rating in the stock market. That leaves such companies wide open to the predator. Perhaps worst of all, the need to boost the share price by inflating dividend payments to keep the predator at bay deters small and medium-sized companies from taking the long-term view that the management wishes to adopt.

When takeovers absorb important regional companies, the relentless drift to the centre in Thatcher's Britain is accentuated and business confidence in the regions is totally undermined. None of these vital issues seems to concern the Government. The Government simply leave it to the shareholders and let the devil take the hindmost. Those who gain from takeover mania are the City institutions, while those who work in British industry and the communities which depend upon it frequently suffer.

**Mr. Stephen Dorrell** (Loughborough): The right hon. and learned Gentleman has described at some length what he believes to be the shortcomings of the takeover system as a discipline on incompetent or lazy managers.

**Mr. Smith:** Not at all. The hon. Gentleman has misunderstood me.

**Mr. Dorrell:** The right hon. and learned Gentleman said that he thought that takeovers would encourage short-term perspectives and weaken the possible victim companies. What alternative discipline would he propose to the threat of takeover? What discipline would he propose to encourage managments to make effective use of the assets under their control?

**Mr. Smith:** I find it hard to imagine that the hon. Gentleman, whose attention to these matters I much respect, was able to misunderstand what I was saying. The whole thrust of my argument is that the threat of a takeover does not act as a discipline to make management more efficient; it acts as an incentive to make management more short-sighted because management is frightened of the predator at its elbow. Therefore, it must keep a higher share price than the company would like. It was not the threat of a takeover that made Pilkington one of the best companies in this country; it was the threat of a takeover that might have caused damage to the company. It is simply good fortune that that threat has been relieved.

**Mr. Dorrell:** Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Smith:** No, I have already given way to the hon. Gentleman and I cannot take the risk that he will misunderstand me so comprehensively again.

**Mr. Dorrell** *rose*——

**Mr. Smith:** British manufacturing industry in particular has borne the brunt of the damage caused by the Government's economic policies. Manufacturing investment, despite all the largesse of North sea oil with which this Administration have been blessed, is still 17 per cent. down on the 1979 figure. Manufacturing output, after seven years of Tory Government, is still 4 per cent. down. Our trade deficit in manufactured goods was announced today as almost £6 billion for 1986 and it is predicted to rise to £7·5 billion in 1987. I remind the House that under the previous Labour Government, in 1979 there was a surplus of £2·7 billion on the balance of trade and manufactured goods. For the first time in modern economic history, we are in deficit in the balance of trade in manufactured goods. If for nothing else the Prime Minister will be remembered as the first British Prime Minister to take Britain into a deficit in the balance of trade and manufactured goods.

Without vital capital investment in British industry, that trade deficit will never be corrected. Nor will we create the wealth that we need to create a civilised society and to pay our way in the world. This Government have abandoned responsibility for the employment of our people. They have equally abandoned the responsibility for ensuring that industry receives the capital investment that it requires.

The figures are bad enough at present. They will get even worse as the blip caused by the ending of capital allowances works through. Those are the underlying realities behind the candy floss economy that the Government have promoted. There is a declining and debilitated manufacturing base; a deepening north-south divide which the Government do not even admit exists let alone profess to remedy; wickedly high unemployment; misery and lost opportunity for millions of our fellow citizens, including 1·25 million of our young people.

It is clear that the Government have no policies to get Britain back to work or to rebuild our industry, let alone to bring order and decency back into our financial system. At the heart of the Government's policy is a distorted sense of values. Mr. Ivan Boesky, when he was riding high, gave a lecture to business students in the United States. He told those who might have had some conscientious reservations:

> "Greed is all right by the way. I want you to know that. You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself."

That has, unfortunately, too obviously been taken as the motto by those favoured by the Government, those who have not only claimed but received huge salaries and also received enormous endowments from tax reductions. Their good fortune, as we have seen, has not diminished their avarice by one whit. They seek more and more, to the extent of not only bending but breaking the criminal law. It is time for others to be the beneficiaries of Government —those who work to build our industry, those who care for our people and those whose purpose it is to build a productive and decent society.

5.18 pm

**The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Paul Channon):** I beg to move, to leave out from "House" to the end of the Question and to add instead thereof:

> "deplores the irresponsible attacks on the City by Her Majesty's Opposition which ignore its massive and continuing contribution to meeting the long-term financial needs of British manufacturing industry and business and more generally thoughout the country to the balance of payments, and to employment in the United Kingdom: notes that investment growth has averaged 4·5 per cent. per year during this Parliament; notes with approval the consistency of the Government's mergers policy; and applauds, in particular, its firm action in establishing a regulatory framework for the City and its determination to root out abuses."

I begin by making it clear that we utterly reject the Opposition motion. The House is by now familiar with the Opposition's attempts to paint the blackest possible picture, to run down our industries and to leap upon and exaggerate every item of bad news that they can find. In this debate, we are discussing a sector of the economy that

*[Mr. Paul Channon]*

is not just self-evidently successful but in which Britain leads the world. To most people, that should be a matter of pride. To the Opposition, it is merely something to belittle and to undermine.

Of course I fully accept that there are serious grounds for concern, with which I shall deal later. Some of the recent revelations of what has happened in some well-publicised cases in the City are worrying and damage the City's reputation. That is agreed by hon. Members on both sides of the House. The Government are determined that each case, and others that come to our notice, will be rigorously investigated and offenders will be punished with the full weight of the law. But to portray, as some Opposition Members do, everyone who works in the City as a shark or a charlatan is offensive to hundreds of thousands of honest, hard-working people. It is grossly irresponsible and against the national interest.

No one is keener than those who work in the City to see offenders brought to book. [HON. MEMBERS: "Come on."] The scoffing from Opposition Members helps to make my point. Those who work in the City know the disproportionate harm that a few individuals can do. Unless they are brought to book, they threaten to besmirch the reputation of the City of London on which so much of its business depends.

The Opposition motion talks of the failure of the City to serve the nation. The financial services industry employs more than 1 million people; it accounts for between 5 per cent. and 6 per cent. of our entire national product; and in 1985 its earnings for the balance of payments were more than £7·5 billion. The Opposition try to dismiss that contribution as a failure to serve the nation.

It is not just the size of the financial services industry that makes it such a major asset to the country. The accumulated expertise, the range of financial services available in one place and the ability to react quickly to change and to meet the requirements of a vast range of overseas customers have made the City of London the leading financial centre in Europe. As rapid advances in telecommunications lead to a 24-hour global market in financial services, London, with Tokyo and New York, will form the triangle at the heart of the financial world —*[Interruption.]* I am sorry that hon. Members do not like hearing good news about the City. No doubt it spoils their case.

**Mr. Kevin Barron** (Rother Valley): What are the Government doing about it?

**Mr. Channon:** If the House will give me a hearing, I shall explain exactly what we are doing, what we have done and what we intend to do—*[Interruption.]* For some extraordinary reason, the Opposition do not seem to want to hear this. They asked for the debate, but they do not want to hear the answer.

The City has already made the most of its strengths to develop itself as a world centre in several major sectors. It is already the largest world centre for foreign exchange dealing—£60 billion a day. It is the world centre for Eurobond trading, with £220 billion of new issues a year and five times that volume of trading. It is the largest centre of international bank lending, with more than £500 billion a year.

Nor is the City just a direct contributor to our national wealth. It has a vital role—here I answer the point made by the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith)—in supporting the rest of British industry—*[Laughter.]* The right hon. and learned Gentleman laughs; that is interesting. In 1985, £6 billion of capital was raised for industry on the stock exchange; in 1986, about £7 billion was raised. The venture capital industry, which barely existed when there was a Labour Government, raised about £300 million for British unquoted companies in 1985 alone. The business expansion scheme introduced by this Government raised nearly £150 million in 1984-85. At the latest count, more than £70 billion of loans were outstanding from the banking sector to industry and commerce in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): All to private industry.

**Mr. Channon:** Opposition Members do not like hearing this. Banks are also making available finance to smaller companies in new ways that recognise their special needs. The full range of industrial and commercial risks are insured through London's insurance markets.

No financial services industry in the world can match the scale and range of these services to the rest of industry. Many foreign firms seeking to set up manufacturing facilities abroad have been attracted to Britain because of the range of services offered by the City of London. That is the context in which the debate should be set.

**Mr. Jack Dormand** (Easington): Even if we accepted those figures, how does the Secretary of State account for the fact that, after eight years of Conservative Government, manufacturing investment is still 17 per cent. lower than it was when they took office?

**Mr. Channon:** I shall deal with manufacturing investment, but, as the hon. Gentleman has challenged me on it, he might be interested to know that output is 14 per cent. higher than the 1981 trough—*[Interruption.]* Profits and profitability are up—*[Interruption.]* When there is good news, the Opposition try to shout it down. They do not like to hear it. Unemployment is coming down, growth is going up, output is going up and exports are going up. But the Opposition scoff at that. They do not like good news.

The Opposition's behaviour on this subject has been a catalogue of hypocrisy. It was a Conservative Government who first proposed to make insider dealing illegal—in the Companies Bill of 1973. That Bill lapsed because of the general election of 1974. There then followed five years of Labour Government—five wasted years in which they failed to tackle the problem. It required a Conservative Government to take action to make insider dealing a criminal offence in the Companies Act 1980. Having conveniently forgotten their failures, the Opposition try to make capital out of the few prosecutions that have taken place. Again, they fail to mention that this Government introduced unprecedented powers for the investigators of this crime as soon as it became apparent that convictions were difficult to obtain because of the high level of evidence and proof required. Those powers, which include the right to question witnesses on oath and compel them to answer or face punishment for contempt of court, have been described as draconian, even by the Opposition spokesman in another place.

**Mr. Anthony Nelson** (Chichester): My right hon. Friend is right to draw to the attention of the House the many serious measures that the Government have taken to deal with insider trading, but may I mention one area where strengthening would be welcomed by hon. Members on both sides of the House? The Securities and Investments Board, which is the new watchdog body for the City, is expressly denied the power to investigate or to bring prosecutions in cases of insider dealing. It must seem incredible to the public at large that that body, which ostensibly has those powers, cannot look into such cases or instigate actions. Will my right hon. Friend reconsider the matter?

**Mr. Channon:** Of course, I will consider it. I shall gladly consider anything that my hon. Friend says. He must agree that there has been no lack of effort by the Government during the past few months to bring people to book for insider dealing. Indeed, in America, our powers would be in breach of the constitution. During the passage of the Financial Services Act 1986, we heard not a word from the Labour party suggesting that they were insufficient. Moreover, we brought forward the implementation of the powers so that they took effect within one week of the Act becoming law. Royal Assent was granted on 7 November. On 14 November, I made an order which came into force on 15 November, and on the same day I appointed inspectors to investigate a case. Our powers are proving to be exceedingly effective.

In addition, last week I announced that the Government would table an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill to increase the penalty for insider dealing from two years to seven years' imprisonment, thus making it an arrestable offence. The maximum now is seven years. When the right hon. Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) was Secretary of State, it was nothing. In trying to attack the Government's record on this matter, the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East does not have a leg to stand on.

**Mr. John Smith:** Bearing in mind the fact that the Government inherited a Labour Bill to make insider dealing a criminal offence—I hope that that is accepted —may I ask the Secretary of State whether he takes satisfaction from the fact that, since 1980, there have been nine prosecutions for insider dealing and five convictions while at the same time there have been 138,000 convictions for low-level social security fraud? Does that reflect the Government's priorities?

**Mr. Channon:** No, and the right hon. and learned Gentleman knows it. He tries to attack the Government on insider dealing, but he is well aware that the Conservative party brought in a Bill in 1973, which fell at the Dissolution. Five years later, the Labour party still had not enacted it. Yet only one year after the Conservative Government came to office, insider dealing became a criminal offence. That shows that we put it at the top of the list, while the Labour party put it at the bottom. That illustrates its scale of priorities. It is easy to talk loud, but Labour did not act when it had the chance.

Our determination to stamp out malpractice and abuse has led to a concerted effort, drawing on the resources of the Trea[illegible]y, the Home Office, the Law Officers, the Director o[illegible] Public Prosecutions, the Bank of England, the police and the DTI. I shall not read out all the measures that we have taken in the past few years, but mention only the Companies Acts 1980 and 1981, the Insolvency Act 1986, the Building Societies Act 1986 and the Banking Bill now going through the House.

Last week, I announced the results of Sir Patrick Neill's inquiry into Lloyd's. The Government keenly await Lloyd's response to the report. By the beginning of October last year, the fraud investigation group, which was set up two years ago, had seen 121 cases through to conclusion, resulting in 100 convictions or guilty pleas. The Criminal Justice Bill implements the great majority of recommendations of Lord Roskill's committee on commercial fraud. A serious fraud office will be set up to bring together experts from all the relevant agencies and arm them with powers similar to those available to DTI investigators under the Financial Services Act—powers, incidentally, that the Opposition now seek to weaken through amendments tabled in Committee.

**Mr. Chris Smith** (Islington, South and Finsbury): Clearly, the Secretary of State has not read the proceedings of the Standing Committee on the Criminal Justice Bill. The Opposition have given full support to the aims of the establishment of that office and, indeed, have secured a wide measure of agreement between the two sides represented on that Committee.

**Mr. Channon:** I have a list—I hope that this is in order, Mr. Deputy Speaker—of five amendments tabled by the Opposition that would have the effect of weakening the powers of this proposal. Indeed, one amendment is designed to weaken the offence of knowingly destroying documents. It is quite extraordinary that the Opposition should speak with two voices about these matters.

**Mr. John Smith:** As the Secretary of State appears to be happy with progress made with the fraud investigation group, will he tell us when Mr. Peter Cameron-Webb will be brought to justice?

**Mr. Channon:** As the right hon. and learned Gentleman will know, I answered a question of his on that very point last week. I have already been in touch with my right hon. and learned Friend, but it is a matter for the DPP, as the House well knows.

The Financial Services Act, for the first time, sets up a comprehensive and effective structure of regulation for the City. There have been widespread misunderstandings of the system of regulation that that Act creates. It has been suggested that it is a purely self-regulatory system and that the Government are proposing simply to leave it to the City to police itself. That is simply not true. The system that we are setting up is backed by a framework of laws that will ensure that the system works properly. It will be a criminal offence, punishable by up to two years in prison, to conduct investment business without authorisation. What is more, the definition of investment business has been drawn sufficiently wide to extend regulation to a number of areas not previously covered.

Secondly, rules made under the Act will carry the force of law and will give a civil remedy to anyone who suffers loss as a result of a breach. These rules will cover such matters as conflicts of interest, the content of advertisements, the segregation of clients' money and a host of other matters. If the firm concerned has gone out of business, compensation will be payable from a fund set up under the new regulatory system. For the first time, market manipulation will be a criminal offence, punishable by up to seven years imprisonment.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington) *rose*

**Mr. Channon:** I really must press on. I have given way about four times already. If the hon. Gentleman will let me continue, I may give way later.

The system of control that the Act establishes does, of course, take advantage of the flexibility and proximity to the market of practitioner-based regulation, but it is reinforced by a strict statutory framework. Indeed, on Third Reading the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) said that he thought it was right to strike a balance between statutory regulations and a statutory framework and a substantial element of self-regulation. The Act achieves that balance.

Of course, the Opposition have been calling for an independent statutory commission rather than the designated agency for which the Act provides. The Opposition have signally failed—with respect, the right hon. and learned Gentleman has failed today—to name a single advantage that an independent commission would have over our proposals. What matters more than any argument about the private or public sector status of the designated agency is the powers that it is given to do the job. The agency has been given those powers under the Financial Services Act — with statutory force, which means with real teeth.

**Mr. Robin Cook** (Livingston): As the Secretary of State stands on the powers given to the SIB, I remind him of the point that was put to him by his own Back Benchers about the powers to deal with insider dealing, which he undertook to consider. When that very amendment was tabled in Committee on the Financial Services Bill his Minister resisted that power being passed to the SIB precisely because it was not a statutory agency.

**Mr. Channon:** The hon. Gentleman and the whole world knows that those powers are available elsewhere and are being effectively used at this time. Frankly, the idea that there is a lack of powers on insider dealing is preposterous; the House knows that very well.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman asked me about the role of the takeover panel. Of course, as the House will expect, we have given further thought to the concerns expressed about the conduct of takeovers. I understand from the Governor of the Bank of England that the takeover panel will be meeting shortly to consider changes to the takeover code and other actions to strengthen its application. I welcome that. I have agreed with the Governor that all of us in Government concerned with City regulation—*[Interruption.]* If Opposition Members will listen to me, they will find that I have certain things to tell them. The regulatory system that we are establishing should reflect our considerations on how we can best support the panel further in its important job of regulating takeovers. To that end, the Bank of England, my Department and the Treasury, in conjunction with the takeover panel, the stock exchange and the SIB, will be looking at four main areas. First, in the light of the panel's immediate plans, they will consider whether additional action by any of us would be helpful in relation to disclosure of material interests, indemnities and nominee shareholdings.

Company law is particularly relevant. First, we shall examine both its relationship with the code and whether it is desirable to amend the relevant provisions of the Companies Act. Secondly, we need to ensure that any information suggesting that matters require investigation is passed rapidly to the body most able to take quick and effective action and to ensure that the investigative powers available under the Companies Act, the Financial Services Act and the Banking Bill are used to best effect to support the panel. We shall examine the arrangements for co-operation between the takeover panel, the stock exchange—particularly its surveillance department—the SIB, my Department and the Bank of England.

**Sir Peter Hordern** (Horsham): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Mr. Channon:** If I may finish my passage on the takeover panel, I shall of course give way to my hon. Friend.

Thirdly, we shall consider how best to reflect the provisions of the takeover code in the rules to which investment businesses will be subject under the Act. Finally, at my request the Governor, with the chairman of the panel, will review whether it has both sufficient resources and adequate representation of those with responsibility for the regulation of investment business under the Financial Services Act. The panel has much more work in hand. Our aim is together to produce a package of measures that will strengthen the existing regulation, retain the speed and flexibility of the system of regulation and enable the market to operate freely and fairly. One thing that I wish to make quite clear is that the Government are determined to enforce high standards. I underline what the Governor said on Monday — if practitioners do not respect this system, we shall replace it with one that makes greater use of statutory powers and sanctions.

**Sir Peter Hordern:** Bearing in mind what my right hon. Friend said about the powers of the takeover panel and the additional assistance that the Government will give it, will he consider also disposing of the old system of nominee shareholdings? It is time that beneficial share owners are registered. Whatever may be the administrative convenience of having them in nominee shareholdings, it is greatly outweighed by the right of companies to know who their shareholders are. That would greatly ease the difficulties of my right hon. Friend's Department.

**Mr. Channon:** My hon. Friend will recall that I said that I would ask the review to examine whether additional action would be useful in relation to disclosure of material interests, indemnities and nominee shareholdings. I think that, certainly in relation to takeovers, I have covered the point raised by my hon. Friend.

**Sir Peter Tapsell** (East Lindsey): When the four different areas are being examined in connection with the takeover panel, can consideration also be given to the desirability of giving statutory powers to the panel to require individuals and companies to give evidence, both orally and in writing, on oath? It is the lack of power to demand evidence on oath that has, I believe, weakened the panel. I have reason to believe that in the past its members have not always felt that they were being told the truth.

**Mr. Channon:** I shall draw my hon. Friend's remarks to the attention of the review body. I do not exclude any solution to the problem, and will bear his remarks in mind.

I want to say a word about mergers. The Opposition have become fond of talking about merger mania. I assume that that means that they are, in general, against them. Indeed, the Labour finance and industry group's latest document — to which the hon. Members for Dagenham and for Livingston (Mr. Cook) contributed —calls for a merger policy that is

"either neutral or has a built-in bias against concentration."

Yet it was not so long ago that the Labour party believed that mergers were the solution to every economic ill. Those of us who have been in the House a long time will remember that it even set up the Industrial Reorganisation Corporation specifically to persuade, cajole and, sometimes, coerce companies into mergers. I shall not go into the details as they are unhappy memories.

In fact, of course, mergers and takeovers are in themselves economically neutral. They are one of the main ways in which the structure of industries and the management of industrial and commercial assets adapt to changing needs. It is sometimes necessary for them to adapt. That is beyond doubt, especially at the present time of accelerating industrial and technological change.

Of course I recognise that the interests of the parties to a merger and their shareholders can diverge from those of the economy as a whole. That is why, with the support of all parties, there exist powers to refer mergers which meet the statutory criteria to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. It is common ground, too, that mergers that significantly restrict competition may require examination.

We are urged to take a broader view and be more ready to refer mergers on largely unspecified grounds of public interest. I can assure the House that I have learnt one thing —nothing could be easier or more popular than for the holder of my office to refer each and every large and controversial merger to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. I suspect, however, that the commission's findings would often come as a salutary shock to those urging referral. I well remember the criticism, in this House and outside, that the policy pursued by my predecessors—from both sides of the House—on merger references was arbitrary and unpredictable. I know that that view is strongly held in industry, as I said earlier.

I do not rule out the very occasional case that may give real ground for public concern that is not related to competition. The Elders bid for Allied is a case in point. It was the first major example in the United Kingdom of a high-leveraged bid involving the planned break-up of a major industrial company.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman and others underrate very seriously the value to industry of predictability in merger policy and the chaos that can result if Ministers intervene on grounds more appropriate to the shareholders.

**Mr. Tony Favell** (Stockport): When objecting to a merger, should we not remember that often the target company has itself previously taken over companies, and that its greatness may well have come about through merging with companies less successful than itself and through taking over companies not only in this country but abroad?

**Mr. Channon:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right; that often happens.

The BTR bid for Pilkington, which the House will remember well, raised very serious issues of corporate philosophy and style, industrial structure and research and development philosophy. I had no basis for believing that I — or, with great respect, the MMC — was better qualified to decide on them than the shareholders, who had every incentive to make the right long-term judgment. What I do know is that intervention by me could have prolonged for months the uncertainty which was resolved in days by the market.

Of course, the last word has not been spoken on merger policy. My Department's review of policy on mergers and restrictive practices policy will continue. I should have been failing in my duty had I allowed myself to be deflected and had referred to the MMC a merger that raised no issues of competition or of anything else not perfectly appropriate for the shareholders to judge.

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): There are two tests in the Fair Trading Act—one is competition and the other the public interest. Why does the Minister always ignore the public interest?

**Mr. Channon:** Of course I must consider the public interest. I said that cases would primarily be referred on competition grounds, and that has been the practice since 1984.

The next charge that has been levelled against the City is that of short-termism. I accept that there is a serious point here, which merits less partisan treatment than Opposition Members give it. There is a widespread feeling that the major investing institutions, whose own short-term performance is closely monitored, look too much for short-term profit and under-value expenditure on research and development, training and investment. It is said that, as a result, industrial managers, fearful of the threat of takeover, cut back on such expenditure and concentrate exclusively on the day-to-day share price.

The evidence on that is mixed. A number of companies with high research expenditure also command high market ratings. The institutions do not always take the quick profit in a takeover; Woolworth's is a case in point. Many of the shareholdings of pension funds and insurance companies are kept for long periods. Often, it is the under-performing managers who feel under most short-term pressure, and that may be no bad thing.

For industrialists who are confident of their future strategy for their companies, but feel that it is not understood by their investors, I suggest that they take the advice of the chief executive of the Prudential Corporation, which owns 3·5 per cent. of United Kingdom equities:

"If boards of directors have told us what they are doing, we would normally support the incumbent management in a takeover bid."

Very often, the remedy is better communication.

I warmly welcome the establishment by the CBI of its City industry task force, with the object of promoting better understanding. I also warmly welcome the work currently being undertaken by the Accounting Standards Committee with a view to producing an agreed accounting standard dealing with research and development. I hope that that will be within the year. That would require the disclosure in company accounts of expenditure on research and development for the financial year reported on.

I am less convinced by some of the more radical remedies that have been proposed for the City's alleged short-termism. Changes in the tax status of the institutions and curtailment of the rights of shareholders would have repercussions far beyond the immediate target, and the case for them has not been made.

**Mr. Tim Smith** (Beaconsfield): Does my right hon. Friend agree that there are double standards in industry on this matter? The director of an industrial company will say that the market is taking a short-term view of his company, but will also wear his hat as a pension fund trustee and encourage his pension fund managers to improve their performance.

**Mr. Channon:** My hon. Friend, as so often in these matters, has put his finger on a problem.

The Opposition motion claims that the City has failed the nation. It has not. It has served, and continues to serve, the nation well as a major industry in its own right and as a provider of a unique range of services to the rest of industry. The attempts of the Opposition to blacken its name with such phrases as "a spiv's paradise"—used by the Leader of the Opposition — and "a sleazy undercurrent of corruption" — used by the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) —are a disgrace and damaging to the nation.

I do not accept that either of those phrases bears the remotest resemblance to the truth. The overwhelming majority of those who work in the City are honest and hard-working. They are fully justified in finding such language deeply offensive. As in any profession or trade, there exists a minority of people who break the rules, and the Government are determined that they should be identified, rooted out and punished.

Last week, the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook stated in the House that the Government were

"reluctant to act against City fraud".—[*Official Report*, 20 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 768.]

We are used to the right hon. Gentleman's distortions and twistings of the truth, but with that statement he reached new depths. I challenge him or any of his colleagues to produce evidence of any case where abuse has occurred and the Government have failed to act. If they cannot do so, that statement should be withdrawn.

The Government are doing all in their power to protect and maintain the good name of the City. I urge the House to accept the amendment.

5.50 pm

**Mr. Ian Wrigglesworth** (Stockton, South): The House will be aware that the events of recent weeks have had considerable influence on the country's opinion of the City. It appears from the Minister's speech and from the Government's recent actions that they too have recognised this.

Before coming here I worked in the City for National Girobank and before that for the Midland Bank, and at present I advise Barclays Bank, so I have no hesitation in saying from my experience that the City plays a very important role, not only in the way emphasised by the Minister, that is, in its contribution to overseas earnings, but in providing a service to millions of people, in insurance, banking and other spheres, that is wholly beneficial. However, it is no good the City minimising the scale of what has happened. I fear, from the remarks of the Governor of the Bank of England, reported in the press this morning, that he and some others are seeking to do that. To claim, as he did in his speech to the Institute of Bankers in Scotland, that Guinness is not a City scandal is to put his head in the sand. When I consider the number of City institutions — Morgan Grenfell, Ansbacher, Alexanders, Laing and Cruickshank and others — involved in this business, I wonder how one can describe it as not being a City scandal.

I have found, particularly among some of the older inhabitants of the City, a complacency about the current situation which is deeply worrying.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** The hon. Gentleman is virtually accusing the Governor of the Bank of England of being complacent. Has the hon. Gentleman not noticed a letter which has gone out today to all merchant banks in which the Governor says that unless there is tighter control and self-discipline he will seek statutory powers? How can he accuse the Governor of being complacent when he says that?

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** I regret that it has taken him so long to become aware that control in some of these apparently widely respected institutions is so lax as to allow the sort of things that have been happening in corporate finance divisions and merchant banks. As I pointed out in Question Time the other day, when the chief executive of Morgan Grenfell, who has been responsible for the supervision of that bank, is a former employee of the Bank of England and when the director of the corporate finance division of that bank is a former director-general of the takeover panel, I feel that I am not being unfair in saying that the rot has gone a very long way in terms of both supervision and the atmosphere throughout the City.

One need only look at the sort of remark made this morning in *The Times* by the city editor, Mr. Kenneth Fleet, when he says:

"There is nothing new about merchant banks and stockbrokers sailing as close as possible to the wind in takeover situations"

to know what I mean. This is the trouble, that everyone expects these people to "sail close to the wind." It is fairly evident from what has happened in recent weeks that they have been sailing not only close to the wind but well beyond it. We want the City to thrive and make a contribution to the economic life of our country, but many of us fear that there is a lot more to come because in the City an atmosphere has developed: making a fast buck and greed are the order of the day. This attitude is most regrettable and must be rooted out.

The whole of the recent actions of the Governor of the Bank of England raise starkly what has long been a question for me: what is the role of the Governor and of some of the other City bodies, and who is responsible for supervision? I was sorry to hear the Secretary of State say that he was drawing in the Governor in the way that he mentioned, not because of any personal antagonism on my part or anything of that sort but because I have thought for a long time — and have said so here on previous occasions — that it should not be the role of the central bank to supervise the City. We have the Banking Bill and the responsibilities clearly lie in that direction. There are others who should be responsible for the supervision of other parts of the City. It is not the responsibility of the Bank of England.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** Why not?

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** I am sure that hon. Members on the Government Benches will agree that there are others who are responsible. In my view, the supervision of the City is too fragmented and needs to be concentrated in a way that it is not planned to be at the moment.

The sort of atmosphere that has built up in the City is demonstrated by another facet of the Guinness affair. Mr. Olivier Roux, the finance director of Guinness, was paid the magnificent sum of £6,000 in director's fees for his work at Guinness.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** Was he not worth it?

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** I will come to his worth and his payments in a moment. It raises questions about how the gentleman was remunerated. We know that he and a substantial number of other members of staff of Guinness were employed by Bain and Co. to whom Guinness paid £8 million for their services. What a curious way for a major corporation in this country to behave. Has it anything to do with the taxation of the income of the people working in Guinness and other such companies? I wonder whether the payments were made in the Cayman Islands or in some offshore tax haven so as to avoid taxes here. That sort of practice is not unknown in the City and it is the sort of thing that breeds antagonism in ordinary people who do not have the benefit of tax lawyers and accountants, who make it possible for people earning very high salaries to avoid the taxes which they should be paying and which other members of the community are paying. It is all part of this rotten atmosphere that has built up in the City over a period of years, an atmosphere that needs to be changed.

On the question of supervision and the role of the Government in all this, it took five years from the commissioning of the Gower report in July 1981 for the legislation envisaged in that report to be enacted, as it was last October. It took two years from November 1983 to December 1985, after the publication of the Gower report, to consult and then to publish the Financial Services Bill. That was two years during which hon. Members on both sides of the House were pressing Ministers about their delay in bringing forward proposals following the publication of the report. It took five years to get the legislation on the statute book. It is intended to give the delegated powers to the Securities and Investments Board only in July of this year, although we hear that that may be brought forward. That is dilatory progress on this important matter. One must also take into account the fact that the former Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made a statement to the House removing the stock exchange from the action that was taken against it in the restrictive trade practices court in July 1983.

The Government bear a major responsibility for the mess that we have got. Here we are, with the big bang having taken place last October as a direct consequence of the former Secretary of State removing Stock Exchange action from the restrictive trade practices court—in order, I may say, to protect single capacity rather than to break it up, as subsequently happened—but because of the dilatoriness of the Government we have not yet got the Securities and Investments Board in action or the provisions of the Financial Services Act 1986 in force. They should have been in place before the big bang took place. It is the Government's fault that that is not the case.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** (Bury St. Edmunds): While the hon. Gentleman is on the subject of delay, does not he recall that when the Conservative Government led by my right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) left office, they had introduced a measure to deal with insider trading? That fell with the election and during the next five years the Government who were in power did nothing about it. At the end of that Government's period in office the Lib-Lab pact was in place and the hon. Gentleman's party claimed that it had profound influence on the Cabinet of the day. How is it that it did so little to achieve the enforcement of that much-needed legislation and how can the hon. Gentleman complain of dilatoriness now?

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** Much-needed legislation was introduced at that time. Although the history of 17 years ago may have some relevance for the hon. Gentleman, I do not think it has much relevance to the events of the last few months.

I remind the House that not only were the Government dilatory in introducing the legislation, but when they brought it to the House the original Bill was enormous, having 166 clauses and 15 schedules. So slipshod was the preparation of the Bill that the Government had to introduce 40 to 50 new clauses, make 800 to 1,000 amendments and add four more schedules. So, after all that period of gestation, the Government almost had to rewrite the Bill.

**Mr. Tim Smith** *rose*——

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** No, I cannot give way because many hon. Members want to take part in the debate.

We have ended up with competition being the order of the day in the City, with the big bang having taken place and with none of the legislation properly in place to deal with it. The Government are responsible for that state of affairs and it is deplorable that they allowed it to happen without preparing properly beforehand.

As I said earlier, one of the major problems under the present regime is that the system of supervision is too fragmented. During the passage of the legislation it was proposed that the SIB should have power to investigate and to instigate actions. In the light of recent events, I have moved considerably towards that position. As we said during the passage of the Act, the takeover panel should be brought under the auspices of the SIB and should have much greater power. It should also have greater independence. We also made it clear that it should be funded by the Government, not the City, and that it should have a much more substantial representation of lay people within it to ensure confidence outside the City in the work that it was doing.

One problem about the Department of Trade and Industry exercising the powers that it does—I accept that they are substantial, and I welcome the changes that the Government have made to strengthen them in recent weeks—is, with great respect to the Secretary of State, that this is a Government Department supervised by politicians, with some 42 inspectors working for it. I do not believe that there can be public confidence in a Government Department, particularly the DTI with the history it has had over the years in policing companies legislation, continuing to have those powers.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Is not it extraordinary that recently the takeover panel resisted being dragged kicking and screaming into the divisional court, saying that it was so exempt from supervision that not even the divisional court should look at it as a matter of judicial review? Is not it extraordinary that it should behave rather like a Borgia pope trying to control nepotism?

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** I am not sure that I take the hon. Gentleman's analogy. Before coming to the debate I was reading the report of the takeover panel on the Turner and Newall bid for AE. If the public spotlight had been put on the activities of Cazenove, Hill Samuel and others who were rebuked by the takeover panel for their activities then, and if the takeover panel had had real teeth, we would have seen more action than just a note of censure against those City institutions. That illustrates the weakness of the takeover panel's role and why it needs to be brought within the ambit of the SIB.

I do not believe, as the Labour party believes, that Lloyds should also at this stage be brought within the ambit of the SIB. The Neill report, which has just been published, recommends that the council should have a majority of outsiders upon it. That recommendation should be implemented rapidly. I hope that there will not be delay upon that. We should see how that and the other recommendations work before making a decision to bring Lloyd's under the ambit of the SIB. Indeed, the chairman of the SIB has made it clear that he does not believe that he has the resources and the ability at this stage, with all the other responsibilities the SIB has taken on, to take that on as well. So, although I do not say that it should never come within the ambit of the SIB, at the moment it is best to proceed rapidly with the Neill recommendations, and in, say, two years, make a judgment about what should happen.

Moving to the role of the City in relation to industry, I want to say a word about monopolies and mergers policy. As I said at Question Time this afternoon, I am disappointed that the Secretary of State is not bringing forward his review of competition policy. He seemed to be satisfied with it; if he is so satisfied, what is the point of the review? We believe that there is a need for a profound change and a streamlining of the machinery. We have said for some years that the burden of proof should be put on to the shoulders of the person making the bid. We believe that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission should be abolished, as should the restrictive practices court, that individuals and organisations should have power to take action in the courts against anti-competitive practices and that the Office of Fair Trading should have a much bigger role, removing responsibility from the Secretary of State to intervene and only allowing him to overturn recommendations of the Office of Fair Trading with the support of the House.

Changes of that sort would ensure that mergers took place only if they were genuinely in the economic and public interest of the people working in the firms and the customers that they serve. That could also ensure that competition was safeguarded and that we had a much quicker and simpler system of dealing with mergers and takeovers than we have at present.

**Mr. Tim Smith:** The hon. Gentleman has made an extraordinary assertion about his party's policy. I know that he is not a Liberal, but it is incredible to say that every case should have to be justified in the public interests and then to say that the system should be quicker and simpler.

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** I said that the burden of proof should be put upon the shoulders of the person making the bid. That would result in the public interest — the interests of the employees and the consumer — being served much better than if it was the other way round, as it is at present. If the hon. Gentleman is satisfied with the present system, so be it but we are not. Britain does not have the competition that it should have and the way in which takeovers and mergers have been taking place in recent years has not served the interests of British industry or the nation.

There is a great problem, not in the supply of money to industry, but in the terms and conditions upon which it is available to industry. Not enough medium and long-term funding is available and the levels of interest that people have to pay and the security that they have to provide make it impossible for many firms to obtain the funds that they want. We have proposed introducing an industrial credit scheme and small firm investment companies which would help to overcome that problem which undoubtedly exists and which many in the City also recognise exists.

It is also important to see the development of regional financial services. The great contribution made by the financial services industry in Edinburgh to the Scottish economy illustrates how important it is to the regions to have a sound financial infrastructure which other parts of England, and, indeed, Wales, do not have. We should like to see the development of regional financial services, which do not exist at the moment, and which companies have to come to the City of London to obtain.

If all those changes were made, the interests of British industry would be much better served by the financial services industry than they are at present. I hope that the Government will take into account the way in which events have changed people's attitudes in recent times and the remarkable change in the City, making it necessary for much more powerful, independent and effective supervision than we have had in the past.

6.12 pm

**Sir Peter Hordern** (Horsham): I should start by declaring an interest. I have worked in the City all my working life, first as a stockbroker, then as a member of Lloyd's, and now as chairman and director of investment trust companies.

Perhaps the part of the debate that I have enjoyed most so far was the expression on the face of the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) when, in conclusion, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State described the activities of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and what he had to say about the City. He greatly enjoyed the situation and he was well justified.

The right hon. Member for Sparkbrook does not appear to be very comfortable either in the economics scene or in what he has to say about the City. To resort, as he did the other day, to talking about the "sleazy undercurrent" in the City does neither him nor the Opposition any good at all. The right hon. Gentleman would do much better to stick to writing articles for magazines and leave economics to his betters.

There has been some speculation that the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East might take the place of the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook on the Opposition Front Bench. That might be a good move. If nothing else, the right hon. and learned Gentleman is an extremely good lawyer and quite able to make the best of a poor case, and that is really all that the Opposition have had to say about the City so far. To blame the City for the activities that have occurred recently is absurd and damaging to the Opposition. Moreover, it is surprising, because if they were ever in a position to form a Government nobody would be more dependent than they would upon the City. Time and time again Labour Governments have had to be bailed out by the City. I think that they propose to borrow several billion pounds in order to renationalise. How they can do that without the City, I do not know. However, perhaps we need not exercise ourselves too much about that, because they would inevitably fall into the embrace of the International Monetary Fund, as they have done on every occasion.

I want to say something about the place of the City and the part that it has played in our national life. The Opposition correctly talk about the loss of the share of national production and GNP in manufacturing industry. That is a phenomenon that is well known in every advanced country. Therefore, they could not be surprised at that. Indeed, any effort to retrieve that position could well be more damaging than beneficial. But what they have not done is to point to the extraordinary change which has come about in the past few years in the credit balance of our financial services.

I have available only the figures for the first three quarters of 1986, but we ran a surplus of £6·3 billion on our financial and other services at the same time as we were running a trade balance of roughly comparable figures.

**Mr. Allan Rogers:** Playing with money.

**Sir Peter Hordern:** The hon. Gentleman says, "Playing with money", and I want to take that seriously. The Labour party must address itself to the fact that manufacturing industry depends upon the import of raw materials, their conversion and final sale to other customers. The hon. Gentleman and the Labour party should consider the distinction between that and a financial institution in the City discovering that a manufacturing company in Japan wishes to raise money, raising that money in the City through its own expertise and selling that service to Japan. There is an important point here. What distinguishes that is the way in which the margin of profit can be gained in financial services which now bring, and will continue to bring, considerable benefits to Britain, and which it can be argued will displace in time to come what we can now contribute from manufacturing industry.

**Mr. Rogers:** The hon. Gentleman asked me to consider his thesis and I do, but at the end of the day I still do not see any increase in Britain's wealth coming from the operation that he has described. There will be no more investment in jobs or in industry. One can shuffle paper round all over the world, but that still does not create Britain's wealth.

**Sir Peter Hordern:** It was a mistake to give way to the hon. Gentleman and I apologise to the House for doing so. The simple point is that it is the product of financial services which also increases the profits of industrial companies, which is the motive force for further investment and employment. It is as simple as that.

I want to make one particular point about the change which has come about in the past three years. London is but one of three main centres in the world, of which the other two are New York and Tokyo. We are part of a global financial village, as it has been aptly described in other quarters. The significance of that position may not have been generally recognised. Its significance is that we shall continue to earn a substantial financial surplus on our invisible earnings and services for years to come. It is perfectly possible now to see the position that Britain held for most of the Victorian era, when, as a result of our manufacturing capacity and our financing of world trade, we eventually had a large and continuing surplus on our invisible earnings. I see no reason at all why that position should not continue hereafter. Of course, if the Labour party were to take office it might sensibly diminish that by its proposals to bring back pension funds.

I should also like to comment on the earnings from our portfolio investments. Last year we received dividends amounting to £6 billion, compared with only £540 million in 1979. I understand that Opposition Members plan to persuade or induce pension funds to return their investments to this country. It appears to me that Opposition Members are signally ignorant of the economic process, because if that is done, and to the extent that it succeeds, it must increase the price of sterling, relative to other currencies. It follows from that that the effect would be to reduce the competitiveness of our manufacturing industry, thus throwing more people out of work and reducing investments in manufacturing industry. Therefore, that policy is a strange one altogether.

**Mr. Gerald Howarth** (Cannock and Burntwood): Does my hon. Friend agree that the effect of that would be to put people out of work in other countries who have been financed from this country, leading to further calls from Opposition Members for increased foreign aid?

**Sir Peter Horden:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who is quite right. I do not wish to pursue this point any longer. I regard it as important that there has been a substantial change in our economic and trading position, which is likely to continue under good guidance for many years to come. Everyone should be aware of that. If that is to be the case and we are to keep intact our place in the global village and take advantage of the situation, the law as it affects the City must be clear and the guidance must be authoritative.

In so far as the City's activities touch upon our national life, there is a public interest which must be observed and protected. Although arguably we would have saved a lot of trouble if we had had an SEC, the Securities and Investments Board, with the SROs, is much more likely to uncover the sort of crooked activities that may occur than would be a full-blown SEC. However, if it is right to increase the number of nominated members on the council of Lloyd's as the new report suggested—I believe that it is right to do so—from four to eight, there is equally a case for increasing the number of lay members on ISRO from four to eight, and even, perhaps, for increasing the number of lay members on the SIB.

I do not know whether it is necessary, because my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry would be in a better position than anybody else to know that fact. However, the number of cases that are now referred to the Department for preliminary investigation make a case for strengthening the number of people in his Department.

My right hon. Friend announced some proposals that would affect the takeover panel. Plainly, either the panel should be brought into the ambit of the SIB or its powers

*[Sir Peter Hordern]*

should be beefed up in one way or another. It cannot be allowed to continue quite as it is at the moment, without powers, nominated by practitioners themselves, in which they must have confidence, in the end. If it cannot produce any effective measures to stop the things that go wrong, some change must be made. Therefore, I welcome what my right hon. Friend said about the takeover panel.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the takeover panel, which has done excellent work, has nevertheless lost a great measure of confidence among people in the City, the financial press and the public? In those circumstances, without pointing the finger at individuals, does my hon. Friend agree that there should be some change in the personalities at the top of the panel?

**Sir Peter Hordern:** The last thing that I wish to do is to make any remarks about personalities. However, the proposals that my right hon. Friend has made are interesting and deserve careful study. I hope that they will be carried through.

I intervened in my right hon. Friend's speech in connection with nominated shareholders. I am surprised that the issue has not been raised before. It is an old and convenient administrative practice. When stockbrokers or banks buy shares, they put them in the names of nominees. Very often, merchant banks or stockbrokers have a substantial number of discretionary clients and it takes them some time to work out how they are to be allocated.

Apart from that administrative convenience, I cannot now see any reason why the beneficial owners of shares should not be registered right away. That would get rid of the temptation that exists for those who want to buy shares for reasons which they do not wish to divulge from using nominee names in Swiss banks or in any other country.

In the long run, it would do my right hon. Friend and his Department a great service if that change were brought about. There may have been very good reasons for it when those nominee shareholdings were established and the matter was originally considered because the stock exchange, as I was told when I first joined it, existed for the benefit of its members and for nobody else. The existence of nominee shareholdings cannot now be justified——

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford) *rose*——

**Sir Peter Hordern:** I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive me for not giving way. I have already given way and I want to get on. Irrespective of whether the City is as closely involved in industry as it should be, it should recognise that it should be more closely involved.

I should like to comment on merger policy and the public interest. There has been an enormous amount of merger activity. I understand that in the first nine months of last year about £11·3 billion was spent on company acquisitions, compared with £7·1 billion in the whole of 1985 and £1 billion in 1981. It would be less than realistic to suppose that all the banks that have been set up recently and the old existing merchant banks did not make a lot of money out of merger activity and that there are not a large number of people who are sedulously seeking to promote mergers and do very well out of them.

I agree with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State that the main test must be competition. However, one must consider the reality of what it means to leave it to the market. As my right hon. Friend said, it is perfectly fair to mention the Prudential as an institution with shares in virtually every company in the country, and which on the whole decides to favour an existing business rather than the one that will take it over, but there are several other fund managements which take a short-term view, because, as my right hon. Friend mentioned, their performance is compared very carefully with other funds. In every sort of takeover one sees the same names involved. I have to say that leaving it to competition means leaving a large part of it to fund managers, who are bent on getting the best price for their shares, rather than on taking a long-term view.

Anyone in manufacturing industry who in 1980 had to face $2·40 to the pound, $1·09 five years later, in 1985, and $1·52 now, would have to be a genius to anticipate that state of affairs and to carry out its trade perfectly, in every respect allowing for that fluctuation. It is perfectly possible that such a company would find it difficult to resist asset-strippers bidding for it at the bottom of the cycle. Therefore, there is a public interest when hundreds of people are laid off at the behest of a tiny company borrowing on the assets of a large company that it is considering taking over.

Through the Office of Fair Trading the Government have a duty to look at aspects of takeovers apart from competition. I urge the Government to look closely at the credentials and the financial stability of those companies —often small or highly geared—which are making a bid to take over another company. The policy should not be to prevent takeovers where the business that is being acquired is likely to have more investment as a result of acquisition, rather than less, as has been suggested. The emphasis and priority should be to allow takeovers, but to be sure that the amalgamation of the two companies will not mean that more strain is placed on the two together than would have occurred before.

It is necessary to secure an identity of interest between industry and the City if the public interest is to be served. I greatly regret the tone in which the Opposition have launched the debate. The City has served the country well for many years and will continue to do so.

6.30 pm

**Mr. Brian Sedgemore** (Hackney, South and Shoreditch): I shall try to be brief. One of the problems with our debates on the City is that they are getting wider and wider, so our speeches have to be ever more truncated.

I did not think that I would, but I agreed with what I thought were three interesting aspects of the speech made by the hon. Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern). I believe that there is a problem with the repatriation scheme that the Labour party has proposed, the level of sterling and competitiveness. That worries me slightly. I entirely agree with what he said about nominee shareholdings, and I would not disagree with some of what he said about mergers.

The Secretary of State was a grave disappointment to the House. He was credible for a couple of sentences and then my hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) asked him a simple question—if there are all of these investment funds, what has happened to manufacturing investment since 1979? It seemed a perfectly straightforward question. I understood it.

Instead of talking about investment, the Secretary of State spoke about output and compared output with what had happened in 1981, not 1979.

The Secretary of State has had a lifetime in business. He is the top person in Government. Let us suppose that he goes to sit an O-level examination in economics and the first question is, "What has happened to manufacturing investment since 1979?" He begins his answer, "Far be it from me to be so invidious as to discuss what has happened to manufacturing investment since 1979, but as for manufacturing output since 1981 . . . " The examiner would not mark the paper. Such behaviour is not helpful to the House when shrewd observers such as my hon. Friend the Member for Easington intervene.

I do not think that the Secretary of State has read the figures about investment properly. If we ask who are the investors in Britain, the answer comes back that they are not rich individuals, banks, insurance companies or pension funds. The statistics of the past 20 years, as opposed to those of the past year, show that the stock exchange, which is sometimes described as the source of capital for commercial and industrial companies in Britain, has, on average, provided 5 per cent. of industrial capital annually.

The banking sector has done rather better. It has provided between 20 and 25 per cent. of the capital that commercial and industrial companies need. The real investors are the customers. Although it is described in the City as equity capital, it is not what the individual in the street understands as equity capital and it is not what I interpret as equity capital. Year in, year out, between two thirds and three quarters of the capital used by commercial and industrial companies is provided by customers who go into shops. They are savers in a real sense. They forgo consumption, but they do not get issued with a share certificate when they go into a shop. It would be fairly complicated if they were. They do the saving, but they do not get interest on their savings or on their investment.

What we see on the stock exchange, day in, day out, as described by John Maynard Keynes, who understood rather more about economics than some Conservative Members, is a vast amount of speculation which is based on what he described as a combination of psychology and probability theory. That process, carried out by bulls, bears, stags and whatever else, does not seem to be a productive enterprise for British industry.

There are eight basic foreign exchanges in the world. A recent study, which was done not by me but by perfectly respectable City people, shows that $150 billion crosses those exchanges every day. I am told that that is equivalent to about 10 per cent. of the world's trade. Let us suppose that that is wrong, and that it is equivalent to 20 per cent. of the world's trade and that some of the rest is concerned with hedging. We still end up, as the report said, with about $100 billion speculated across the exchanges each day—one third of it in London. Moreover, we still end up with major financial and industrial companies using the foreign exchanges as "profit centres". Industrial companies are not producing goods and services. Rather, they are producing money through the "profit centre" of the foreign exchange market.

That is equivalent to going into a bingo hall and playing 11-digit bingo with $100 billion as the prize every day. Conservative Members say that that is a respectable activity. I do not believe that 11-digit bingo is a respectable economic activity or that any hon. Member will support such speculation.

It is often said that the Labour party makes no proposals regarding insider dealing. The hon. Member for Horsham made a proposal which did not concern only insider dealing, but it seemed sensible and a means of dealing with insider dealing. He suggested that we should make everybody declare the beneficial ownership of shares and cut out nominee shareholdings. I advanced that idea the last time we debated these matters. It seems eminently sensible. Now that the hon. Member has advanced it, I hope that Ministers will consider it a little more seriously than when I suggested it.

I know that some Conservative Members agree with it, but I do not believe that there should be own-account dealing in merchant banks and broking houses. Some limit themselves and do not have own-account dealing, but I believe that we should legislate to stop it. We would then cut out some of the conflicts that occur.

If asked what I think of the performance of the takeover panel, I think that I would say that it has done a reasonably good job. It has genuinely tried to get things right. I have said that publicly before. I believe, however, that time, technology and the problems that are piling up have ceased to make it acceptable to the public that the takeover panel should be able to carry on as a purely voluntary body, either outside the scope of the Securities and Investments Board, because it is not appropriate there, or outside some further statutory control.

**Viscount Cranborne** (Dorset, South): I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way, especially as his momentum has taken him past the point that I wanted to pull him up on. What mechanism would he propose for the conversion from one currency to another, which is essential to world trade, if we were to abolish the foreign exchange market?

**Mr. Sedgemore:** I know that the hon. Gentleman is not a macroeconomic expert of the highest order, but I was not proposing to abolish the foreign exchange markets. If he wants me to go in to this macroeconomic problem, I shall devote five minutes to it at the end of my speech. It is a big problem for all nation states, whether they are governed by Conservative, Labour or Social Democratic Governments. The hon. Gentleman has put himself on a major point. I do not believe that there is a simple answer, but if he wants me to develop the argument, I shall.

There is some agreement about takeover bids. I even heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer say that some people in the City are taking a short-term view and that they have a kind of tunnel vision. Some of the institutions, such as, I suggest, the Hanson Trust, take a short-term view of takeover bids. The public interest and the Labour party's proposal seems eminently sensible and I am glad that it has some support on the Conservative Benches.

One of the ways in which to get around some of the problems that have arisen, including those with Guinness, is to make it illegal for people to use their own shares in takeover bids and to insist on the use of cash. That would be a simple and fundamental step. I understand that it comprises part of the legislation in some states in America.

Our proposal that, before takeover bids of a certain size can advance, a submission must be made to the

*[Mr. Sedgemore]*

Department of Trade and Industry about their likely economic, commercial and employment consequences seems perfectly reasonable.

Conservative Members cannot disclaim responsibility and say that a group of people or companies are involved who and which are divorced entirely from the Conservative party and its ideology, some of whom have committed a few crimes. Morgan Grenfell is a merchant bank which was advising Guinness, and it gave £20,000 to the Conservative party in 1985. Let us examine the way in which one of the country's most prestigious merchant banks gives money to the Conservative party and the way in which it has handled itself over the Guinness affair. Let us ask ourselves why the Conservative party is accepting funds from such a bank.

First, we discovered that Mr. Geoffrey Collier, the securities chief, was sacked. I shall not comment on that, because I believe that he faces criminal charges. Then we discovered that Mr. Roger Seelig, one of the corporate financiers, was in trouble. At that stage the chairman, Lord Catto, heard the alarm bells sounding. He set up an internal inquiry and we have all seen the headlines that it attracted, such as "No witch hunt, no whitewash." There was a whitewash, however, for nothing happened. Some of my hon. Friends, including my hon. Friends the Members for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd), who is in her place, and for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner), who is not, tabled a detailed motion about Morgan Grenfell. Lo and behold, it was only four days later that the Governor of the Bank of England, terrified that there was to be another Johnson Matthey bank examination, began to act in response to my hon. Friends' motion.

It was at that stage that we discovered that Mr. Christopher Reeves, the chief executive and a former Bank of England official, had to go. There are two ways of regarding Mr. Reeves's conduct, and I do not want to judge him. Either he was incompetent or he was dishonest, or both. If a former Bank of England official is dishonest, incompetent or both, how can we be assured about the probity of self-regulation in the City? We then learned that Mr. Graham Walsh, the head of corporate finance and a former director general of the takeover panel, had to go. Either he was incompetent, dishonest, or both. How can we believe in self-regulation when a former director general of the takeover panel is dishonest, incompetent, or both? Conservative Members must address themselves to these issues in relation to Morgan Grenfell.

Last night, I was walking across a bridge and talking to one of my——

**Mr. Bill Walker** (Tayside, North): Has the hon. Gentleman read the report of the Adjournment debate which I initiated on 25 July 1985, which dealt specifically with Guinness and Morgan Grenfell? If he has, why was he so silent at the time and thereafter?

**Mr. Sedgemore:** I must apologise to the hon. Gentlemen because I did not read the report of his Adjournment debate. If it included some gem, I am sorry that I did not read it. That is negligence on my part. I must ask others whether they read the report. The hon. Gentleman wants to be like me, and learn how to use the media rather better. If he had been able effectively to us the media, reports of his Adjournment debate would have been splashed over the front page of every national newspaper before I spoke.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** I must correct my hon. Friend. His failure is patently clear. It is that he does not read *The Scotsman*, and not because he failed to read the report of the Adjournment debate which the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) initiated.

**Mr. Sedgemore:** That joke is too subtle for me.

There I was on a bridge talking to a City solicitor late at night. He went south and I went north. As we parted he said to me, "Listen out for the name Hanson." We have a mutual friend called Bomber Hanson, but I do not think that he was talking about him. I think that he must have been talking about Lord Hanson. I do not know whether Lord Hanson is involved in the Guinness affair or whether his name is about to come up. Perhaps Conservative Members can enlighten us. Lord Hanson was knighted in 1983, the same year in which his company provided £82,000 for the Conservative party. Between 1979 and 1984 the Hanson Trust provided £217,000 for the Conservative party. That seems to be a great deal of money. It is something that brings a close connection between the Government, the Conservative party and the use of funds——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman cannot criticise a Member of the other place unless by means of a motion.

**Mr. Sedgemore:** I agree, Mr. Speaker. I am talking about the Hanson Trust. The trust provided the money, and not Lord Hanson, who is chairman of the company.

We have heard about Bain and Co. this evening. It was mentioned by the Government Front Bench spokesperson, but we were not given any details. I believe that some correspondence has passed between the two Front Benches, and it seems that the Prime Minister attended a lunch that was hosted by Sir Jack Lyons at Bain and Co. a few weeks ago. What sort of company is Bain and Co.?

**Mr. Robin Cook:** The Home Secretary attended the lunch too.

**Mr. Sedgemore:** We know that one of the employees or associates of Bain and Co. is Mr. Olivier Roux, the disgraced director of Guinness. We know also—this is something that I discovered — that Bain and Co. is about to receive a writ from the Church Commissioners involving a large sum of money for non-payment of rent. We know even more than that, because we had some by-play from my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) in his delightful and brilliant speech about Mr. Gerald Ronson, who returned £5·8 million to Guinness. That was a fee for putting £25 million of the company's money in that firm.

My right hon. and learned Friend did not say that Mr. Gerald Ronson was first approached by Anthony Parnes, a person who was nicknamed the "animal". Mr. Parnes is a director of J. Lyons Chamberlayne. He is a close associate of Sir Jack Lyons, who received a knighthood from the Conservative party and who more recently hosted the lunch at Bain and Co. I dare say that the "animal" was at that lunch. He is a friend of Sir Jack Lyons. We must ask ourselves why the Prime Minister went to the lunch. Who was she trying to meet? Did she want to meet Mr. Olivier Roux? Did she want to meet the "animal"? Did she want to help Bain and Co. deal with its defence in the face of a writ from the Church Commissioners? Was she trying to give the firm some general solace or, as is more likely, was it a general meeting at which the Conservative party raises funds?

One of the great problems facing the City is that which arises from the big bang, which has not been discussed in the House. I only hope that we shall have the opportunity to do so. I cannot be sure of what I shall say, but there is something disturbing in that separate control of financial institutions may well disappear. Financial institutions have operated basically under some form of separate control—the banks, merchant banks, discount houses, accepting houses and money markets have all operated under it—but they are now beginning to operate under joint control. Most of the clearing banks are in on these mergers. Every conceivable form of financial and economic activity is coming together under the same control. Some firms will not survive and they will go bust. There will be some takeovers of financial institutions as well as some mergers. There is a real fear that in 10, 15 or 20 years time we shall have large mega-merge financial institutions that will wield much greater power than any present institution of that type, and power that may be wielded globally.

American banking law is changing. The regulations that apply to state banking are beginning to change and the New York banks are beginning to come to Britain. With Japanese and American banks coming here, mergers, amalgamation and bankruptcies could occur that will create colossal problems for a Labour Government as well as the present Government. That is something that the House should debate.

6.49 pm

**Mr. Cecil Parkinson** (Hertsmere): I have listened with interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) and his discussion on the big bang and the City revolution. Last week, we heard the speeches of the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) and today from the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) which seemed to imply that the whole City revolution was started by the Conservative Government as a way of creating a sort of free-and-easy in the City.

I wish to remind the House that the rule book of the stock exchange was referred to the restrictive practices court in February 1979 by the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook. It was the Labour party that decided that the stock exchange, in its old form, was guilty of unacceptable restrictive practices and set out to make sure that the stock exchange rules were changed.

In 1983, the Conservative Government, after four wasted years on the legal case, sought to get the equivalent of an out-of-court settlement and we obtained from the stock exchange all the concessions that were sought by the Office of Fair Trading when it started its action. Indeed, the Director General of Fair Trading, who initially resisted the actions that I took, later admitted that the reforms that had been agreed were the ones he and the Labour Government had had in mind. Therefore, the notion that the free and easy City was started by the Conservative Government and that all troubles such as Guinness flow from it does not stand up to examination. The truth of the matter is that — perhaps the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook is ashamed of it and perhaps he did not realise what he was doing — that the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook set the changes in train.

It is a mistake to think that the big bang was somehow connected with the Guinness and Distillers affair. That wrong thinking argues that, because of the big bang and the resultant changes, affairs such as that of Guinness have become possible. The Guinness affair was concluded in March but the changes to the City took place on 27 October.

The hon. Member for Stockton, South spoke about the absence of a regulatory system after the big bang but the troubles of which he complained took place before the big bang under the old system. The other fallacy is that because of the big bang and the Guinness affair the new system of regulation has been discredited and there is convincing evidence that what we now need is a statutory system of regulations. It is argued that because of the existence of the Securities and Exchange Commission, insider trading and the Guinness affair came to light.

Mr. Boesky's activities came to the attention of the SEC because someone wrote an anonymous letter to it about Mr. Levene and his insider trading. Mr. Levene then talked about Mr. Boesky and Mr. Boesky talked about Guinness. It was not because of the magical powers of the SEC that Mr. Boesky's activities came to light; it was because of an anonymous letter. I would have thought that the Securities and Investments Board is just as capable as the SEC of receiving an anonymous letter.

**Mr. Nelson:** Although I accept that the SIB is capable of receiving such a letter, there is nothing that the SIB can do about it.

**Mr. Parkinson:** I appreciate that, on the Conservative Benches, my hon. Friend is almost a lone devotee of the SEC. The Opposition have argued that there is a need for a body such as the SEC but nothing that has happened justifies that argument. The fact is that Mr. Boesky prospered for four years under the SEC. He made hundreds of millions of dollars and he was discovered only by accident. There is no argument for trying to impose on Britain the system that failed in America.

Opposition Members make a big mistake by arguing that statutory somehow means certain. The impression is that if one has statutory regulations it is bound to work.

**Mr. Allan Rogers** *rose*——

**Mr. Parkinson:** I shall give way in a moment.

Allow me to offer to the House the experience that I gained when I was Trade Minister. We were having trouble with the Americans who were trying to extend their market regulations into our commodity markets. I invited the chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission—that is another statutory body—to come over and see how we regulated our markets. At the end of the week, he admitted that our system of self-regulation was better than theirs. Unfortunately, he had to leave early because Hunts had cornered the silver market — his statutory system had failed. Therefore, to believe that somehow statutory means certain and that, as a result a statutory system, discovering people is inevitable has no basis when one considers the experience of the American or other markets overseas.

**Mr. Rogers:** If we accepted the logic of the right hon. Gentleman's argument we would not need statutory

*[Mr. Rogers]*

regulations to catch criminals. The process that led to the apprehension of the criminals in this case is exactly the same that pertains in many instances, for example, in America, when one canary sings and the rest of the Mafia are pulled in. American crooks are just the same as British crooks.

**Mr. Parkinson:** The hon. Gentleman is implying that we will have a system that is voluntary and, in some way, unenforceable. That is the big difference between the two sides of the House.

We do not know whether the SIB will work as it is not fully in place and, therefore, to argue its failure before it is in operation is to overstate one's prejudices.

The SIB is not a voluntary body exercising, if it wishes, powers. It is a body made up of practitioners in the market who understand how the system works but who have imposed upon them, by law, statutory duties that they must carry out. We have a system that is based on the law but run by people who understand the market.

I believe that our system is imaginative and that it will work. It is quite wrong for Opposition Members to argue in favour of the SEC, a system that has patently failed, and to dismiss the SIB which is not yet in operation and which we have every reason to believe will be a success.

The hon. Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch congratulated one of his hon. Friends because he tripped up the Secretary of State by asking him why investment was not bigger than it was in 1979. Today's debate is on the City and I would argue that it was not a shortage of funds that caused a shortage of investment. That is the implication of the Opposition's motion.

When I first went into the City as a chartered accountant more than 20 years ago there were few sources of capital. One could get short-term money from the joint stock banks, the ICFC that took minority stakes in medium-sized businesses, the merchant banks—but they wanted a substantial stake in the company if they agreed to be involved — and the stock exchange. Therefore, many companies went to the stock exchange far earlier than they should have done. That was the only way to get the necessary money.

Now everything is different. There are venture capital organisations, the joint stock banks have their own merchant banks, business expansion schemes have been introduced and the banks are more ready to lend money. There is, in fact, a proliferation of sources of capital. There is no shortage of money for a good proposition. To criticise the City because the figures show that investment has not increased is to misunderstand the fact that the money is available, but the demand for it has not been there. That is hardly the City's fault, and the demand is growing.

It is wrong to argue that the City has failed in its job of providing capital. There is growing demand for investment capital, and I am pleased about that. However, it is wrong to imply as the Opposition motion does, that the cause of our less than desired investment is shortage of money. It has been shortage of good propositions.

When the Labour Government were in power we had low company profitability and high rates of yield on gilts, and the stock exchange was used by the Government as a way to fund their ever increasing debt. It is outrageous of the Labour party to criticise the stock exchange because it does not provide enough capital when it was creating an economic climate in which business could not make the profits that justified further investment. We do not want any nonsense from the Labour party about the stock exchange. Nobody used the stock exchange more actively than the Labour Government, to raise money at high yields that were beyond the reach of industry, thus pricing industry out of the investment business.

There is a notion that [illegible] British investment institutions take a short-term view. This morning, I was at a meeting of the board of a unit trust group that handles £4 billion of savers' money. We have over 400,000 investors. When Labour Members talk about City institutions and how they are investing money, they talk as if they are the private property of the people who are running the organisations. We are investing the savings of 400,000 people, and it is no part of our business to experiment with them. We have to invest them soundly so that we can give a proper return to those who save with us.

The House partly contributes to the problem of short-term thinking in the City and investing institutions because we have such relatively short parliamentary terms. We have to face the fact that the two sides of the House offer the electorate a different economic system. One of the reasons why our investors shorten their thinking is the uncertainty that could arise if we had a change of Government. Unlike other, successful capitalist countries, we have an Opposition who basically do not believe in private enterprise, so do not support the system.

I refer now to BTR and Pilkington. We have supported enthusiastically the privatisation of nationalised industries, because we believe that the Government are a bad commercial decision taker and should be taken out of commercial decision taking wherever possible. We have also supported the sales because we believe in wider share ownership and giving people a stake in the businesses in which they work and a say in how those businesses are run.

It struck me as absolutely unbelievable, when my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State took the correct decision that the takeover was a matter for the shareholders of Pilkington, and that there should not be a reference, that that decision was criticised by people who have made speech after speech saying that Governments should not take commercial decisions, we should privatise and reduce the size of the public sector. It is wrong of the House to say that we want to take the Government out of commercial decision taking, we want to privatise and spread share ownership, but then to say that there are a range of decisions that are far too important to be left to people such as shareholders, and the Government should intervene and take those decisions.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is to be congratulated on resisting the pressure to refer the BTR bid. That pressure was not the result of a genuine desire to see the Monopolies and Mergers Commission do its job. The only reason why anybody wanted the reference was to delay the bid and to mess it about. It was not to allow the MMC the chance to decide whether the bid was in the public interest.

I have one thing to say to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State about the review of mergers policy. We have broad criteria which my right hon. Friend uses in arriving at his decisions about whether to accept the advice of the OFT, and the principal criterion is that of national and public interest. My right hon. Friend has been urged to come forward with a series of very tightly drawn specific proposals. I hope that he will resist that advice, as he resisted the advice on Pilkington.

As an accountant, I found that the section of the tax law that was most effective was the general anti-avoidance provision. The more specific the provisions, the easier it was to get around them. The more specific the rules about takeovers and mergers, the easier it will be for people to work their way round them, and my right hon. Friend will be legislating continuously. With the national interest criteria applied sensibly and wisely, my right hon. Friend has the basis for good decision taking. I hope that he will not allow himself to pushed or cajoled into thinking that if he comes forward with specific and clear-cut rules he will be doing something worthwhile. The present rules, with the national and public interests, as the main criteria, are just what he needs.

I heard the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) quoting the theory that one of the problems is that a company that makes investments and does research makes itself vulnerable. The idea is that one can either be profitable or invest and do research. The best companies do both, and they do them in tandem. I know that Labour Members admire the SEC greatly, so I was interested to read a speech by the acting assistant Attorney General of the anti-trust division of the American Government. He said this about the argument that one makes oneself vulnerable if one does research:

> "Finally, this argument is also contradicted by an SEC study that demonstrates firms that are subsquently takeover targets spend relatively less on research and development than firms in the same industry that are not takeover targets."

The idea that one makes oneself vulnerable in this way is nonsense. Companies that are not doing research are shown, by the Labour party's favourite, much admired organisation, the SEC, to be the vulnerable ones.

7.8 pm

**Mr. Doug Hoyle** (Warrington, North): I start by declaring an interest as president of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffss. The right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) talked about voluntary regulation of the City, but that is different from the way in which the Government view trade unions. They insist on the compulsory regulation of trade unions. But when they are dealing with their friends in the City, regulation can be voluntary.

We are debating a scandal without a parallel. Of what has been going on in the City, we know only the tip of the iceberg. There is much more to come out. Whether the Government or Conservative Members like it—I know that they do not, because they are dependent on what they call free enterprise—there are in the City an awful lot of fat cats who are greedy and who are not content with what they are getting with their champagne-breakfast style and with the high salaries that they receive, so move into criminal dealings. At long last the Government have woken up to them and have been forced into action because of the public outcry. It is not something that they were originally determined to do, but something that they have been pushed into doing.

Many interesting people in the City have been dismissed or had to resign. Many of them have been referred to. Those people earn very high salaries. Geoffrey Collier of Morgan Grenfell had to resign because of insider dealing in relation to AE. He received a salary of £300,000 a year. Roger Seelig was very highly paid and he had to resign in connection with the Guinness bid. Ernest Saunders, the chief executive and chairman of Guinness, earned £375,000 a year. Oliver Roux, who was the finance director of Guinness, was seconded from Bain and Co. He was reported to be on a six-figure salary. Christopher Reeves is the chief executive of Morgan Grenfell and was earning £300,000. Graham Walsh was head of corporate finance at Morgan Grenfell and was earning £200,000 a year. Lord Spens was head of corporate finance at the merchant bank Henry Ansbacher and earned £100,000 a year. All those people have had to resign, yet we are told that there is nothing wrong with the City. Those people were earning salaries that are not even dreamt of in my constituency or in most others. In spite of that, they were not satisfied and had to look for ways to inflate their earnings.

Sir Ralph Halpern is the chief executive of Burton. He has not resigned, but his lurid activities were reported in all the tabloids on Sunday. However, I am concerned, not with his sexual dealings, but with his share dealings. This should be of interest to the House.—*[Interruption.]* The hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) should listen. He is not renowned for listening. I am concerned about the takeover of Debenhams and the 7 per cent. that switched the balance in the takeover. Sir Ralph's company was involved in that takeover. Mr. Tony Parnes of Alexanders Laing and Cruickshank, known as "the animal", was involved in the Debenhams takeover, just as he was involved in the Guinness bid for Distillers. This gentleman arranged for Gerald Ronson to take an interest. Mr. Ronson was one of the investors involved in the block of 7 per cent. that switched the balance. That Debenhams takeover should also be the subject of an investigation by the Department of Trade and Industry. We might find out some interesting things.

Morgan Grenfell was the banker in the takeover bid by Guinness. The position of that company is somewhat shaky and, having lost so many of its executives, it is in the process of reorganising.

The Government have no policy in relation to merger mania. Up to the end of November, 250 offers were registered for British companies. The value of the bids is £34·4 billion. That is four times the figure of 1985, yet the Government have been complacent about that.

Many famous names have had to fight off takeover bids and some have been successful, such as Allied Lyons, Plessey, and more recently, Pilkington. The chairmen and chief executives of those companies have better things to do than fight off predators or always to be looking over their shoulders at who is going to make a bid. They would prefer to spend all their time, as they should, creating wealth and looking to the future of the company.

We have heard already about the earnings of the City and about how indispensable it is to the nation. We should look at the other side of that, at the capital outflow from the City. Between 1980 and 1985 there was a total outflow from Britain of £30,270 million. That money would have been better used by investing in British companies rather than in strengthening our competitors and putting British companies out of business and employees out of jobs.

Two thirds of the takeovers have been financed by ordinary share capital. That illustrates the critical position of share prices. It also shows why there has been a big rise in the profits of many of the companies which might have been subject to takeovers, while investment in British

*[Mr. Doug Hoyle]*

industry in general has been stagnant. If investment is stagnant or falling, we know that the net result will be fewer British companies.

The right hon. Member for Hertsmere talked about short-termism. He said that he did not like that and that there was much finance available. Our competitors, such as Japan and Germany, have been investing in long-term ventures but we, especially the City, have been investing instead in short-term ventures because those involved are interested in short-term profits.

The scandal of Guinness has been revealed. There has been resignation after resignation and we do not yet know whether the resignations are at an end. However, we know that about £200 million or £300 million has changed hands in share purchases. We also know that £25 million has been paid in compensation to those who have helped. I do not think that there will be any end to the saga. Every time we pick up the newspapers we see some new issue.

**Mr. John Heddle** (Mid-Staffordshire): Typical Labour party pessimism.—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Hoyle:** We do not control the press. It is your press that is revealing the scandals.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong):** The hon. Gentleman should not use the word "your". It is certainly not my press.

**Mr. Hoyle:** I mean the Conservative party press. I wish that it was your press, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because if it were it might be more favourable to the country and to the press itself.

We know that there have been offshore dealings in the Guinness affair. We are also finding out that spiv after spiv has made a quick buck over Guinness.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** My hon. Friend makes an interesting point. There is a danger that if more and more stories come out, and if incidents surface of illegality and criminal activity in the City, the British public will simply become conditioned to accept them. If that happens, the newsworthiness of those stories will subside and the danger is that we will create a climate of acceptability for these practices in the City. That is a real danger. It will become like Northern Ireland, where, when someone dies, the media do not treat it in the same way as they did perhaps 10 years ago.

**Mr. Hoyle:** My hon. Friend makes an interesting point which is worthy of consideration. All the time people come up to me and say, "Ah well, Guinness was unlucky. They were the unlucky people, but there were a lot more involved in insider dealing." That is precisely the point that my hon. Friend is making. People also say to me, "Will Argyll press ahead with the litigation, and if not why not?" Is it because, as my hon. Friend says, there is a lot more of this hidden away in the City? We know that that is so when we look at the bid for AE, in which Turner and Newall was finally successful. Hill Samuel gave an indemnity to investors who were trying to fight off the threat to the company. In this case, even the tabby cat City takeover panel voiced an opinion that that was not the right way of conducting the matter. As I mentioned earlier, one individual had to resign because of insider dealing in relation to that bid as well.

Then there is Hanson Trust, which is the epitome of short-termism and short-term profit. We all know that Hanson Trust and Lord Hanson are great favourites of the Government and of the Conservative party. They signify what is wrong with industry in this country. All that we have seen from Hanson Trust is a succession of takeover bids.

**Mr. Heddle:** Instead of treating the House to this catalogue of episodes that anyone can read in the press from time to time, will the hon. Gentleman devote just a little of his speech to praising some of the exceedingly good things that the City does; for example, the protection that it gives to unit trust investors, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) mentioned, and the protection that the building societies give to their investors, who now receive a real rate of return at three times the rate of inflation? Will he devote just a little of his speech to an optimistic view of the City, which is the envy of the free world?

**Mr. Hoyle:** I can understand why the hon. Gentleman and other Conservative Members are nervous when we talk about the City and what is happening there. I also understand why he does not defend the Hanson Trust. What have we had from Hanson Trust? We have had a succession of takeovers that reached their zenith with the Imperial Group takeover last April.

The difficulty now is that Hanson Trust requires even larger takeovers to maintain profits and share prices. It is rumoured that City institutions backed Hanson Trust in its successful bid for the Imperial Group, not because it made industrial sense against a rival bid from United Biscuits Ltd., but because they were afraid of the consequences for Hanson share prices had it not been successful.

Hanson Trust is a company which never hesitates to sacrifice sales, market share or employment for short-term profit. Yet that is the company which is admired by the Conservative party, which is in office at present. Recently, Hanson tried to strip £80 million from the pension funds of Courage into which it had not paid a penny. That is the sort of company with which we are dealing, and those are the asset strippers whom all of us should be condemning. The Conservative party should be interested in building up long-term investments in industry.

The Secretary of State was praised for his conduct over Pilkington by the Prime Minister. Only last week the right hon. Lady said the right hon. Gentleman was right not to refer the matter to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and that the market took its own decision much more quickly than if the bid had been referred. Of course, it was nothing of the sort. What really happened was that, in the wake of the Guinness affair, and following political pressure, BTR's bid was withdrawn. Pilkington is a world leader in flat glass manufacture—we do not have many world leaders — and it was spending £62 million on research and development and, £200 million on modernisation. It had invested in the regions and was one of the few multinational companies that had its headquarters in one of the regions. The company and its employees were under threat from the predator BTR, although it had made a profit.

It was the outcry that occurred in the House and outside that caused Owen Green to back off. Certainly there was a sigh of relief from the Conservative party when that happened, because had that not occurred the Conservatives would have been under a lot of pressure from many of their own party who were very concerned that a company such as Pilkington was facing that threat. I have no doubt at all that, before too long, we shall see Owen Green residing in the House of Lords for what he did in withdrawing his bid.

I come to another matter—the destiny of Westland. Its destiny was determined by about six unusual people making bids at the same time. What happened to Westland? Several people purchased shares within the 5 per cent. limit and therefore did not have to declare their shareholding. They were very strange people. There was the Actraint No. 34, Proprietary of Australia which had just purchased 4·99 per cent. There was Lynx Marketing SA, of Panama which purchased 4·79 per cent. There was Rothschilds Bank AG, of Zurich, which purchased 4·89 per cent. There was Sterling Trust SA, of Geneva, which purchased 4·89 per cent. There was Gulf and Occidental Investment Company SA, which purchased 1·38 per cent. Sir John Cuckney said, when he was giving evidence to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry, that he thought there was one other company involved, Les Fils Dreyfus, which also purchased shares. Those purchases altogether totalled about 21 per cent. and they determined which way Westland went. All the bidders appeared late on in relation to the bids that were being made by the Americans and by the European consortium. They all purchased shares and appeared to be voting in one direction. If that was not a concert party, I do not know what was. That is the sort of thing that occurs.

I ask Conservative Members not to be complacent about what is happening in the City or about the destiny of companies that are important to it. What are some of the factors that are encouraging the illegal activity that is occurring? One factor is the massive fluctuation in share prices, which means that enormous profits can be made when a takeover bid takes place. The Distillers shares rose from 200p to 700p in the course of the takeover. There is increasing competition to partake, especially among the merchant banks. We know about Morgan Grenfell. Morgan Grenfell has benefited considerably from the present takeover mania. There is also increased competition resulting from the big bang. If the merchant banks do not keep their present customers, the American banks that are coming in and are determined to press to the limit the regulations will get them instead.

There are large fees and large commissions to be made from the takeover business. There is also pressure on the companies to which I have referred to neglect things that they should be doing, such as investing, so that they can keep profits high and stave off the takeover, merger and asset-stripping sharks in the market. The Guinness bid for Argyll generated £160 million in legal fees and commissions for the City. Thus, takeovers not only make for rich pickings in the City but give the speculators a field day.

What action has been taken? Everybody regards the present takeover panel as a pretty useless body. It has failed to do what it was set up to do in the 1970s—to oversee takeover bids. Many people think that the chairman, Sir Jasper Hollom, despite the fact that he is an ex-deputy governor of the Bank of England—perhaps because he is—has not been strong enough, but the real reason for the panel's ineffectiveness is that it is a purely voluntary body run by the City for the City.

**Mr. Tim Smith:** This is so sixth rate that it is unbelievable.

**Mr. Hoyle:** It may be unbelievable. Nevertheless, it is true. The hon. Gentleman might not believe it. Indeed, it seems hard to believe. Nevertheless, that is what is occurring in the City. That is what is occurring all the time.

What action has been taken by the Governor of the Bank of England? Why has he not used his powers? What about the deputy governor? What has he been doing? He has responsibility for takeovers. Why has he not initiated action?

Then we come to the Government. They have been reluctant to take any action. There is a grave difficulty with their Front Bench. The Secretary of State cannot speak on Guinness because it is the family firm and because the foundations are rocking. The Minister responsible for corporate and consumer affairs, the hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), cannot speak on Lloyd's. How can people have confidence in the Government doing anything when two of the leading spokesmen cannot voice an opinion on a major crisis in relation to Guinness and Lloyd's? This is a disgusting state of affairs. The country will wonder why they are allowed to remain there when action should be taken.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Hoyle:** I apologise to my hon. Friends. I have not finished yet.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Perhaps I can help the House. The debate started at 4.52 pm. The hon. Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle) is the seventh speaker, and, out of those seven speeches, only two have been less than 20 minutes. Many right hon. and hon. Members are anxious to catch my eye. I appeal for brevity.

**Mr. Hoyle:** I shall be as quick as I can, but I think you will agree, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it would be wrong if we in the Opposition did not say what we want.

I am in favour of a statutory body. I should now like to speak a little about the public interest, which the Conservatives have decried. Emphasis should be placed on the public interest. When we talk about the public interest, we should take into account the interests of the employees who created the wealth of the company and who are subjected to a takeover, as well as the interest of the shareholders. Through the trade unions, the employees should be represented on the statutory body. At least one third of the places should go to them. They should have the right to give evidence. That is important, because if the company goes and they lose their jobs, not only they but their families will suffer. They should be able to say to any company that is successful in a takeover bid that the conditions of employment and pension rights should be maintained. If an employee is dismissed as a result of a takeover, that should be deemed to be an unfair dismissal.

It is not enough to consider just shareholders and competition. We should consider the public interest and the national interest. We should consider whether a takeover is good for the country. Equally, we should take into account the interest of the company's employees.

7.35 pm

**Mr. Michael Grylls (Surrey, North-West):** I shall not follow too far the line taken by the hon. Member for Warrington, North (Mr. Hoyle), much as I like him personally. I believe that on almost every issue that he raised, he is entirely wrong. However, in the interests of politeness, I shall not follow him down that route. I shall be brief because I know that many colleagues want to speak.

I shall make only a passing reference to the present problems of the City and the scandals that are coming out almost daily. Everything that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said today gave the answer to the criticisms put by the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith). He made a firm, tough and resolute speech, and everybody on the Conservative Benches was delighted to hear it. I hope that the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East will listen to this. It may be to his advantage. He will not damage the Conservative party by trying to smear the City or us. People are too sophisticated to do that, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has given the answer.

The right hon. and learned Gentleman may succeed —it would be a tragedy—in damaging the City itself and all the good things that it is doing for this country, such as raising money for industry and bringing benefit to the balance of payments, and all the things that have been brought out in the debate. Although we may be in an election year, I hope that the Labour party will desist because it is damaging the national interest very much.

I should like to concentrate my few remarks on competition policy, under two heads. One is merger or takeover policy and the other is anti-competitive practices which, again, are an important part of competition policy, but sometimes are not discussed enough. I applaud my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the decision that he took some seven months ago in setting up the committee under Hans Liesner from the Department of Trade and Industry to look into competition policy. The House will be comforted to know that the committee is sitting at present, so in a way this debate is timely.

I refer first to merger or takeover policy. I am sorry that my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern) is not here to hear what I shall say because much of what he said was near to the truth. It is a fine judgment as to whether the law is right. Of course many mergers can be constructive in an industrial sense. When a firm has floppy management, it can be rejuvenated by joining a more dynamic group. It would be idiotic to say anything else. However, we must also weigh this in the scales. For the past 30 or 40 years we have become the most concentrated economy probably in the whole of the western world. I admit that it is difficult to measure—I shall not give statistics, because there is not time—but not many people would contest the truth of that. If the private enterprise system is to work effectively and the market that we talk about and believe in is to be fair, I fear that we have to regulate, and not encourage, or encourage too much, further concentration in British industry and commerce. Many would agree with that.

A concentrated economy also runs absolutely counter to one of the outstandingly successful policies followed by the Government, to encourage the development and growth of small and medium businesses. For 40 years before this Government took office, those businesses had been largely neglected in Britain through a lack of understanding that such businesses are the key to a successful private enterprise economy.

**Mr. Hoyle:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Grylls:** No, I want to finish my point.

If that is true, if it is important to have a policy to encourage the growth of small and medium enterprises, we cannot allow the economy to become more and more concentrated. One works against the other.

I am sure that the Government want to pursue their successful policies towards small and medium firms and they would be wise to consider some of the effects of merger policy. This concern is not simply a sudden quirk on my part or on the part of others. The provision that I have described has been written into the United States anti-trust law. There is a phrase in American statute relating to the need to protect the interests of small businesses. That is one of the criteria. For many takeovers, that would not be the most important criterion. However, with the Americans' belief in a fair market system and the diversification of economic power rather than the concentration of such power, they believe that that is a factor which must be observed when a merger is under consideration.

With respect to some of my colleagues, it is not enough to say that we will only consider mergers if two similar firms are involved. If BTR and Pilkington had been two glass firms proposing to join together, under the present guidelines established in 1984, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State would almost automatically have referred that proposed merger to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for consideration. However, the bid was not referred because the firms were not both glass companies. I do not want to consider the Pilkington case here, because it is finished with and is old hat. However, other factors should be taken into consideration because other forms of concentration may be just as damaging.

The economics editor of *The Times* wrote an excellent article today. He states:

> "Of course, takeovers across industries can result in a reduction in competition if it is possible, for example, for a large company to force rivals out of the market by undercutting through cross-subsidisation from the other industries in which the firm operates."

In a sense, that is a horizontal merger. That can result in anti-competitive practices that would be every bit as damaging to the free enterprise system as the traditional cartel. We should consider adding to our policy—I know that my right hon. Friend is considering this—the protection of smaller firms.

I want to consider anti-competitive practices in general. It is unique to British competition law that our bureaucratic system allows a decision to be made more or less by an official. In other countries, if a firm is damaged by an anti-competitive practice—driven out of business or severely damaged—it can sue and receive damages. What happens in this country? A firm may report to the regulatory authorities the details of that anti-competitive practice and the regulatory authorities—which I admit have a good record in this respect—may decide that that is an anti-competitive practice and must be stopped. Of course, it probably is stopped, but very often it is too late. The damage has already been done.

I believe that there should be some remedy at law for firms that are damaged by anti-competitive practices. It is interesting that in most industrial economies that principle is accepted. It is unique to this country that firms that are damaged by those forms of anti-competitive practice cannot recoup damages.

It would be ridiculous for me to leave the impression—I do not want do to this—that I am against large firms and mergers. In the 1960s and 1970s we believed that it was important to be big, no matter how a firm became big. The lesson that we have learnt by considering more successful overseas competitors is that they have become big because they have been successful, not successful because they have been big. There is a difference.

We should be encouraging the internally generated growth of successful firms rather than growth by acquisition. If that view was taken in respect of merger policy, we would gradually have a less concentrated economy in which a free enterprise system could operate more fairly and successfully. That would be completely in line with the thrust of the Government's policy, which has been so right to aim for a fair enterprise economy. We will achieve that if we adjust our general competition policy in some of the ways that I have suggested tonight.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I am grateful for the hon. Gentleman's brevity.

7.45 pm

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): I am glad to follow the hon. Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls). If he studies the Committee proceedings on the Bill which became the Competition Act 1980 he will find that his proposition about anti-competitive practices was debated at some length by myself and my hon. Friends. I would like to take the opportunity to pay tribute to the hon. Gentleman for the work that he performs on some of the more innovative aspects of small business policy that have been fed from the Conservative Back Benches to the Front Bench over the past few years, some of which I have openly supported on the Floor of the Chamber when I believed that they were right and thought that they may work—especially the small business subsidy.

Before I put the boot in, I want to pay a tribute to the right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson). In many ways he was the father of the big bang in the sense that he was responsible for negotiating a deal on commissions with the stock exchange in the early 1980s which, in effect, brought in the changes. I was sad to hear him criticise my hon. Friends for being unappreciative of that move. As those of us who sat on the Committee of the Financial Services Bill made clear, we support the changes and the greater freedom and liberation brought about in the City of London.

We are concerned about the vast expansion in the market. We felt that some suitable regulatory system should be in place to ensure that abuses would not break out in the way that they have and will repeatedly break out in future. Without giving the case away, there is one particular reason why an SEC-type statutory operation would have been more appreciated by many hon. Members—the public would have a better perception of such a body.

I do not believe that the British public can understand an arrangement whereby the policing of the City—apart from the statutory powers available under the Companies Acts to the Secretary of State—is carried out by a private firm of policemen in the form of the SIB. The City of London will be policed by a private company. Irrespective of the powers—and we can argue at length whether increased powers would be available to an SEC-type statutory SIB—there will always remain the problem of perception. We will never convince the people that a private policing operation in the City will work. Even if it did work, people would never believe it. Wherever they saw deficiencies, they would say, even if that was not true—and I will not go into the merits of that—that they arose only because the policing operations were in the hands of a private company.

More brutally, may I deal with the arguments during the past few months about Guinness and what it did. Despite assurances from the Dispatch Box, I believe that the Department of Trade and Industry will try to ensure that the number of people who are prosecuted is minimal. I have no doubt that some of those directly involved in the activities will be prosecuted, but the vast majority of them will not. We shall be fortunate to see two or three prosecutions from this entire affair. I believe that not just two or three people but hundreds of people are involved, and I can prove it. It was not a few people who received the £25 million, if that was the sum paid, but many people. Anyone who is willing to conspire with others to break sections 151 and 152 of the Companies Act 1985 is guilty of a criminal offence under the Criminal Law Act 1977, which sets out the offence of conspiracy. Clearly, some people conspired with those who set up the arrangements that are in default of sections 151 and 152 of the 1985 Act. They knew precisely what they were doing. They knew that they were conspiring to commit a criminal offence, and I believe that they were many.

I warn the Secretary of State that when he comes to the House and announces the names of those who will be prosecuted, I shall be asking for prosecutions under the Criminal Law Act 1977. He knows that they have committed offences and they must not get away with it. It is as important that they are prosecuted as it is to prosecute someone who fiddles his supplementary benefit. They have all broken the law. As the Government have been willing to prosecute thousands of people who have fiddled their supplementary benefits, if it can be proved that at least hundreds, but perhaps thousands, of people are involved in this conspiracy, they should, equally, be prosecuted. I shall expect the Secretary of State to take that action.

Earlier today—I must choose my words carefully because I gave the Secretary of State an undertaking privately—at Question Time I mentioned a licensed security dealer operating in the City and I asked the Minister to confirm that I had given him, privately, the name of that licensed security dealer, who was trading fraudulently, and that, during Question Time, that company was open for business and trading. I know that the people who bought shares today through that licensed security dealer will lose much of their money. Since I asked that question, people will have purchased shares not knowing that they will lose their money, but they will, as many before them have lost.

I gave the Minister the name of the company and mentioned the nature of the offence that was being committed. I put it to him that, since he had the information, unless he took action to close the company immediately—his departmental officials have been considering the matter for several months and, in my view, have been hanging about and not taken the necessary action—it could be said that the Government or the officials had been negligent and that those who had lost money may have a claim against the Government.

I give the Secretary of State notice that I intend to proceed with the case on that basis: I gave him the information today. I know how much that company has been paying for shares, as today I made arrangements to ring in to discover the sale and purchase prices of their shares so that I can measure any losses in the future. If anyone who has bought shares comes to me in the future, I shall refer him to my statements in the House.

The company, which I shall not be naming—I shall explain why in a moment—has international connections with associated companies carrying out similar activities overseas. A company associated with it in the United States of America is already the subject of an inquiry by the Securities and Exchange Commission. Information that I received from an SEC informant helped me to put together my case to the Minister at Question Time and during this debate, and I have taken that information in conjunction with further information received directly from investors. The company is already the subject of inquiries by the Department of Trade and Industry, and I am at a loss to understand why no action has been taken. There is sufficient evidence to warrant the Minister moving in to close the company before more money is lost.

I have not revealed the name of the company for one reason. The company, which deals in the over-the-counter market, is warehousing shares. It is a market-maker in some shares and, because of its position as a market-maker, if I revealed its name, it would affect the price of shares held by ordinary people. I do not wish to be held responsible for a rapid drop in the price of those shares because many of them could be small savers.

I have been criticised for refusing to name the company in the Chamber, and that is why I gave my reason. It is said that by refusing to name that licensed dealer, I am placing a question mark over other licensed dealers which might, as a result of my actions, lose business. I do not know. It was a hard judgment to make, and I can tell the House that I was up until 4 o'clock this morning discussing how to approach the matter. Eventually, the company will fall, and I place an obligation on the Minister to resolve the matter before the public loses more money.

Finally, I should mention briefly the attempt by Lonrho to take over Harrods. We have all received a mountain of information from Tiny Rowland. The pile of paper that I have received during the past year is extremely thick. There must be a company somewhere doing nothing but photocopying and sending out correspondence. It is significant that much of the correspondence that he is sending out is clearly libellous. I do not know whether he is trying to provoke a legal action. He must realise that he will not get it, so now he simply says what he thinks. Some of the statements are outrageous, but they may be true. The problem is that none of us knows.

I am informed that Tiny Rowland does not intend to give up. He will continue to ply us with information. This man may well be obsessive about this matter, but he may well be telling the truth. He is making grave allegations against Department of Trade officials, people in the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, the Prime Minister and, indeed, the Prime Minister's son, who allegedly was involved in discussions about the takeover. I do not know whether it is true or false.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** Why mention it?

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** That is the problem. We must discover the truth.

Every hon. Member who, weekly or monthly, receives information from Tiny Rowland on this matter needs a full explanation. It is insufficient for Ministers to go to the Dispatch Box, as they do, and answer questions on this matter by referring to statements that were made some years ago about the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's decisions Nos. 1 and 2 on the proposed Lonrho takeover. Today, I mention the tax aspects of the matter. For those who were not present when I mentioned it at Question Time, I repeat that we have lost £20 million of revenue because of a decision taken in the early 1980s to refuse Lonrho the right to take control of Harrods. That in itself is worthy of some form of statement, if only a sentence — *[Interruption.]* It is not central to a statement, but may be mentioned during the course of a general statement on that takeover.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** (Great Grimsby): Does my hon. Friend agree that a statement, and indeed discussion in the House, will not clear up the matter? Grave allegations which may be accurate have been made. Certainly, in the argument put forward by Tiny Rowland in his letters to hon. Members, a strong case has been made for an inquiry, at the very least.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** From my point of view, it does not matter what it is. All we want is an explanation.

8.2 pm

**Mr. Kenneth Warren** (Hastings and Rye): The title of the debate is:

"The City's Duty to Serve the Nation."

As the Opposition chose this topic, I am amazed that more than 95 per cent. of Opposition Members are not present. It is their choice, their debate, and they make enough noise in the headlines—but where are they today? It was a delight to see the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) join us. Where are all his friends in the alliance? Where are the Ulster Unionists? Where are the Scottish nationalists? Where are the Welsh? It is an Opposition day, but they are not here. They serve their case very badly in seeking to criticise the City. They provide Conservative Members with an opportunity to talk in a sane and sensible fashion about the Government's relationship with the City, and to take Opposition time to do so.

The interests of the Government and the City are mutually indivisible in exactly the same way—as we would be told by the Labour party, if its members were here—as the interests of Government and manufacturing industry are indivisible. There should be no qualification about the fact—I am sure that it will be apparent in the Lobbies—that the City does a valuable job for the nation. That job is well recognised around the world, even if it is not recognised on Opposition Benches.

We heard the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry make a sensible statement about the value of the City. Now, in Opposition time, we could consider the way in which Her Majesty's Government should act and react to the City in a fair and reasonable fashion. Our trading position is disadvantaged because of the high cost of money in our domestic and trade economies. I hope that the Government appreciate that the regulation of interest rates should not be imposed so rigorously as to deny competitiveness. We must look sternly at the way in which the present high interest rates, both in the City and in the promotion of manufacturing industry, are hurting our competitiveness.

The issue of nationalisation compensation has been explored by Conservative Members on a number of occasions. It has been virulently pursued by my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, North-West (Mr. Grylls), who made an interesting contribution to the debate. The Government must examine their relationship with the City — those who invest in it and those who rely on it to make progress in their businesses. That fact has not been spelt out more clearly than by the representations, for instance, by Sir William Lithgow in the Kincaid case. In letters to hon. Members, he stated that he considered that

> "The Government's attitude is quite incomprehensible to an industrial community like ours, not least because my organisation could provide so many more jobs in an area of great distress."

He wrote that letter from Port Glasgow in Renfrewshire.

When the Conservative party was in opposition, it was acknowledged that the Government of the day were not fair in the way in which they nationalised industries and paid compensation. I refer to the case of one company. I do not make this a cause celebre, but merely say that it is a sign of the general problem. It was stated before the European Court that Kincaid, an engineering business that had no special departmental aide, was vested in the Government on 1 July 1977. The Government acquired a business valued at £19 million, including £5 million in cash, for less than £4 million. The Government of the day acquired £5 million cash for £3·8 million and a business worth £19 million for nothing. Even at this late stage, Her Majesty's Government should examine this and other instances. The Government must be seen to be fair in their dealings with industry and the City to make sure that they protect future industry and commerce that may be threatened if the Labour party were to be in power. If Conservative Members cannot make the situation fair, the people of this country must look to Parliament and ask, "Where is our protection?"

On 23 September last, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, in reply to the chairman of Scott Lithgow, wrote that she could not accept that the Government had produced unfair results. She went on to say:

> "Payment of additional compensation would require legislation."

Today or tomorrow is not too late to try to achieve equity. In their relations with those who invest and deal in the City and in the community, the Government must act in a fair and reasonable fashion before we decide that we should always blame the City for any wrongs that may be done, as is so readily the accusation of the Opposition.

What will the Government do about multiple applications in terms of the denationalisations that are most welcome and that we must pursue vigorously? At a convenient time, I shall give the Secretary of State information about the way in which multiple applications are being effected, which, judging from a reply that my right hon. Friend gave me in a written answer last week, appears not to be detected. We do not support anything that will allow multiple applications on denationalisation, but, apparently, they are taking place. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will pay strict attention to the need to control multiple applications without any hesitation.

The tin crisis has almost become a traditional subject of interest to the Select Committee on Trade and Industry, of which I have the honour to be Chairman. Following a personal representation — I was not acting in my capacity as Chairman — in a letter dated 22 January my right hon. Friend said:

> "I do not believe that the Government should seek a negotiated settlement of the claim against the International Tin Council and its members."

The Government are held in high esteem throughout the world, and should take the initiative where responsibility is clearly seen to be that of the Government as a participant in an international agreement. We have only 4 per cent. of the total responsibility. I am advised that the Government's total legal liability would be not more than £20 million. However, because there has been no initiative from the Government, the creditors' bankers and brokers have been forced to take recourse in the United Kingdom courts.

If the Government, whom I support wholeheartedly, believe in the strength and the future of capitalism but will not try to ensure that it is protected, I believe that they must examine their position and state whether they are prepared to reconsider carefully the way in which they have acted.

Mr. Justice Millett, when considering the proposals for winding-up petitions, said:

> "The responsible course now would be for the member states by diplomatic means to negotiate suitable arrangements to meet the shortfall."

The Government have an opportunity to take the initiative, but they are holding back. If they exercised their ability to take the lead in an international problem, it would greatly enhance their stature.

The opportunity for debate provided by the Opposition today has, strangely enough, given Conservative Members an opportunity to tell the Government that they should act more strenuously to protect capitalism and to be seen to enhance its value.

8.11 pm

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): I, too, am glad that the House is debating this issue today, although not for the same reasons as the hon. Member for Hastings and Rye (Mr. Warren). For a long time we have been concerned not about the relatively new events with mergers and insider dealing, but with the fraud in the City that has occurred over a considerable period, and that has been well known to the Minister with responsibility for consumer affairs. Indeed, our motion encapsulates the proper dissatisfaction felt not only among Opposition Members but throughout the country with what is happening in the City.

There was a time when the City evoked some national pride; today, it stands for fraud, chicanery and fiddling — *[Interruption.]* It is true. If we ask anyone on the streets for his views on the City, that will be his general concept——

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark** *rose*——

**Mr. Rogers:** No, I shall not give way to the Tory Member. Most Tory Members are sponsored by and are consultants to firms and companies operating in the City. Most of them act as parliamentary consultants to large groups that have been involved in mergers and takeovers. I ask them to sit back and learn a lesson, rather than come to the House at this late stage of the debate and become very excited. They should listen——

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark** *rose*——

**Mr. Rogers:** I shall give way to my colleague and forgive him for his lateness.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** What lateness? I was here for the beginning and the middle of the debate. Does my honourable colleague think it logical to say that the City is noted for chicanery and fraud? Does he not know that £7·4 billion is earned by the City? Does he think that the world is as stupid as he is? Does he think that the world would deal with us if that were so? Will he not moderate his language and think of the country rather than only of the Welsh valleys; just for once?

**Mr. Rogers:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for those remarks. Had I realised that he would be so personally insulting, I would not have given way.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** My honourable colleague was rude to us.

**Mr. Rogers:** I might have been rude about Conservative Members in general, but I did not personally insult the hon. Gentleman. However, I admit that it is not difficult to be rude to him.

The hon. Gentleman asked me to justify my opening statement; if he sits back and listens, I shall do just that. We are not dealing tonight with the new phenomena of Distillers, Argyll, Pilkingtons and BTR—we are dealing with a long history of fraud and chicanery in the City. The extent of fraud in the City's insurance sector is extraordinary in moral, legal, criminal, financial and social terms — *[Interruption.]* Perhaps I should say that it is anti-social. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) keeps muttering, and perhaps there are reasons why he does so at this time of night. I simply ask him to listen so that I can put my case.

The position is extraordinary in the number of frauds that are perpetrated, in the audacity of those frauds and in their treachery. In general, those frauds are not simply a matter of one person against another—they are only the vehicles for handling the money of ordinary, decent people who, through pension funds or bank deposits, put their money into the hands of the City — and, more important to me, into the hands of the insurance sector. That aspect of the City has not previously been highlighted in this debate.

Conservative Members are fluttering around their Benches, claiming to be concerned about standards and worried about what I may say. The Government appear to have an obsession with standards—probably because they do not have any themselves. Not long ago, the leader of the Conservative party spoke of standards in society — the need for more law and order, the need for the hanging penalty for terrorists, the birching of hunt saboteurs and the flogging of miners—*[Interruption.]* If Conservative Members read *Hansard*, they would then know that that is what was said during the miners' strike. As Max Hastings said,

> "All the other little human touches that would make British civilisation a better and a finer thing"—

**Mr. Warren:** I must protest, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Gentleman has made the serious accusation that a Conservative Member has advocated the flogging of miners. Will he please name that Member?

**Mr. Rogers:** Yes, I will. I shall not do so now, but will check with *Hansard* — *[Interruption.]* Because I have prepared myself for this debate—*[Interruption.]* I wish that the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Sir A. Fletcher), who is parliamentary adviser to the Argyll group, would allow me to speak. After all, I am speaking only for the Rhondda constituency——

**Mr. Warren:** Name the Member.

**Mr. Rogers:** I shall check with *Hansard* later.

The one area in which the Government especially lack standards is in their dealings with their friends in the City. As the Lord Chancellor said last year:

> "The bottom seems to have dropped out of morality."

When considering the background to the frauds, we must remember that the City has changed. The image the Conservative Members put forward in defence of their friends is one of the City still being of good men and true, working hard and honestly for God, Queen and country; of people whose word is their bond, and who meet in their clubs or at their old boy's reunions and order the world for the benefit of others.

That is the image that Conservative Members would like us to have of the City of London but, of course, it is miles away from the present-day image of the City. It may well have been true some time ago but it bears no resemblance to the modern, high-technology money market where vast sums of money are moved and manipulated, as illustrated earlier by the hon. Member for Horsham (Sir P. Horden), and where the measure of success is not integrity but acquisition and greed.

We know that the City is a dynamic institution and is constantly changing. As Andrew Philips said in *The Observer* on 15 December, 1985:

> "With all this, London has become an international crime haven, allowing financial racketeers from mainland Europe and the United States to continue their commodity swindles, advance fee frauds and the like unmolested. But we also have a fraud boom all of our own. Any firm you talk to will have its own in-house tale of woe. But it will probably remain under wraps. Exposing crooked employees in court is a rarity."

That is a City solicitor talking. He was certainly not challenged by his friends in the City.

In the research that I have done for this debate, I have been impressed by the scale and number of frauds perpetrated. When I asked the staff in the Library if they could give me a list of all frauds that had been brought to public attention in the past couple of years, they came back to me a day or so later and said that they could do it but that there was so much I should get someone to help me carry the paper. I was not impressed, I was frightened by the volume and number of frauds perpetrated. In 1981, for example, the City of London police fraud department had 80 cases under investigation. In 1984 there were 117. New matters recorded were 536 in 1981 and 621 in 1984. In 1981 there were 35 arrests. By 1984 the figure had increased to 77.

Before Conservative Members applaud the Government for the increase in the number of arrests, I would like them to consider the fact that there were only 18 Crown court cases in 1981 and only 18 in 1984; there has been no increase in the number of City fraudsters brought before the courts. The sums involved are huge, almost beyond what normal people can comprehend. A recent study, for example, calculated that British companies are now defrauded of £3 billion or more a year.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** Load of cobblers.

**Mr. Rogers:** The hon. Member is using a rude word. It is probably either because he cannot understand, hear or read——

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** You are talking nonsense.

**Mr. Rogers:** —and he will drown there in his ignorance not just for the rest of the evening but probably for the rest of his life.

An informed insider reckons that the recent reinsurance frauds netted £500 million. The City of London fraud squad has actually reported these figures.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** That is too much.

**Mr. Rogers:** Are the City of London police figures wrong? I would prefer to accept them rather than the mutterings of the hon. Gentleman. The Government's own Inland Revenue has come up with figures as well. If there is nothing going on, as the hon. Gentleman is saying, why on earth in 1985 did Lloyd's agree to pay the Inland Revenue £42·5 million in respect of liabilities wrongfully secreted by members of Lloyd's? These were men of high probity, men in the City who settled with the Inland Revenue for forty two and a half million quid. That is the scale of the fraud that goes on in the City.

Andrew Philips has further referred to under-resourcing. Perhaps I could refer to the number of people involved in investigations in the City, the numbers that I have mentioned as compared with the numbers that my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) mentioned, when he talked of hundreds, if not thousands. We are dealing with cases that are only in the low hundreds, because there are no people to investigate the crimes. The allegations are being made, yet there are insufficient trained police to catch up with the criminals. I quote Andrew Philips again, when he talks of

> "the bizarre under-resourcing of those responsible for policing the City and bringing its malefactors to book. The Fraud Investigation Group of the DPP, for example, has a paltry qualified staff of 21."

Over 30 specialist claims control units investigate petty fraud in the social security system. My hon. Friend the Member for Workington said that it would be quite proper for people who were cheating on supplementary benefit to be brought before the courts. Quite right, but why do the Government have to have thousands of inspectors chasing people who may have cheated them of 5p or 10p and only 21 people investigating the City of London?

The Minister intimated last year that he was going to put more resources into this area. Perhaps he could give us some indication of this now. I am sure that he will accept my argument that more resources should be put into increasing not only the number but also the quality of the people who do this work.

It has been argued by Government Members that other financial centres are more corrupt than the City of London, that there have always been rotten apples in the City and that we have to live with corruption and fraud. I do not think that we have to. This debate today is vital for the interests of the country. We Opposition Members are to be applauded for removing the wraps from the iniquitous goings-on in the City of London. The debate should not be in any way about self-regulation versus statutory control because to some extent it is now sterile. We cannot legislate for an institution whose moral foundations are crumbling. We can have the finest laws on earth, the finest structure and the finest institution, but if there are crooks operating inside and we do not root them out it will still be an evil, decaying institution.

8.28 pm

**Sir Alex Fletcher (Edinburgh, Central):** I am obviously happy to declare my interest in this matter, first as an adviser to the Argyll Group but, more important for the purposes of this debate, as the Member for Edinburgh, Central, the United Kingdom's other financial centre. I might add that also in my constituency I have what was supposed to be the headquarters of Distillers, although the actual headquarters' activities were rather difficult to find.

I shall be very brief on matters of competition policy and in terms of City regulation, not least because my right hon. Friend the Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) covered these points extremely well in his speech. I had the pleasure of working with him at the Department in 1983. There should not be over-reaction to the criticisms that have been made by some of my hon. Friends, but more frequently by Opposition Members, about policy on competition and mergers. I recollect that in 1973 there was over-reaction to the secondary banking crisis. As a result we had the development land tax, which stifled economic growth in the market.

On the question of the regulation of the City, the biggest problem that we face on this side of the House, for which I must take much of the responsibility, is the continued use of the expression "self-regulation". Self-regulation was the old system of voluntary club rules in the City, but the new system which has been introduced in the Financial Services Act 1986 is by no means voluntary. If people wish to trade and do business in financial services in the United Kingdom, they are obliged to register and to submit to the rules that will be supervised by the Securities and Investments Board. These rules are no soft option. They require the consent of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. He in turn has the full advice of the Director General of Fair Trading. So I can only apologise for having in my time at the Department stuck with the term self-regulation. If nothing else, I can now see how badly it describes the system that is being introduced.

In the interest of time I shall come straight to the problems that confront us in the Guinness case. This is a case of financial fraud clumsily perpetrated, one that was bound to be revealed, if not by Boesky or Ansbacher, by someone else; most likely it would have been the company auditors, Price Waterhouse. I have every reason to believe that when the DTI inspectors arrived on the scene Price Waterhouse was well on the way to investigating many of the matters that are now being aired publicly. Instead of Price Waterhouse presenting the evidence to the company's shareholders, as it would have done, it presented it conveniently to the DTI inspectors. I have no doubt that Price Waterhouse would have carried out its public duty whether or not inspectors were sent in.

I wish that more of our companies would return to the habit of taking advice from their auditors, rather than always going to the smoothly operating merchant banks in the City. There is a good tradition in this country of people going to their accountants. This is not a commercial for my profession but it is a fact that companies do well to seek financial and business advice in general from their auditors.

The point that I wish to make in bringing in Price Waterhouse at this stage of the debate is that investment

*[Sir Alex Fletcher]*

protection is not a new invention. We may be critical of aspects of it, but it is carried out day in and day out by firms such as Price Waterhouse.

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** The hon. Gentleman has raised a very important point about auditors, but is the history of auditors in not blowing the whistle on matters of this sort good enough to give him the confidence that he has about the role of Price Waterhouse in this case? Does he not feel that the powers of auditors should be strengthened?

**Sir Alex Fletcher:** In my experience, yes. Having worked as a professional accountant, and having been involved in audits, I have seen many examples of fraud being exposed. It is not always exposed publicly, because it does not always have to be exposed publicly. If the auditor confronts the company chairman and says, "This is not right," nine times out of ten the company chairman will see that the matter is sorted out or that the police are called in and an investigation takes place. I am talking not about a cover-up, but about the power of an auditor to declare publicly in his audit certificate that he is unhappy with the way that the directors are treating shareholders. He has such power that the directors cannot afford to go against his advice.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** The hon. Gentleman is making a serious point and I am with him in much of what he says. He will appreciate, of course, that his last observation weakens some of the force of his argument that Price Waterhouse would have been going to the chairman of Guinness, Ernest Saunders. If that method of investment protection is to work, would it not be desirable to consider having an audit committee within the board?

**Sir Alex Fletcher:** I do not disagree with the last point that the hon. Gentleman has made, but it is wrong for him or the House to think that because an auditor finds a difficult chairman that is the end of his action in the event of fraud. He has other powers available to him, and he uses them. A firm of Price Waterhouses's stature need fear no one in anything that it might come across in an audit.

On that point, I might say to the House that Price Waterhouse may also find evidence in the course of its investigation of Guinness of cash payments for which there will be no invoices, payments that were probably made in plain brown envelopes to members of the professional criminal classes. I say this because I have reason to believe that someone in Guinness may have resorted to tactics designed to intimidate those who, like myself, desired an investigation into the affairs of the company following its acquisition of Distillers. I know that such payments are difficult to detect. As I have said, I have worked as a professional accountant and I know the difficulties that Price Waterhouse faces. I am sure that if it detects such payments it will present its evidence to the new directors of Guinness, and I am sure that they in turn will wish to be as forthright about these as about the other matters that have been made public.

**Mr. Barry Porter** (Wirral, South) *rose*——

**Sir Alex Fletcher:** I am sorry, but I cannot give way. I must allow hon. Members who have been here all afternoon an opportunity to speak.

During the Report stage of what is now the Financial Services Act I referred briefly to the takeover panel, which is the last remaining vestige of the old club rule system of self-regulation. The Guinness affair has confirmed my view that the panel should become part of the new statutorily backed system, whether as part of the SIB or in some other way. It would be better if ir could be contained within an existing body, rather than create another body which has to supervise the affairs of the City. This is a matter to which my hon. Friend the Minister can give further thought.

During the Argyll bid for Distillers, Argyll complained to the takeover panel a number of times about certain dealings in Guinness shares. The panel simply accepted the assurance of Morgan Grenfell over the telephone that the takeover rules were not being broken. With the benefit of hindsight, we need much more effective supervision in the new markets. The SIB will have the resources and the authority that the panel lacks to investigate and take quick action where evidence suggests that all is not well. In any case, the SIB will be doing just that in the markets generally. I hope that in reply to the debate my hon. Friend will go a little further than my right hon. Friend in saying how he thinks the panel might be brought into the takeover sphere.

In the wake of the Guinness revelations, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Governor of the Bank of England have acted quickly and effectively in the City. They were absolutely correct to ensure that the top brass cannot simply dismiss junior directors and leave it at that. The captain is responsible for the fate of his ship, whether he is on the bridge or down below in his bunk. That should apply on land just as much as it does at sea.

Serious as these City matters are, the fundamental question in this shameful affair must be the legality of the Guinness acquisition of Distillers. I can do no better in that respect than quote briefly from the *Financial Times* of last Saturday 24 January:

> "It is now clear that the takeover battle for Distillers was not decided simply by free market forces. Instead the share price of Guinness was manipulated so as to give shareholders in Distillers a misleading impression of the value of its bid."

That says it all.

The criminal matters arising from this affair will be dealt with by the courts. Argyll and the other companies will decide what civil actions they should raise against Guinness and its advisers. But what about the Scotch whisky industry and its future? A year ago Guinness followed Argyll's lead and promised to return to Scotland the headquarters and top management of Distillers as part of the newly merged company. That commitment was broken, along with several others.

Are the shareholders of Guinness content that the Guinness family directors and the remaining executive directors, who sat silently but profitably throughout the Saunders' stewardship, should be permitted to merge or dispose of Johnny Walker, Dewar's, Bell's or Gordon's as they think fit? I have every respect for the new non-executive directors and the new chairman, Sir Norman Macfarlane, who is a personal friend of mine, but their hands are full trying to measure the extent of the damage inflicted on the company by its directors. In any case, their presence now does not alter the thrust of my question about the future of the Scotch whisky industry.

In recent weeks the City has revealed its deep concern for its reputation as a leading financial centre, and rightly so. I have already praised the work of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and the Governor. But the City has another equally important role in this affair as the major institutional shareholder in Guinness. The City backed Guinness twice last year, first in the bid—many people in the City took the view that because it was an agreed bid with Distillers they should back both the Distillers board and the Guinness board — and again at the extraordinary general meeting at the beginning of September when it personally backed the chairman when he went against all that the City should believe in and said that he would be chairman and chief executive. He was stubborn on that point and the City gave way, and we know why. He could not risk an independent chairman — if hon. Members will pardon the pun — of Guinness. If Sir Thomas Risk had become chairman, the company's affairs would all have tumbled out in the few weeks thereafter. However, that was not to be. On both occasions the City was seriously misled. Indeed, it was deceived.

I respectfully suggest to the City that in the present circumstances, with Guinness confronted by enormous management and financial problems and possibly vulnerable to an overseas bidder, and with the competition policy that has been stated and restated many times—the Government cannot simply kick it into touch to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission; at least, I hope that they would, for reasons not to do with competition or the public interest — it should, as the dominant shareholder, assert its influence on the future of the Scotch whisky industry, and be seen to do so.

The City would enhance its reputation a great deal if it showed that it could act, not just as practitioner, merchant banker, broker and dealer, but responsibly as a shareholder, rather than have this great industry floating around rudderless and, at the moment, captainless. No new captain coming on board suddenly out of the blue would easily remedy the enormous problems that that company faces. That is where I see the City's further responsibility in this affair.

Ministers also have a responsibility here, because they have it in their power to influence swift and effective action to heal the severe wounds which the Guinness company has inflicted on the Scotch whisky industry. This is a time where the aims of the City, of the industry and of the Government should combine. They should be at one in ensuring that our financial reputation, industrial performance and good government prevail.

8.44 pm

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** (Great Grimsby): I followed the speech of the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Sir A. Fletcher) with great interest. I agree with the major part of his argument. Indeed, quite by coincidence, I have just written to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry suggesting that Guinness should be required to divest itself of the Distillers company. We cannot countenance a situation in which the criminal is allowed to keep the spoils of the crime. The hon. Gentleman mentioned the brands concerned. Will it be good for the reputation of those brands that they are now diluted with Guinness in the market? It will certainly not be good for Scotch whisky. I hope that that suggestion will be considered seriously because such a measure is well justified in this case.

The hon. Gentleman's speech also stood out, if he does not mind me saying so, because, unlike many other speeches by Conservative Members, it was not a panegyric for the City. Clearly, Conservative Members are sensitive about the City's reputation, as well they might be, but to defend it on the grounds that it earns so much money overseas for Britain, or at least for a section of Britain, is rather like the citizens of Colombia defending the drug trade for fear of endangering overseas earnings.

What happened in the Guinness affair was surely a test of the City club and the vaunted principle of self-regulation. Most social security frauds, which the Government are so assiduous in dealing with, come to light because neighbours report on the fiddler. They complain to the Department of Health and Social Services. Yet here, in full view of the City, was a scandal of major proportions which many people knew was going on. That kind of thing cannot be kept within a close circle. The merchant banks, the institutions and the overseas connections involved must have known on a considerable scale what was going on, but nobody grassed. Nobody turned anybody in and nobody complained. They all sat there silent—the club operating.

Then the City asks us to accept the principle of self-regulation; that the mafia can best do its own police job. We see that kind of performance in that kind of case, faced with that kind of scandal. That surely undermines the whole principle of self-regulation. The stimulus to the inquiries, the original accusations and information, came from the United States, not from the City of London where it had all been happening. That is a major indictment of the City.

I do not want to join in this chorus of denunciation. Clearly, there are major problems. Insider trading is a major problem. If the Government want to encourage shareholder democracy, they must not allow the small shareholder whom they are encouraging to be ripped off. Yet that is what is happening with insider trading. The smaller shareholders are being ripped off by people with inside information using it for their own, now criminal, fortunately, purposes. That is what is at issue. Although few cases have been detected or prosecuted, it clearly must be occurring on a considerable scale judging by the share price movements of companies in contested takeovers. The movements always start before the bid is launched. Most of the research that I have seen shows substantial movements, which can only come from insider information and trading before the launching of the bid.

The scandal is amplified by what went on in addition in Guinness. But I do not find that surprising. The City is, after all, about money. It is about self-interest, greed and speculation. It is about lemmingism turned into a computer programme and wearing a dark suit. The City is not the Church of England at lunch. It is not a cathedral and we should not be surprised that such things happen.

The City is now characterised by a kind of up-market barrow boy mentality. It is rather like the Conservative party. There is no noblesse and there is no oblige. There is a kind of lowering of the accent. The elocution teacher element has gone. It is about that kind of greed and self-interest. Those who do not make it in the City, in either sense of the word, come here to the House of Commons as the pioneer corps of the City, trying as best they can to defend what is going on down the river from which they are mercifully excluded. That is not surprising because, in the ethics of the jungle, people will get away with what they can. It is no use expressing surprise that that has happened.

We need proper, effective regulation and that is why, in Committee on the Financial Services Bill, Opposition

*[Mr. Austin Mitchell]*

Members were adamant that the Government should place regulation on a statutory basis. We said that there should be a body with the power to prosecute and to be its own police force, rather like the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States, and functioning in the same fashion. In the more intimate atmosphere of the City, my hon. Friends and I saw that as the most effective way of dealing with the issue of regulation.

Indeed, we advised the Minister that a Labour Government would have to begin the work of regulation all over again if he did not accept our suggestions. We had hoped that we could come to cross-party agreement on some statutory body. The Minister unwisely rejected that advice and the Government are now desparately trying to back-pedal from their current position. They now have to strengthen what is, essentially, a limited company, financed by the City to regulate the City. That is not good enough.

One of the next Labour Government's first jobs on taking office will be to restore the City's reputation. In that sense, we have its real interests at heart. Its trading ability and worldwide connections depend upon its reputation and it has done more harm to its reputation than have any attacks from this side of the House. By providing a statutory basis for regulation, we shall be defending the City's reputation.

We should go further. I would like to see a requirement for the registration of the beneficial ownership of shares so that overseas nominee companies cannot go in for such raids as are involved in the process of takeover. Why should the beneficial ownership of shares not be registered? That is a legitimate requirement, and one of the problems facing us is why are the Government not proposing that.

My hon. Friends and I should also like to see a takeover panel with statutory powers and with a duty to take the economic situation of the company and the wishes of the workforce into account to stop the highly leveraged bids that have been built on a pile of money and credit, so that we can adequately control takeovers. I would give the first response to any bid to the employees of the company so that they can take over their own company, if that could be written into the legislation. A takeover panel with statutory powers seems to be the absolute minimum requirement.

If the Prime Minister is so keen on turning the unions over to their members, why is she not so keen on turning companies over to their shareholders? Why are the Government not bringing forward a radical programme of shareholder democracy, if they want to encourage small shareholders? Shareholders should be given more say in power and control over their companies. Why are the Government allowing small shareholders to be fleeced, exploited, rooked and duped in the way that has happened because of insider trading? Why are the Government not making the same song and dance about shareholder democracy that they made about the trade unions? Why are the Government not doing any of that?

I should like to deal briefly wth two problems. I decline to join the chorus of praise about the achievements of the City. In the main, those achievements have benefited a fairly small and wealthy class in this country, and not the great mass of our people who depend on the real economy of jobs, manufacturing and industry, not on manipulation, and certainly not on a City that is now an adjunct or an outhouse shed to international manipulation, instead of having British interests, industry and investments at the centre of its preoccupations. The interests of the people of this country are in industry and not in the speculation of the City. Therefore, I decline to join the chorus of praise.

I note that our share of world financial services has been declining as steadily and at about the same rate as our share of world manufacturing trade. If that is achievement, the City will shortly be in the same situation as British manufacturing industry. In part, British manufacturing industry is in its current situation because of the City's approach to it.

The Chancellor has told us that he condemns short-termism in the City. He is the kind of man who should recognise short-termism, whenever it occurs, because his economic policies are essentially based on a short-term approach. However, in this instance, the Chancellor is right to point to the problem of short-termism in the City and to draw attention to the problems that that causes. The City's short-term attitude towards investments, shared by the banks, has fostered an attitude of short-termism towards takeover bids, or the possibility of such bids, and is a penalty on investment. Any company that takes a long-term view makes itself unattractive to the market and immediately vulnerable. A company with an investment programme that is designed to enable it to survive as a competing, effective company in a competing world market makes its share price less attractive and, therefore, becomes vulnerable to takeover. A short-term attitude penalises innovation and one of the great problems facing this country is the lack of finance that the City has provided for innovation, new initiatives and new products.

We do not have a similar ability to the Japanese to think long-term. The Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry not only has influence, but common personnel with the banks, and is able to arrange finance for a company that wants to invest in the long-term and to get a certain share of the market for its new products. That allows the company to sit through the hard years of getting a market share and building up its product and marketing force and to survive to draw the benefits. In Japan, a company can decide the market share that it wants, can get the finance to achieve that and can build on a long-term basis. That is something that we have never been able to do in this country. The City and the banks are largely responsible for the fact that we have not had such a long-term approach to investment. It is now too late for the City to pull its socks up. The City is doing a bit but it is certainly not doing enough. When it comes to investing in industry, the banks have nothing like the record, reputation or ability of the banks in West Germany. The approach of the banks has been short term. They want a quick, profitable balance sheet. A profitability time scale of three months seems to be the aim, rather than thinking of the five or 10-year expectations of the company.

The banks in my constituency are much more keen to operate as glorified pawnbrokers and to provide money for assets rather than to invest in the future for investment, growth or business. If those banks lend money they are too keen to charge fees for arranging the loan that would be a burden on the firm. The banks snatch the loan back at the first sign of difficulty and cannot evaluate whether the firm has a real possibility of success. They do not nurture business as their television commercials tell us they do, and they certainly do not nurture business as do the West German banks.

We need an institution that looks to long-term investment. That is why the Labour party proposes a national investment bank or an industrial bank—I am not sure what the current nomenclature is—which will bring back, by stick and carrot, money that has been invested overseas and ensure that it is invested in Britain for long-term purposes.

The weakness of the banks and the City, and their failure to nurture industry and be involved with it like the Japanese and West German banks, is one of the reasons why we have had to labour too long with an overvalued pound. The interests of finance are taken separately from those of industry. The West German and Japanese banks are keen to see that their exchange rates are as competitive as possible. They are keen to resist appreciation. They must allow their exchange rates to appreciate substantially if we are to trade fairly, win back markets and indeed survive in the face of competition from them.

West Germany and Japan are now trading unfairly because the value of both currencies is kept lower than it should be by such devices as exporting capital, low interest rates and membership of the European monetary system. We should have gone in for that type of strategy if our banks had had similar involvement with industry and knowledge of its interests.

We are all worried about the amount of credit. The Bank of England has called it the overhanging glacier of credit. It is one of the main engines of inflation. An example of that is the appreciation of house prices. That appreciation creates collateral. People can then borrow on an appreciating house price and, because more credit is available, the house price increases again, enabling people to borrow even more.

One of the Labour party's aims should be to achieve effective control of credit. We should reverse the decisions that have been taken in regard to competition and credit control. They were disastrous, as they made credit an engine of asset appreciation and speculation. We must be able to direct credit so that it is used for the proper purposes of industry and the community.

I should like the banks to be required to take Treasury bills at a low rate of interest so that they cannot fund the debt in the traditional fashion, and so that we can use Government credit and put the money out directly into public spending, benefit increases and, if necessary, tax cuts to stimulate the economy rather than pump it out through the banks. The latter course leads only to a fever of speculation on asset appreciation. It is not for the banks to fuel the fever of speculation and takeovers. One of our first jobs, as the Government, must be to ensure that credit is used for the people and not for the banks.

9 pm

**Mr. Peter Lilley** (St. Albans): I too must declare an interest, although I am currently on leave of absence from my old firm. Like each right hon. and hon. Member, and every constituent who has a pension plan or an insurance policy, I have a vested interest in effective and rigorous regulation and honourable and honest investment by those people who handle our funds in the City.

It is therefore sad that not one Liberal Member of Parliament has turned up for such an important debate and that, although it is an Opposition day, fewer than eight Labour Members are present.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** There are only nine Conservative Members.

**Mr. Lilley:** I should like to deal with some of the sources of confusion which bedevil the debate in the House and in the country.

The first is the term "self-regulation". Unfortunately, it normally conjures up the idea that it is all voluntary or, at best, imposed by the moral persuasion of professionals in the City. People therefore deduce that we need something statutory. What we have is a system of practitioner-based statutory regulation. The alternative is civil servant-based statutory regulation. Anybody who believes that it is possible for civil servants to regulate a business that is so complex and rapidly changing as effectively as those who operate a system which involves practitioners who know what is going on is talking through his hat.

The motion talks of imposing a statutory independent commission—an SIC. The Opposition seem to believe—the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) implied it—that we have not established any body to supervise the City, have no plans and are relying on the sense of obligation of those involved. All I can say is, to use the words of the advertisement, he should go and tell SIB.

The second source of confusion is what might be called a paradox of successful detection. As long as crime and misdemeanours go unnoticed, nobody thinks that there is a problem, but as soon as we have some success at identifying crimes and those responsible for them, the public becomes aware of the problem and, as the public is wont to do, says that something must be done. It says that precisely because something has been and is being done.

I hope that we can get over the fact that we are successfully identifying wrongdoing which was previously going unrecognised, not least because some of the things which are now crimes were not crimes under the Labour Government.

The third source of confusion arises from the two uses of the term "moral standards" in the phrase, "declining moral standards in the City". The first use concerns the standards which we all agree ought to be observed and which are enshrined in the rules and laws that govern the City.

The second use is the degree to which those standards are at any time adhered to and complied with. There is no doubt in my mind that the standards that are accepted and enshrined in the rules and imposed by law have increased steadily and, over a period, dramatically from those which used to prevail. I can think of many examples, and the most obvious is insider trading, which used not to be an offence in law and was not considered to be morally wrong. Through lack of rigorous analysis, it was not known who lost as a result of it.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath) talked in an earlier debate about his experience in the City. He explained that at that time

"there was no legislation on insider dealing bcause nobody imagined for a moment that there would be an orgy of insider dealing."—[*Official Report*, 20 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 793.]

*[Mr. Lilley]*

He suggested that the City did not reckon to involve itself in that sort of activity. I must tell my right hon. Friend —I endeavoured to do so at the time—that he let a lot pass him by. It was considered the norm to deal on the basis of insider information, if it was available, until about a decade ago.

Other changes have raised the standard of morality and rule-making in the City, including the change of attitude to multiple applications for new issues. That was considered to be a bit of a lark and it is now potentially a criminal offence. It used to be considered normal for those working in banks and broking houses and acting in a corporate capacity for a company to deal in the shares of the company. That would now normally be prohibited except on the terms on which the directors of companies deal. It used to be considered normal to deal before offering advice to a client. It was commonly held to be rather a recommendation when it was said, "I have bought some myself, old boy; why don't you?" That is considered now to be wrong and improper and no one is expected to deal on that basis until after all his clients have been enabled to buy.

There have been changes in the morality and rules that we seek to establish in the City. None of us has any firm evidence whether there has been any change in the number of bad apples in the crop and we do not know the extent to which there is compliance with the rules. My suspicion is that there has been little change over the decades and that there are as many rotten apples now as there were in the past, but probably no more.

There is the belief that, if a company invests, its profits will be reduced and it will render itself vulnerable to a takeover. This is held to be the mechanism by which the City enforces a short-term attitude on industry, which leads to a lack of investment in research and development, for example.

Short-termism is a weakness in industry, in the City and not least in politics. It was Lord Wilson of Rievaulx who said that a week is a long time in politics, but it is nonsense to suggest that investment is discouraged by the City and that it leads to takeovers. Investment does not reduce a company's profits. It does not enter into the profit and loss account until after the project in which it has occurred comes on stream and starts producing profits. The only areas in which there is a significant reduction in short-term profits are those where research and development is written off in the short term, and that is especially important in the pharmaceutical industry. Exploration costs are written off straight away in the oil industry, which again is an important factor.

It so happens that the pharmaceutical and oil industries are favoured by the City and are not prone to successful takeover bids. They have not been dissuaded from investing. On the contrary, they have invested heavily, successfully and in the extremely long term. I used to be involved in the oil business and we took a 20-year view. I believe that much the same is true of the pharmaceutical industry. The City has encouraged that, not discouraged it.

The Opposition are trying by means of the debate to arouse misunderstanding in the City on the basis of their own semantic confusions. I have mentioned the pharmaceutical industry and I think that the Opposition should take the motto that was hung above a pharmacist's shop, which was, "We dispense with accuracy".

9.9 pm

**Mr. Bill Walker** (Tayside, North): I am grateful for this opportunity to contribute to this important debate. First of all, I declare that I have no interest whatsoever other than that of a Member of Parliament in whose constituency are the firms of Distillers and Bell. On that basis, I shall concentrate my comments, in the few minutes available, on the problems in the city concerning Guinness.

In my Adjournment debate on 25 July 1985 I spelt out the problems concerning the decision taken at that time by the takeover panel. I said that I considered that the takeover panel had made the wrong decision concerning the Bell takeover when it allowed Morgan Grenfell to continue as Guinness's merchant banker and adviser while Morgan Grenfell's corporate finance department had acted, for 10 years, as Bell's corporate finance department. Therefore, it was privy to all Bell's secrets right up to the point of the takeover. Immediately prior to the takeover, the corporate finance department was acting on behalf of both Bell and Guinness. There were no Chinese walls there.

I criticised the takeover panel because I believed that it had let the City down and I still believe that—but, more important, the criticism that has been heaped on to the City should properly and justifiably be put on those whose job it was to look after the affairs and morals of the City. I believe that the chairman of the takeover panel should consider his position.

At the time, I said that it was wrong of the takeover panel to allow Guinness, during the Bell takeover, to say:

> "Scotland's best performing manufacturing company has lost its way."

That was the biggest lie that I have ever read in my life. No one could ever describe Bell as a company that had lost its way. Every year, the company had increased its profits and its sales, and the employees — who were all shareholders—enjoyed its profitability. I shall return to the matter of employee shareholders shortly as I think that it is important and crucial to any decisions that we make about the future of the City.

I found it rather odd that General Accident, Bell's next-door neighbour, deserted Bell at the last minute of the takeover—it held 11 per cent. of Bell's shares—and if it had stayed with Bell, Bell would probably be independent today.

The reason I speak about this is that there have been reports in the press, which I confirm are accurate, of correspondence between a director of Noble Gorssart, which was acting for Guinness, and the present chairman of Guinness, Sir Norman Macfarlane. I believe that there are questions that require an answer. I am not seeking to cast any slurs, but those questions must be answered. Why was Peter Tyrie's account of £51,000 at Quayle Munro paid for by Guinness prior to the completion of the takeover? No declaration was made.

I congratulate my right hon. Friend and hon. Friends on the Front Bench on the speed with which they have moved. They have my full support. The criticisms that I am making are in no way a reflection on the present Front Bench. However, I must criticise my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Sir A. Fletcher) —

unfortunately he is not in the Chamber at the moment —because he was the Minister at the time when I gave him the early evidence that I had, which stands up to close examination, that there was skulduggery going on in the City.

My hon. Friend let the Scottish whisky industry down and it is no good for him to call foul. We would not have faced the ghastly problems of Distillers if the problems had been dealt with during the takeover of Bells. Ernest Saunders used the same tactics and the same strategy with Bells, but the funds used were smaller. I know that, because I was followed by a private investigator during the period of the Bells takeover. He must have been rather disappointed, because my life is not that exciting. Nevertheless, I know that I was followed, as were the directors of Bells.

There is much that I wish to say about this, but I hope that the situation of the employee shareholders will be looked at. I hope that a formula to return Bells to its former directors and employee shareholders will be found and we can get rid of the greed, skulduggery and political ineptness that have brought us to this situation today.

9.14 pm

**Mr. Robin Cook** (Livingston): For the first time since the hon. Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) entered the House, I can say that it is a pleasure to follow him. Lest that comes as too much of a shock to my colleagues, let me explain that I represent one of the two main production centres for Bells whisky and I accompanied the hon. Gentleman when he went to see the hon. Member for Edinburgh, Central (Sir A. Fletcher). In the light of what has happened since, I rather wish that he had agreed to our representations to refer the Guinness bid for Bells to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Perhaps, in the light of his deep knowledge of the subsequent bid by Guinness for Distillers, he can now see the force of the arguments that we put to him.

**Sir Alex Fletcher:** I am sorry that I did not hear all the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Tayside, North (Mr. Walker) but I can guess those remarks that I did not hear. However, there was no evidence presented by anyone during my time as a Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry to show that there was any misconduct by Guinness or anyone else in the course of the takeover bid for Bells.

**Mr. Cook:** That is what the takeover panel says about the Guinness-Distillers bid, a point to which I shall return.

I shall refer to many of the speeches made today, but the House will expect me to make the core of my remarks, around which I shall weave these references, the revelations that we have had in the past month about the way in which the City operates. These have made the business pages of the newspapers much the most interesting and entertaining pages, reporting as they do flights of creative energy that we cannot discover on the arts pages.

It is now evident that Guinness succeeded in beating off its Argyll rival for Distillers by a touch of more than pure genius. It was partly, at least, secured by the use of a war chest of £25 million, disbursed to members of the concert party. I understand that the £25 million was paid by means of petty cash invoices. Guinness is a large company, especially now that it has swallowed Bells and Distillers, but even a company as large as that is not accustomed to handling £25 million through petty cash. Payments have been made to several people who have been named tonight —Gerald Ronson, Sir Jack Lyons, S. and W. Berisford. I noticed the rather plaintive observation of Jacob Rothschild's J. Rothschild Holdings the other week:

> "We appear to have been one of the few investors in Guinness which did not receive a kick-back for its help. We were a genuine part of the fan club."

I am not sure whether the second sentence is offered in explanation of why it did not get the kick-back or a complaint about not getting the kick-back.

An obvious series of questions flows from these revelations. The first and most clear is: is Guinness an isolated affair? Is it without parallel in the recent history of the City? Are there any comparable cases? We have the intriguing remark of Lord Hanson, who, rather unfortunately, said on 9 April 1986:

> "Guinness . . . are doing so many of the things we are doing in our fight for Imperial."

I have no doubt that if he could have his time over again, he would phrase that rather more felicitously.

The question whether there are any parallels is prompted by one or two considerations, of which the first is that Guinness is not the only company to have launched a takeover bid and discovered to its surprise its share price rising during the course of that bid. One need look no further than the case of the Burton bid for Debenhams, which was also accompanied by an interesting rise in the share price at the time of the offer for Debenhams.

The other reason why we might speculate whether Guinness is an isolated case is the fortuitous way in which we understand that the DTI inquiry began. It began, as everybody in the world knows, because the DTI received information from the SEC which had stumbled over the link between Guinness and Boesky. The Department of Trade and Industry knew that that link was going to break on Wall street in the following week if it did not send in its people first.

The right hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Parkinson) took a dim view of the SEC in America for having taken four years to nail Boesky. It is a fact that Boesky was active not simply on Wall street, but in the City. He was involved in several of the takeover deals in the City. He formed one of his major investment trusts in the City. It is true that his enthusiasm for the City was tempered by his observation that he did not care to do business there because, as he said in his delightful phrase, he found it "too leaky". Nevertheless, Mr. Boesky was very active in the City. It ill becomes the right hon. Member for Hertsmere to complain that it took the SEC four years to uncover Mr. Boesky in Wall street when he was never uncovered in any of his operations in the City.

It is fair to reflect on what happened during the Guinness bid for Distillers as a test of self-regulation or, as we now must learn to call it, practitioner-based regulation. At the heart of the failure of the regulatory system was the operation of the takeover panel. That panel is a prime example of practitioner-based regulation. It exchanges personnel with the rest of the City. One of the personnel it has exchanged is Graham Walsh who, five years ago, was its director general before he transferred back to Morgan Grenfell, from which he resigned earlier this month having discovered that his bank had helped to break the rules that he had helped to frame while he was at the takeover panel.

*[Mr. Cook]*

Where was the takeover panel when Guinness was not just breaking the takeover rules, but was comprehensively pulping them? What was it doing? Did it know? If it knew, why did it not act? If it did not know, why did it not know? It has no excuse. We know that the Argyll group made sure that it was informed about the suspicious and curious things happening to Guinness shares.

In *The Independent* this morning Sir Martin Jacomb observed that the takeover panel should not be thrown to the wolves. I would not adopt that course of action. That appears to be the Lord Avebury solution. I believe that Sir Martin is missing the point. The point is not whether the takeover panel should be thrown to the wolves, but why it failed to notice such a large ravenous wolf in its own backyard.

I listened with interest to the Secretary of State talking about setting up another review. I hope that it will report earlier than the review on competition policy which, as I understand it, will not report until the end of the year. He would have been spared the need to set up such a review if he had accepted the many offers of advice and the many amendments tabled during the passage of the Financial Services Act 1986 and taken the opportunity to put the takeover panel on a proper statutory basis.

Another area of concern in the Guinness scandal is how it was so easy for Guinness, having embarked on its course, to find so many willing accomplices in the City. My hon. Friend the Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) made a characteristically robust and fearless contribution to the House. However, I differ from him in the emphasis that he placed on crime in the City. I do not take the view that all those who operate in the City are crooks. I would go so far as to say that most of those in the City would not knowingly break the law. Over the past three months I have met many people operating in the City on many different occasions. I have not been invited to chateau Morgan Grenfell, which I understand is located in Whitehall court. However, I have met many operators in the City and it is clear that many of them — *[Interruption.]* My right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition holds out the prospect that I will be invited. I hope that this speech has drawn my absence at the chateau to the attention of those in Morgan Grenfell.

I have met many operators in the City and there is no doubt that from most of them there emanates a sense of indignation and embarrassment at the way in which the City is being portrayed in the press, because it has been let down by what they see as a minority. I accept that as a fair point of balance. Nevertheless, the awkward fact remains that Guinness had no difficulty in finding accomplices for its manoeuvre. It found plenty who were willing to help it in merchant banks and among the stockbroker community. Since we have talked much about merchant bankers, I wish to say something about stockbrokers.

We have as our first witness Mr. Parnes. He was described by Gerald Ronson as "an eminent broker" which immediately prompted the wonderful spectacle of top City stockbrokers hurrying to the press to say that they were not eminent brokers.

As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) reminded us, and as my hon. Friend the Member for Hackney, South and Shoreditch (Mr. Sedgemore) said in an entertaining speech, Mr. Parnes has apparently been known for a long time in the City as "the animal".

One of the things that fascinates me about each successive Guinness revelation is that every time someone is named there are always two dozen people around to say, on an unattributable basis, that they always knew that he was a bad apple and that he was suspect. Mr. Parnes turns out to be a case in point. Nevertheless Mr. Parnes, having got Mr. Ronson's commission, successfully placed it through Alexanders, Laing and Cruickshank, which handled all Mr. Parnes' business and also, of course, took its half of the commission, worth £500,000.

To put it mildly, the supervision at Alexanders, Laing and Cruickshank does not appear to have been of the best, which may make it regrettable that the Secretary of State has appointed the chief executive of Alexanders, Laing and Cruickshank as one of the members of the Securities and Investments Board to oversee the whole of the City.

Mr. Parnes' tie with Alexanders, Laing and Cruickshank has now been severed. He is, interestingly, the only broker to have been thrown overboard in the past month. He is the only broker who has been involved in the share deals worth £500 million, involving perhaps one third of the entire Guinness stock, who has been caught out. I must ask the House: what about Cazenove? Cazenove was the regular broker of Guinness and handled all its share purchasing and sales. As any other stockbroker would do when acting for a client, Cazenove monitored all the purchases and sales of Guinness shares. I can reveal to the House that on 6 May, the settlement day after the closure of the bid for Distillers, Cazenove purchased 20 million shares in Guinness for Cazenove nominees. That was, of course, the same day on which Morgan Grenfell paid £7·5 million to Henry Ansbacher for Down Nominees. It is an irresistible conclusion that that payment by Cazenove on the same day was for the same purpose, to pay off some members of the concert party who had bought Guinness shares on a temporary basis during the bid for Distillers to drive up the price.

**Mr. Rogers:** They are all crooks.

**Mr. Cook:** A minority are. My emphasis is different from that of my hon. Friend. This again poses an interesting test of self-regulation because the body that would be responsible for scrutinising the actions of Cazenove is the stock exchange — one of the self-regulating organisations appointed under the Financial Services Act. The stock exchange has signally failed to achieve the same changes at Cazenove that the Bank has manifestly secured at Morgan Grenfell and leaves one with the doubt that it finds Cazenove too big, too prestigious or perhaps too influential within the stock exchange for it to take effective action against them.

We now turn from the stock exchange and the City to the Conservative party. I have been greatly interested in the change in rhetoric that I have witnessed in the short time in which I have held the portfolio for the Labour party. The fact that the Government did nothing effective at the time of the bid to stop the City's excesses has not stopped them pouring forth a spate of speeches in the past month promising vengeance on it for being so troublesome to them. I notice that one Minister was quoted on an unattributable basis in the *Financial Times* as saying:

> "The quicker we put the handcuffs on somebody the better."

We now have the proposition that those caught insider dealing and sentenced will be liable to a penalty of seven year's imprisonment. I presume that that is what Conservative Members would describe as the longer-term view of financial services.

I speak for the whole of the Opposition. We welcome the new commitment by the Conservatives to bringing City fraud to book. It sits a bit oddly with their record of the past six years—with 110 references of suspected insider dealing passed to them by the stock exchange as a result of which only nine people were prosecuted, none of whom has spent a single day in prison. It sits a bit oddly with the couple of dozen cases that they have been sitting on for a couple of years, referred to them by Lloyd's insurance as cases meriting prosecution. It sits a bit oddly with the failure for several years to attempt to extradite Peter Cameron-Webb from Florida, where he is sitting on top of the £38 million that he siphoned away. It sits oddly with the failure to bring a single prosecution arising out of the Johnson Matthey Bankers scandal, which is one of the biggest banking scandals since the war.

My hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) made a plea to the Minister to act on a firm whose name, understandably, he was not prepared to disclose to the House. I understand that he has passed information to the Minister. I say to my hon. Friend only that I hope that the Department of Trade and Industry is swifter in acting on the case that he has passed to it than on the other licensed dealers, Ravendale, which was closed only two years after it was being regularly exposed in the Sunday papers.

However, let us be generous. Let us not complain that the Government have tacked with the wind now that the climate has changed. However, we must say to them that they cannot reduce the lessons of Guinness to a simple matter of law and order. The issue of Guinness begs wider questions about the abuse of corporate power and about the new culture in the City, which means that in certain quarters of the City, apparently, there is a willingness to tolerate the excesses that Guinness represented; a new culture that was partly fostered by the Government, who have passed easy pickings to it in the form of the privatisation programme. They have also helped to fashion the City in the image of their own ideology. It is a completely free market, deregulated by Government, not burdened by an obtrusive Government body to supervise it, and allowed to pursue without check the dictates of market forces with the net result that it is repugnant to the public and embarrassing to the Government. Self-regulation needs self-restraint, and that is conspicuously lacking in the City today.

The most fundamental lesson from the Guinness affair is that the City and business must shift their priorities from chasing the acquisition of each other back to investing in the future of the companies and developing real machinery, real plants and real jobs.

Guinness was at the flood of takeover bids. It is the high-water mark. The strength of that tide was remarkable. In 1983, £2 billion was staked in takeover bids. In 1986, £16 billion was staked in takeover bids—37 per cent. of all investment capital made available in 1986. The irony is that at the very time when that takeover stampede was accelerating in pace, the Conservatives restricted the grounds on which they would make a reference of a takeover to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission panel. They bound themselves voluntarily to confining references to competition and excluded the wider considerations of the public interest, which they are entitled to consider in terms of the law. They have left the public interest to be safeguarded by shareholders.

It is no disrespect to shareholders to say that they are not there to safeguard the public interest. They are there to safeguard their shares. That, of course, is what they do. It is the Conservative Government who are charged with the important duty of safeguarding the public interest, and that is what they have now failed to do.

Labour Members do not speak on these matters from a purely academic perspective. I want to conclude on a personal note as Conservative Members have on many occasions during this debate referred to their experiences in the City. I want to share with the House a recent experience in my constituency. At the end of last week a company operating in my constituency announced the closure of a plant within the Golden Wonder group with the loss of 350 permanent jobs and 150 seasonal jobs, which usually last for several months.

My hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is aware of the closure because many of those operating the plant live in his constituency. The relevance of the closure to the debate is that the company has been sold and resold over the heads of its workers. It has had three owners in two years. One of those owners was the Hanson Trust which has just broken an undertaking not to sell the company that it had acquired from the Imperial Group. The latest owners are the Dalgety food group. That company acquired the firm three months ago. Only three months later, it announced the closure, although the plant has the most modern machinery in the group, machinery which Dalgety proposed to strip and remove although it was installed only last year with the help of a development grant from the Scottish Office.

I am sure that I speak for my hon. Friends when I say that I find it deeply offensive that a company which has owned a plant for only three months should shut it down without consultation, while refusing negotiations with the work force, many of whom have worked in the plant for 20 years. It is not just plant and machinery that change hands in a takeover. The work force which operates that machinery also changes hands. The job security of employees and the economic prosperity of communities cannot be left to be auctioned in the City.

The truth is that the City has shown verve, enthusiasm, imagination and initiative in speculating with the ownership of British industry. However, it has shown scant interest in investing in the development of that industry. It has done itself proud, but it has failed the needs of the real economy. That is why we shall vote against the Government, who have proved the willing accomplice of the City.

9.36 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard):** I want to begin by welcoming the return of the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) to these rather down-to-earth matters. He has had his mind on higher things in recent days. He made a characteristically robust contribution to the debate, and I shall have a word or two to say about his comments in due course.

No one listening to the speeches by Opposition Members would have the faintest idea that we have been discussing one of the most successful sectors of the British

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economy. Quite apart from its contribution to British business, London attracts huge volumes of business which has no natural reason to come here. There is no law of nature which compels Australian owners to insure the risks that they incur in the United States of America with London insurers, or which compels West German purchasers of Japanese shares to deal through London stockbrokers or Dutch borrowers to raise Swiss currency through London bankers. This business is conducted in London because the City is efficient, competitive and convenient. We should always bear that in mind when considering the criticisms that have been made about the City.

I want to consider some of the criticisms that have been made. We have heard a good deal about short-termism. However, it is not true to suggest that the stock exchange in particular or the City in general is incapable of looking to the long term. My hon. Friend the Member for St. Albans (Mr. Lilley) quoted some specific examples. In general, companies whose shares are quoted on the stock exchange are not all rated equally. There are wide variations between the price-earnings ratios of different shares. These reflect the different long-term outlook that different companies face. Proper information must be given. If a company is spending a great deal on research and development, the financial world must be told. If that expenditure is likely to leave a temporary depression in profits, companies should be open about it. If the institutions, whose liabilities, by and large, are extremely long-term, are kept in the picture, they are perfectly capable of taking a long-term view.

Many of those who spoke in the debate, not least the hon. Member for Livingston, commented on takeovers. In this area our policy is under review, but whatever their views on current policy, few objective observers would view with anything other than extreme alarm the proposals made yesterday by the Labour finance and industry group and commended enthusiastically outside the House by the hon. Member for Livingston, who is a member of that group, but not mentioned at all during the debate either by the right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith) or by the hon. Member for Livingston.

Let us spend a moment or two discussing those proposals. They would involve the vetting of almost every merger — it would involve hundreds of commercial transactions every year—by the Office of Fair Trading and, acting as an appeal body, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. That would represent a massive increase in bureaucracy and would dramatically increase the burden on companies which are the targets of bids as well as the bidders. The criteria on which bids are to be vetted are, to say the least, confused. On page 17 of the document we read that competition may play a relatively small part in these matters, but on page 12 we are promised legislation to incorporate articles 85 and 86 of the treaty of Rome directly within our law and to apply them to purely domestic mergers. It is a pity that the person who wrote page 17 was not told about that, because those articles are based fairly and squarely on competition.

Most disturbing of all, under Labour, the Office of Fair Trading and the Monopolies and Mergers Commission would no longer be independent bodies. They would be staffed by people with a political and ideological understanding of Labour party policy. They would be selected on the ground of their political inclinations—those are the words in the report. Under a Labour Government, one would need a party card to get a job with the Office of Fair Trading or the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

I contrast that attitude with the attitude that this Government have taken to those bodies. I remind the House that the present Director General of Fair Trading was appointed by the Labour Government in 1976 and that the present chairman of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission was appointed by a Labour Government. Both have rendered distinguished, independent public service since then and have been reappointed to their posts by this Government. There would be no place for that approach if the Labour party was again concerned with such matters. That document says much about the reality of Labour's policies when one gets behind the rose-tinted facade.

The hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth), on behalf of the Social Democratic party, suggested two possible changes to takeover policy. He suggested changing the burden of proof and giving direct access to the courts to individuals and companies affected. Those ideas will be considered during the review, but it is clear that they could not conceivably lead to the advantages which the hon. Gentleman claims for them. He said that they would streamline the system, that they would make it quicker and simpler. How reversing the burden of proof and thus involving, in common with the policy of the official Opposition, the reference of almost every merger so that that burden can be discharged could conceivably be described as making the process quicker and simpler is beyond credibility. It is hardly surprising if the hon. Gentleman's party's policies are not taken seriously, either inside or outside the House, if it continues to make such extravagant and far-fetched claims about the significance of the policies that it advocates.

My hon. Friend the Member for Hastings and Rye (Mr. Warren) raised a series of interesting points, perhaps slightly outside the mainstream of discussion, in relation to which he has already received letters from my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State. Perhaps he will forgive me if I do not add to those letters during these observations.

My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, Central (Sir A. Fletcher) spoke about the takeover panel and made a number of points about the possibility of changing the way in which the panel operates. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State dealt with that point in his remarks this afternoon. I have nothing to add.

The hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) called, perhaps a trifle surprisingly, for greater shareholder control. He said that the Government should return the control of companies to their shareholders. I was under the impression that shareholders had control of their companies and that that was why Opposition Members were unhappy with our policy on mergers. They constantly claim that we should not leave decisions of this kind to shareholders. Of course, the City's success brings obligations with it. We have legislated to ensure that those obligations are recognised and discharged. The law must be observed. The action that we have taken demonstrates our determination to ensure that it will be observed.

Many hon. Members have expressed concern about some of the events that have been reported in the newspapers in recent weeks, and I share that concern, but they are not grounds for criticism of the Government. As soon as we had good grounds for taking action, we acted. It may be recalled that when I appointed inspectors to investigate the affairs of Guinness plc many thought and wrote that I had beeen precipitate. What subsequently has come to light provides ample vindication of my decision and of my determination vigorously to enforce the law.

**Mr. Allan Rogers:** The Minister said that he will be assiduous in prosecuting people who have broken the law. How is it that only 18 cases were brought in 1981 and 1984?

**Mr. Howard:** I am not entirely certain to which cases the hon. Gentleman is referring. If evidence exists that justifies cases being brought before the courts, they will be brought before the courts.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** We understand that there may well be prosecutions under the Companies Act 1985. Will the Minister not rule out prosecutions under the 1977 criminal law, which provides for prosecutions when conspiracy has taken place? There may be persons who conspired with Guinness to break the law under section 151.

**Mr. Howard:** I rule out no prosecutions when evidence is available and justifies a charge being brought.

The inquiry into Guinness plc is proceeding under the Companies Act. The inspectors, although appointed by me, are entirely independent. They have far-reaching powers. They may call for documents, examine witnesses on oath, and require witnesses to answer questions even if such answers involve self-incrimination.

There have been calls, principally from the Opposition Front Bench, for an interim report, but the inspectors have told me that that would impede their inquiry. To compile it they would have to turn from their investigations and call a halt to their inquiry. They would have to devote their energies to the demanding procedure that must be followed before any report, full or interim, can be published if it is to contain any criticism of any individual. Of all the half-baked suggestions that have emanated from the Opposition in recent weeks, that suggestion — persisted in long after the effects were explained to them —was probably the most inept. I am not prepared to contemplate any action that would impede the independent inspectors as they set about their task. Their inquiry must be full and thorough, and I shall not take any action that would detract from that objective.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** I entirely concur with the hon. and learned Gentleman's wish to put no impediment in the path of the inquiry into the Guinness affair. Does he recall his answer to a question from me last week, which showed that the average time taken by a DTI inquiry to come to final report is 36 months and two weeks? In the light of that extraordinary time scale, is he satisfied that his Department is sufficiently swift in carrying out its inquiries.

**Mr. Howard:** We have taken steps to ensure that this inquiry is completed in the shortest possible time that is consistent with a full, thorough and effective report. The inspectors are devoting all their time to the inquiry, they have all the resources that they need to carry out their investigation and they are very conscious of the need for expedition.

As I said previously, the inspectors do not have to wait until they submit a report before they can submit to me any evidence of criminal activity that they discover. Nor is it necessary for them to complete their report before criminal charges can be laid if the evidence justifies that. The inspectors are well aware of their powers in that respect and I have encouraged them to make full use of them. If, at any time, it becomes appropriate for prosecutions to be commenced, commenced they will be.

**Mr. Allan Rogers:** During my speech I asked the Minister to tell us how many additional inspectors had been engaged. In 1985, 21 inspectors were investigating billions of pounds of City fraud, compared with the thousands who were investigating social security fraud. How many additional inspectors have been engaged since 1985?

**Mr. Howard:** The hon. Gentleman misunderstands the position. I explained that the inspectors whom we appoint under the Companies Act and in connection with insider dealing—a subject to which I shall come in a moment—are independent. They are appointed for the purpose of carrying out specific inquiries. We shall continue to appoint inspectors to carry out such inquiries wherever and whenever we have the evidence to justify doing so. There is no restriction on the resources available to them for that purpose.

As my right hon. and learned Friend said, when the Opposition were in power they never got around to making insider dealing an offence. It was this Government who took that step in 1980, and it is this Government who have taken steps to enable evidence to be obtained if the offence is to be made to stick.

My right hon. Friend described the powers in the Financial Services Act for the purpose, but they were described as draconian by the Opposition spokesman in another place. They take away from anyone suspected of the offence the right to silence so as not to incriminate himself. They far exceed the powers available to the Securities and Exchange Commission. They are certainly not available to anyone investigating social security fraud — the Opposition's favourite comparison. Like the powers available under the Companies Act, they are available to independent inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State.

The Opposition constantly hark back to the inadequate record on prosecutions for insider dealing before the powers were available. It is precisely because we recognised that the record was inadequate that we took increased powers. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has explained how speedily we have brought them into effect.

**Mr. John Butterfill** (Bournemouth, West): Is it not true that the Opposition in another place tried to water down the powers that we were giving to inspectors under sections 147 and 148, by moving an amendment to that effect?

**Mr. Howard:** I have looked at the amendments which were put down in another place on this matter and I think that my hon. Friend is probably correct, but the discussion that took place was so inordinately complicated that, frankly, I gave up the task of trying to discover whether the effect would be to whittle down those powers.

The motion before the House this evening calls for a statutory independent commission to supervise financial

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services. We have heard that phrase before. We have been asking for more than a year now what it means. When the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould), who was his party's spokesman on these matters, during the passage of the Financial Services Bill disclaimed the Securities and Exchange Commission as a model, he said that in looking for a model he would not look to that commission, and he made certain criticisms of it. The hon. Member for Livingston, by contrast, and with a touching if uncharacteristic faith in transatlantic models, seems very keen on the Securities and Exchange Commission. The right hon. and learned Member for Monklands, East, speaking earlier this afternoon, said that he was looking for something not precisely the same as the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Not one of those hon. Members has told us what powers such a body would possess which the regulatory authorities established under the Financial Services Act will not have. Nor have they told us how, in particular, such a body could be expected to be more effective in the exercise of its power than the regulatory authorities set up under the Financial Services Act will be. If any of those Opposition Members wishes to take the opportunity now to identify a single power which the body would have, were it made statutory, and which the regulatory authorities to be established under the Financial Services Act will not have, I shall gladly give him the opportunity of making that plain to the House and to the country.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** I rest with the single illustration, which will serve for the present, of the amendment, which the hon. and learned Gentleman himself resisted in Committee, to give the SIB the same powers as he is so proud of having taken in relation to insider dealing, but which he resisted in Committee precisely because the SIB was not a statutory body.

**Mr. Howard:** The hon. Gentleman is wrong. It is perfectly true that we have decided not to give the SIB those particular powers, but it has nothing to do with its not being a statutory body. As I have indicated, the powers which are given to inspectors to investigate this particular offence, comparable only to the powers available to inspectors under the Companies Act, are draconian in the extreme. They are unprecedented in our legislation and are not available to the Securities and Exchange Commission. Powers of that kind should be exercised only by inspectors directly appointed by the Secretary of State because he is directly accountable to the House.

The hon. Member for Great Grimsby seemed to be unaware, despite the fact that he served on the Financial Services Bill Committee, that the SIB would have the power to prosecute. I have beside me a list of about a dozen offences on which the SIB could prosecute when powers are transferred to it, should it be designated by the Secretary of State.

Opposition Members have been content to mouth slogans, in the hope that no one will ask them questions or insist on answers to those questions. We do not think in slogans. We are putting into place a tough and effective system for regulating the financial services industry. We are determined to ensure that the City maintains the highest standards of conduct, and we look forward to its continuing success. I urge the House to reject the motion.

*Question put,* That the original words stand part of the Question:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 181, Noes 283.

**Division No. 75]** **[10 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Michie, William
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George

Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Chris Smith.

**NOES**

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Ashdown, Paddy
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Beith, A. J.
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruce, Malcolm
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hancock, Michael
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Kirkwood, Archy
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Meadowcroft, Michael
Merchant, Piers
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Ottaway, Richard
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Sumberg, David
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wainwright, R.
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Waller, Gary

Warren, Kenneth
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Neubert and
Mr. Gerald Malone.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

*Question*, That the proposed words be there added, *put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 30 (Questions on amendments)*:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 267, Noes 192.

**Division No. 76]** **[10.15 pm**

AYES

Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Ashby, David
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butcher, John
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, John *(Luton N)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Conway, Derek
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Cormack, Patrick
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Durant, Tony
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Fallon, Michael
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
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Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
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Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harvey, Robert
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Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
McCrindle, Robert
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Merchant, Piers
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, Christopher *(Bath)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pattie, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Sumberg, David
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Waller, Gary
Warren, Kenneth
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Michael Portillo and
Mr. David Lightbown.

NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin

Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gould, Bryan
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lewis, Terence *(Worsley)*
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R. *(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Chris Smith.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

MR. SPEAKER *forthwith declared the main Question, as amended, to be agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That this House deplores the irresponsible attacks on the City by Her Majesty's Opposition which ignore its massive and continuing contribution to meeting the long-term financial needs of British manufacturing industry and business and more generally throughout the country to the balance of payments, and to employment in the United Kingdom; notes that investment growth has averaged 4·5 per cent. per year during this Parliament; notes with approval the consistency of the Government's mergers policy; and applauds, in particular, its firm action in establishing a regulatory framework for the City and its determination to root out abuses.

## London Regional Transport

10.27 pm

**The Minister of State, Department of Transport (Mr. David Mitchell):** I beg to move,

That the draft London Regional Transport (Levy) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 17th December, be approved.

The House will remember that in 1984 we set London Regional Transport clear policy objectives. Since then its professional management has been allowed to get on with the task without continuous political interference. Our remit was that LRT should reduce the revenue subsidy to £95 million by 1987-88. It was requested to do so by rooting out inefficiency rather than cuts in services, fare increases or a lowering of standards.

I can report substantial progress. By last year LRT had cut its need for subsidy to £97 million. It has virtually met its target two years early.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): The Minister said that LRT should meet its objectives without fare increases, but can he explain why, since LRT took over responsibility from the Greater London council, short hop fares have gone up by 75 per cent. in inner London and by 50 per cent. in outer London?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Perhaps I should not have been so courteous as to give way to the hon. Gentleman. He would have found that I shall deal with fares, and I shall be happy to do so briefly now and at length later, if he wishes me to do so.

Our remit asked LRT to reduce revenue subsidy to £95 million by 1987-88, not through cuts in services, not by large fare increases, not by lowering standards, but by rooting out inefficiency. Substantial progress was made last year. Its annual business plan, published only last month, forecast a requirement down to £92 million this year. What is even better is that the plan shows a further fall to £58 million next year, handsomely beating our target.

We asked LRT to reduce its unit costs by at least 2·5 per cent. each year in real terms. Last year, unit costs were reduced by 4 per cent. and it expects to reduce them this year by 7 per cent. on both the buses and the underground, and to secure a further reduction of 5 per cent. next year on both.

We asked LRT to bring forward a significant investment programme design to reduce future costs, modernise the system, and make it more attractive to the paying customer. LRT will spend more than £250 million this year on investment in the system. Next year, LRT's planned investment increases to £280 million. Nobody can honestly and realistically claim that this is a system in neglect.

Costs will be reduced by a massive investment programme — £135 million on the automated underground ticketing system and £50 million to replace the underground power supply with cheaper access to the national grid. A major rolling programme of station modernisation will improve the environment of the underground. On the bus system, new buses are assisting disabled passengers and improve boarding times. Automatic fare collection is also being developed, to improve boarding speeds. A comprehensive computer system for the bus business is being installed to improve its operational and engineering efficiency.

Our objective is a thriving and well-used public transport system. On the buses, careful matching of supply to demand has stabilised patronage at about 2,700 million passenger miles, after many years of continuous decline. On the underground, patronage continues to exceed forecast increases, rising by 11 per cent. last year to 3,700 million passenger miles, with an all-time record of 762 million passenger journeys.

Our objective of a thriving and well-used system is being achieved. The Government are playing their part by approving expenditure of £45 million for the purchase of additional underground trains. I have just approved a £3 million scheme for the Tower Hill station to reduce congestion at this busy point.

We also made it clear that revenue subsidy target did not imply huge fare increases. Increases in fares are an annual catching-up exercise to restore their real value. The hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) may laugh, but we shall come back to this point. The real value is eroded all the time as the retail price inflation continues through the year. LRT's annual business plan shows quite clearly that bus fares are now only about 90 per cent. of their January 1981 real value while underground fares are but 80 per cent. of that value. That is part of the answer to the hon. Gentleman. Another part of the answer is the huge increase in the number of people who are travelling, who must obviously find it an attractive fare level.

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood) *rose*——

**Mr. Mitchell:** It would be better if I finished my speech, and then allowed the hon. Gentleman to take the floor.

Particular increases in individual single fares in any one year will naturally be above, or below, the average increase for the year. That is the result of a fairly simple structure of fares, while LRT's emphasis on marketing its services will change from year to year. Notably, the cost of the one zone bus pass has been unchanged since 1983.

London Regional Transport was asked to pay particular attention to the needs of the disabled. Since the demise of the Greater London council, LRT has been responsible for funding London's dial-a-ride services, on which £5 million is being spent this year. Next year we have increased provision by 20 per cent. to £6 million, including the purchase of new vehicles and facilities to improve booking efficiency. I hope that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West will cheer at that.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Mitchell:** I shall sit down shortly to give hon. Members an opportunity to participate in the debate.

Those figures compare with £4 million spent in the last year of GLC control.

LRT's services for the disabled also include the provision of wheelchair-accessible mobility buses, new design features on fleet buses and at underground stations to assist the ambulant disabled, as well as an increasing volume of information services.

Efficiency clearly brings benefits to ratepayers and taxpayers. Our first year of financial control saw a ratepayer levy of 10·8p in the pound and last year at this time I was able to bring forward proposals for a cut of 1p in the pound. The draft order before the House cuts a further 2p in the pound off the bill rate. That is a reduction of nearly 30 per cent. in three years. By any measure, those are astonishing achievements, at the same time as maintaining the network, increasing the services and modernising the system.

I hope that the House will wish me to congratulate LRT, particularly its staff, and I accordingly commend the draft order to the House.

10.37 pm

**Mr. Roger Stott** (Wigan): It is almost a year since we debated the London Regional Transport (Levy) Order 1986. I remember listening to the Minister saying roughly the same thing then as he has said tonight. It is rather like watching an action replay. He says that everything is doing well, services have increased, there is no problem and that LRT is discharging its responsibilities to the maximum.

During the year Ministers in the Department of Transport have been subjected to a barrage of questions from hon. Members on both sides of the House who represent London constituencies——

**Sir John Biggs-Davison** (Epping Forest): And others.

**Mr. Stott:** The questions were about the level of services provided by LRT. The hon. Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison) continually complains. At every Transport Question Time he rebukes his hon. Friend the Minister over the level of services available to his constituents.

As this is a short debate, I shall simply make some observations on the ramifications of the order and of the business plan that has been produced by LRT. I hope that by containing my remarks hon. Members on both sides of the House who represent London constituencies will be able to make their valued contributions to the debate.

This year the Government will provide £239 million for all LRT spending, capital and revenue. Last year they provided £295 million. The Government are allowed to recover two thirds of that money from London ratepayers, yet under this order they will again recover the maximum amount, that is, £156·9 million compared with £193·6 million last year. That is a 7·7p rate, compared with the 9p-plus rate of last year. The Government may claim that the reduction in subsidy springs, as the Minister has just told us, from efficiency. It is important to note that this difference in the rate precept will be made up not just simply by efficiency, but by £27 million in fare increases and £31 million in increases in borrowing and other external sources.

If we look at the business plan prepared by LRT, which is funded by the precept which the Minister now wishes to get through the House, we see that there will be 6,650 fewer jobs this year than there were last year. This, in my estimation, will add about £37 million to Government expenditure if all those people cannot find jobs and the Government have to provide unemployment and social security benefits, and at the same time lose taxation revenue. Revenue support for LRT will go down by £13 million and by March 1988 there will be 15,000 fewer jobs in LRT than the number approved in the final plan produced by the GLC.

**Mr. Jeremy Hanley** (Richmond and Barnes): Is the hon. Gentleman aware that London has the highest ever level of jobs vacant in its history?

**Mr. Stott:** Inherent in the financial structure under the order is the deliberate creation of unemployment. I shall not concede to the hon. Gentleman that those people will immediately get jobs, but in the intervening period it will be a contingency on Government expenditure if those people are made unemployed. I shall leave my hon. Friends who represent London constituencies to answer the question about unemployment in London, but I know that if we made any bus conductors redundant in Wigan they would not find a job within two years of being made redundant, if ever, and that is directly due to the Government's economic policy.

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): Does my hon. Friend agree that, according to figures issued by the Department of Employment — Conservative Members can attach what credence they like to these figures — there are 393,000 people unemployed in Greater London and there are 36,000 notified vacancies?

**Mr. Stott:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for putting that on the record. Perhaps, if he catches your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he will make that point more forcefully than I can.

I shall continue with what I have to say, which is that the total grant from the Department of Transport will be cut by £56 million, from £295 million to £239 million, which is a decrease of 19 per cent., and LRT will be forced as a consequence to borrow £45 million to make up the difference between income and expenditure. This means that services provided in 1987-88 will have to be paid for in future years.

I deal now with bus services. One-person operation, henceforth to be known as OPO, of buses will be increased from 76 per cent. under the strategic plan to 83 per cent. of services. This in itself will cause the loss of 1,100 conductors' jobs, which is 35 per cent. of the total platform staff, mainly from inner city garages.

Let us remember that in June 1984, when the Government took over London Transport, OPO buses were running on 53 per cent. of the services. The reduction in revenue support has forced London Buses, which is wholly owned by LRT, to increase OPO. However, I am advised that to do this it needs 440 new buses, but will get only 220, and will not be able to tender for the majority of the 33 routes which have been put out to tender in 1987-88. Those routes will be simply handed over to private operators. The plan states that bus staff will have to accept

"changed pay structures and working practices"

if tenders are to be won. London Buses will not even be able to tender for many of those routes, irrespective of the wage demands or wage claims that people put in. At least two, possibly five, bus garages will be closed. London's red buses will operate as much as 11 per cent. fewer services than in 1986-87, which was the lowest service since London Transport was created in 1933. Some 200 jobs — 17 per cent. of the total — will be lost in bus engineering, with 1,050 jobs going in other areas, such as catering and station cleaning. All this stems from what we are debating and what is contained in LRT's business plan.

**Sir John Biggs-Davison:** Would the hon. Gentleman care to add to what he has been saying about one-person operation and the changes in the buses in London, and mention the dislike of many of us passengers of the inflexible, unfriendly one-person-operated bus?

**Mr. Stott:** The hon. Gentleman has preceded me by five seconds. I am about to deal with that precise issue.

Returning, as the words on my script say, to OPO, I readily concede that this operation can be beneficial, and is demonstrably beneficial, in areas——

**Mr. John Maples** (Lewisham, West): It is cheaper.

**Mr. Stott:** It can be demonstrated that OPO can be beneficial to the overall transport provision in certain areas. It can be proved. I concede that, but I do not believe that OPO is suitable for the nation's capital, where millions of people are conveyed by public transport every day in difficult and heavy traffic conditions. Even with the improved design of the buses that LRT wants to use for OPO, its target is a load speed of 2·5 seconds per passenger. This is still more than twice the time to load an old-fashioned Routemaster bus. The schedules are slower too—15 per cent. extra running time has to be allowed for. Nor are the financial benefits all one way with the introduction of OPO. It will take five OPO buses to replace one of the Routemaster buses currently running on the streets of London.

It is important to look not just at the savings, which the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) mentioned, through the reduction of platform staff, but at whether those savings will translate themselves into a better transportation system for the nation's capital. I do not think that they will.

I travel on London Transport from Tuesday to Thursday when I am down here, because I live in Wigan, not London. My buses coming from Kennington have a conductor. At certain times of the morning the traffic is very heavy. Although there are bus lanes for a certain length of the run, heavy congestion can still build up. I genuinely believe that if there is a move towards one-person-operated buses this can only mean longer running times, more difficulties and more traffic congestion.

Moreover, I think that the presence of a conductor not only adds to the efficiency of the running speed of buses in the city centre, but gives an unquantifiable assurance to passengers, particularly the elderly, women with shopping and children, who need to be helped on and off buses, and the disabled. That is an unquantifiable advantage which cannot be equated with pounds and shillings. The clippy —the conductor on a bus—provides a valuable service in keeping the bus moving at speed for the convenience of the people who use public transport.

There are areas where one-person-operated buses will work satisfactorily, but there are other areas where they will not. I am pleased to have the full agreement of the hon. Member for Epping Forest on that.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): Is my hon. Friend aware that the statutory London Regional Transport passengers committee has continuously supported that contention? According to the committee, the 68 per cent. of mileage operated by OPO is the maximum acceptable to Londoners, and public opinion supports that. Is he also aware that, although the Routemaster may be of elderly design, it is preferred by Londoners? If London Transport can revamp Routemasters and try to sell them to China, should they not be kept running in the central areas of London?

**Mr. Stott:** I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend. There is unanimity of opinion among those hon. Members who have considered the matter seriously. They have arrived at this conclusion either because they use public transport, or because they are aware of the problems of people who use public transport. This is not an up-front political problem of great significance between the Labour and Conservative Benches. This is a matter of general common sense if we all want to achieve a proper transportation system in the nation's capital. However, I have finished with that point and I have the support of all my hon. Friends and of some Conservative Members.

The problems that will flow from the order that we are debating and the plan produced by LRT, relate mainly to the bus network. I challenge the Minister's definition of prosperity, because I believe that there has been a decline in services. Indeed, one symptom of that decline is predicted by a 9 per cent. fall in revenue, from £310 million to £282 million.

In addition, there is the problem of tendered services. Many of the services that used to be run by London Transport, by the red buses in London, are now, under the Government's free market philosophy, to be put out to tender. Those of us who have the honour to represent constituencies outside London know what happens to tendered routes following deregulation. I would not wish that on my hon. Friends who represent London constituencies.

I am advised that because of the tendered routes in certain geographical areas of London the Norbiton garage which was built in 1983, and the Plumstead garage, which was built in 1981, will be affected. If the Government intend to go ahead with their policy and put the routes out to tender, what will happen to the buses that are garaged at Norbiton and Plumstead? There has been massive public investment in new garages, yet the buses from these garages are to be subjected to tendered routes. As a consequence they may be put out of business. I am sure that some of my hon. Friends will refer to tendering.

I should deal briefly with the Underground. One person operation does not stop at buses. It is also being introduced on some parts of the Underground. One person operation on deep tube lines will be introduced for the first time on the Piccadilly and Jubilee lines, with no satisfactory evacuation or rescue procedure for trains that have broken down or whose drivers are taken ill in the tunnels. This will create a saving of less than 0·3 per cent. of London Regional Transport's total expenditure. Overall, 1,050 jobs will be lost on the Underground through a combination of more one person operated trains and a further reduction in station staffing.

I must tell the Minister that a further large reduction in station staffing will cause a serious security problem, especially late at night. People travelling late at night, with no one on those stations, could be the victims of muggings, violence and similar problems. It is money well invested to service those stations properly with adequate staff at all times when the trains are running.

I see that Conservative Members are becoming anxious about the time that I am taking——

**Mr. Tony Banks:** So are the people behind my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Stott:** And some of the people behind me, too. I get the message loud and clear, and I shall conclude my remarks.

This will probably be our last debate on London Transport before the election. When the Labour party wins that election it will, as a matter of priority, restore local democracy to London. London Transport will be run by the elected representatives of London for and on behalf of the people of London.

10.56 pm

**Mr. John Maples** (Lewisham, West): One hoped that since the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) did not hold his present job when the Labour Front Bench was opposing the London Regional Transport Bill, he might have brought some fresh light to bear on his party's thinking, but he obviously shares all their old prejudices. He seems to believe that a public transport system is no good unless it is heavily overmanned, massively subsidised and incurring huge losses.

It is worth remembering the Greater London council's record on running London Transport. For the 12 years during which it was run by the council, unit costs increased by 66 per cent. on the buses and 50 per cent. on the underground, the subsidy increased from £5·5 million to £370 million, the revenue grant increased from zero in 1970 to £250 million in 1982 and fares increased by 85 per cent. in real terms, while passenger demand fell by 25 per cent.

As a result, the Government wisely proposed to reform the method by which London Transport was run. Against that, the GLC ran a disgraceful scare campaign about dial-a-ride, pensioners' bus passes, massive fare increases, the closure of 35 underground stations and route closures. It spent £1 million of ratepayers' money on the campaign, which was echoed slavishly by Labour Front-Bench Members, including the hon. Members for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott) and for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), who danced to the tune of their county hall puppet masters and read their briefs very well.

I thought that it might be interesting to look back at our debates on the Bill. A little delving into history might provide some interesting facts. We find an extremely rich diet of words for eating. On Second Reading, the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East said:

> "My hon. Friends and I believe that fares will rise and that services will be cut. That belief comes not only from our judgment, but from well proven and observable principles of public transport economics . . . it is equally clear that the system that the Secretary of State will influence by the amount of support that he gives . . . will lead to service cuts and fare increases . . . It is clear, however that the ratepayers' contribution is likely to increase . . . The Bill will have the effect of increasing fares and reducing services."

In winding up that debate, the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East said:

> "The Government's aims are patently contradictory. They cannot have both an improvement in services and a reduction in subsidies."—[*Official Report*, 13 December 1983; Vol. 50, c. 866-912.]

We then had an extended Committee session in which we thought that they might have wised up a bit, but no, they had not. On Third Reading the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East said:

> "The Bill is ideological and will undoubtedly produce a transport service that costs more, is inferior and does not meet the needs of London."—[*Official Report*, 9 April 1984; Vol. 58, c. 99.]

One may divide those criticisms into three. There will be massive fare increases, massive service cuts, and ratepayers will pay more.

Let us examine what happened. Over the four years covered by the fare increases introduced by LRT—they cover from May 1983, which is before it took over—fares have risen by 23 per cent. During that period, the retail price index rose by 20 per cent. and earnings rose by about 30 per cent. That is hardly a massive fare increase. According to LRT, next year fares will fall in real terms by ·05 per cent. That 3 per cent. rise in real terms compares very interestingly with the 85 per cent. real rise in the 12 years during the time that the GLC ran it. That disposes of the first criticism. *[Interruption.]* All I am saying is that it has now been allowed to be managed by people who know how to manage, without politicians interferring.

I now move on to the next criticism, that there will be massive—*[Interruption.]* If Opposition Members are not pleased to know that fares have hardly risen in real terms, I do not know what they want.

**Mr. Clive Soley** (Hammersmith): I am sure that the hon. Gentleman does not wish to mislead the House.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Yes, he does.

**Mr. Soley:** Perhaps he does, but let us give him the opportunity to prove it. If the hon. Gentleman wishes to use statistics, that is fine, but he should use a common base and not a 12-year period. He should take into account the different periods of Labour and Tory administration and the Law Lords' ruling on the price increase, and he can then make a fair comparison. Without doing that, his statistics are nonsense and misleading.

**Mr. Maples:** The Law Lords' ruling has nothing to do with the matter. Fares went down and went up again. I am not seeking to make a party political point about the GLC. I am seeking to say that LRT is run and allowed to be run by its management and by people who know how to run it, and it is doing a hell of a sight better job than it did when the GLC ran it. That disposes of the first criticism that there have been massive fare rises.

The second criticism was that there will be massive cuts in services. There have not been. The hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) should read LRT's plan. In fact, there have been substantial rises in the train miles run by the tube from an index of 94 in 1983 to 104 next year, and on the buses from 93·5 in 1983 to 96·5 next year. The service level has actually risen every year except for one blip on the buses when it went down one year and up to a greater level the next. Next year, the route miles run by the bus services are planned to increase from 16·6 million to — *[Interruption.]* I shall make my own speech. Opposition Members will have a chance to make theirs. The bus service mileage will rise from 166 million to 169 million, and tube miles will rise from 30·6 million to 31·8 million. That does not sound to me like a massive service cut.

The hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) asked about passengers. The index of bus passenger miles has risen from 97·5 to 107·5 and on the tube from 105 to 147. I should have thought that that was a fairly massive demonstration Londoners' confidence in London Transport.

**Mr. Nick Raynsford** (Fulham): In view of the hon. Gentleman's tendency to use rather peculiar bases for statistics, will he please give the House the figures of the trend in passenger usage of London Transport before the fares fair policy introduced by the GLC? Will he tell the House how that fare cut led to a dramatic reversal in a declining trend and the beginning of an upward trend in passenger usage? Will he be fair and give credit where credit is due, to the Labour GLC?

**Mr. Maples:** When the GLC cut fares massively, usage increased, and when it raised them again, it fell. The criticism of the Bill was that it would result in massive service cuts. Quite obviously and palpably, it has not done so. Services have increased and passenger usage has increased. Tube usage has increased by nearly 50 per cent.

**Mr. Dobson:** Does the hon. Gentleman travel by bus?

**Mr. Maples:** I travel by tube quite a bit. I have noticed that a lot more people seem to, as well.

The third criticism was that ratepayers would end up paying massively more. That is interesting because, in fact, the rate precept was 10·8 per cent. in LRT's first year, 9·79 per cent. in the next and 7·7 per cent. in the next. I make that a fall of 28 per cent. I assure Opposition Members that ratepayers in my constituency do not regard that as a massive increase in their rates; they regard it as a substantial fall and welcome it enormously. It is a result of the revenue subsidy given to the GLC falling from more than £200 million to £58 million next year. That is a commendable performance by LRT. After all, the GLC's planned revenue support for next year was £245 million —another £200 million that would have had to be met out of public expenditure.

The prediction of massive fare increases, massive cuts in services and massive increases in contributions from ratepayers has not been justified. Fares this year will fall in real terms, service levels and passenger usage are increasing and the rate precept has fallen 28 per cent. in three years.

All the Opposition's prejudice about the way transport should be run in 1983 and 1984—against anything other than a heavily subsidised, politically manipulated and municipally run service — seems to continue. It is unfortunate for the Opposition that the facts in the LRT plans, some of which I have quoted in my speech, are so confusing to those prejudices. They have to remember that the real proof of the pudding is in the eating. Opposition Members should have the grace to eat their words quietly and amend their prejudices.

11.6 pm

**Mr. Simon Hughes** (Southwark and Bermondsey): Although some of the points made by the hon. Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) were accurate, the selective use of statistics, and in particular the reliance on the projections rather than the actuality, undermines a substantial amount of the authenticity of what he said. He must not criticise others for selectively using statistics when he then falls into exactly that trap himself.

The last report from the consultative passengers committee—which was set up only, as I remember from Committee, with any proper accountability because of a great deal of pressure—was last March. Then follows, about 10 months behind, the time of the year when we periodically debate the order. The summary of London Regional Transport made by the Committee then holds equally good today. It summarised the performance of LRT as having poor bus reliability and an improved service on the underground. In very general terms, that has been the pattern.

I want to give what are, I hope, some authentic and certainly accurate statistics on the facts, as opposed to the forecasts or plans. On the service levels for bus use, 1985-86 — the last year for which we have complete figures — had the lowest million bus miles since 1982—162 million, which is 4 million lower than the preceding two years. I accept that underground miles have risen slightly.

For the passenger miles on buses, the last full year shows a reduction to the lowest figure for three years—down to 2,587. The forecast goes up again, but the reality is that it has not happened yet. Again, I concede that underground figures have been greater.

The waiting time—an important statistic for people in London — for the underground has remained consistent throughout the last five years at 3·3 minutes, but the waiting time for buses for four years from 1982 to 1984-85 was 7 minutes, and last year it rose, albeit marginally, by another 0·3 minutes. That is not substantial, but allowing for mergers it means some substantial increases in waiting times. That is not an acceptable statistic.

I have two further relevant statistics. The number of passenger journeys on buses has gone down to a figure lower than the preceding two years, and certainly the number of miles operated as a percentage of the schedule has gone down.

Of course, there have been substantial areas of improvement. For example, if we can obtain a service where the ratepayer and taxpayer pay less and the service is better, that—depending on the fare—is a good deal. The fares have gone up slightly higher than perhaps they might have done, but I accept that London Regional Transport had a particular initial capital investment job to do, and certainly the renovation of the underground stations is very welcome. That is one of the improvements that is entirely acceptable. The number of travellers on the underground again manifests the greater appeal of the underground. But there are other criteria which I would like the Minister to address, and which are equally relevant.

There is, I hope the Minister will accept, a limit to the number of people who can be crowded into the underground. One of the current problems is that at peak times, because of greater passenger use and because we do not yet have the new stock on stream, there are increasing periods of congestion on the underground as well as congestion overground, which highlights another problem. I would like to know whether we shall see a commensurate reduction in the difficulties at congested periods on the underground, which seems to be the greatest problem in passenger use terms that the underground service faces at present.

There are several problems in regard to London buses which I hope that the Minister will honestly address, because they seriously concern Londoners. The first is, of course, as statistics show, that bus services are, at best, improving only marginally so far, since LRT took over, and, at worst, are getting worse. There are substantial areas of London, as I am sure the Minister knows, where the reliability and regularity of the service are not good.

For example, there is a bus that goes almost directly from my home to here, the 53. I use it quite often. When the cab does not work I go on the bus. A couple of weeks ago, I was on the bus every day. Coming along the Old Kent road in the morning, that bus is often crowded and often late. and the timetables are often not there. Some parts of Southwark have timetables for this year already displayed; my part is not likely to get them for another four months, until May. That is not acceptable, not even knowing when the buses are meant to come, let alone not knowing whether they will come according to the timetable.

The second problem is that there is a tendency, which is welcome, to look at shortening the routes. The logic is that if we shorten the routes the delays should decrease. But that is just the sort of consideration that the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) introduced, supported by the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison). Clearly, one of the factors that increases the congestion on the already congested roads of inner London is reducing the number of personnel on the bus from two to one. The obvious result is the delay when people get on; there is also not the support service for passengers—information and so on—on the buses, and that slows the whole system down.

The delays mainly arise — and I have had frequent correspondence about the lack of regularity of buses running to schedule in the Selkent district and elsewhere — because of the congestion on the roads of inner London. We must address that problem and do much more to make sure that we have a higher percentage of services operating according to schedule and on time. We are still failing badly in this, compared with many European cities.

I make the next point on every available occasion and I repeat it today for the Minister. North of the river there is to be the Docklands light railway going into the area east of the City. We do not yet have any commensurate routing south of the river, yet boroughs like mine, Southwark, and on into Lewisham and Greenwich are relatively badly served by public transport. So I ask the Minister to follow up the answer that he gave to me in the first Transport Questions of the year, on 12 January, when I asked him to look at a way of linking up the tube lines going to the Elephant with the east London line as a matter of urgency — and the London Docklands Development Corporation has been thinking about and working on this — so that we can have much more effective east-west access south of the river to deal with many of the delays. I gather, for example, that Greenwich has just had a station opened but has still only two trains an hour in each direction. That is not satisfactory, because the potential demand is much greater. So I ask the Minister to consider the very poor bus services and the linkage between types of services south of the river, particularly in dockland.

The point that still has not been adequately addressed is how we raise to an equal standard all the public transport services in London and then run them at equal cost to the public. There is an inner London suburban railway system. I hope that the Minister has read the book, "The Clandestine Railway", that has been produced by the passengers' committee. It contains pictures of stations such as South Bermondsey in my constituency which looks as though it had not been attended to by British Rail for a generation at least. Primarily it is a potentially useful service, but first it has to be made to look as though it is there to serve the public, with proper stations and so on, and then it needs to be properly integrated into the underground and bus network.

Then the last step in the Travelcard/Capitalcard system has to happen, which is that a person would pay the same for a card no matter what public transport system was used for the journey in inner London. I hope that the Minister will encourage the House by saying that soon, no matter whether one goes by bus, by underground or by rail, there will be a common tariff for the Capitalcard or Travelcard with proper interchangeability.

I share the concern that we have so short a time only once a year to debate the only and very anomalous public corporation that runs transport for the capital city. Clearly it is not enough. Although there have been substantial improvements in some areas, I hope that the House will remind London Regional Transport that, particularly for the bus user in inner London, the public transport service is not as good as it could be and that passengers are still paying a relatively high price for a service that often lets them down badly.

11.16 pm

**Mr. Jeremy Hanley** (Richmond and Barnes): There is not mch left to say after the powerful speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples). He set out the history of the London Regional Transport Act 1984 with a clarity and honesty which we have rarely heard from the Opposition. He served with me on the Standing Committee and we both remember well the arguments from the Opposition. It is a very cynical and unpleasant politician who tries to curry favour by living on the fears of others. I well remember the leaflets being given to people on buses saying that there would be massive tube station closures as a result of the legislation.

One thing that struck me in the contribution from the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) and the interjections of other Opposition Members was that they seemed to believe that the London transport system as a whole is meant to be a job creation and a job protection scheme. Hardly ever did any of them mention that it is a passenger scheme. It is there to provide passenger facilities at the levels that passengers require, with a price structure that ratepayers, passengers and Government can afford.

The use of the underground reached an all-time record of 762 million passenger journeys in 1985-86. Is that a 10 per cent. or a 20 per cent. increase? No, since the legislation was introduced, it is a 50 per cent. increase in journeys. And the long-term decline in bus usage has been halted. Overall last year there were 1·9 billion passenger journeys on LRT services.

It is pathetic when Opposition Members start saying, "All right, yes, we agree; the use of tube services has increased, but the bus services have gone down. That is one success and one failure." The answer is that one must give credit for the fact that the tube system is among the most attractive, efficient and well-run systems in the world. At the same time one must recognise the great difficulties that those who run London's buses have, for the simple reason that, because so many people have their own cars — a sign of affluence and of a small increase in prosperity amongst the nation as a whole—that causes difficulties above ground that cannot happen below ground. It must be desperately difficult for John Telford-Beasley to keep the buses from bunching in the traffic levels that we have. Yes, it is irresponsible of millions of people to bring their domestic cars into London. It is also unnecessary and wasteful. The bus services would improve dramatically if domestic cares and smaller lorries would keep out of inner London.

That will be achieved by making the bus services even more attractive and by imaginative schemes to make sure that parking is introduced outside London towards the M25. Individuals must be educated out of the socially

*[Mr. Jeremy Hanley]*

unacceptable habit of coming alone into London in motor vehicles. Success will depend on matching the efficiency of the service, and the attractiveness of the facilities provided above ground with those below.

**Mr. Raynsford:** Many Labour Members accept much of what the hon. Gentleman says about the strategic importance of seeking a reduction in private vehicle usage in central London in order to facilitate bus movement. But he went on to say that one of the keys to that was making buses more attractive. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that one-person operated buses and an increase in the time taken to pick up passengers, so reducing the efficiency of buses, would have exactly the opposite effect?

**Mr. Hanley:** Mr. Telford-Beasley has exactly the right plans to make buses more attractive. He has already achieved that on some routes in the centre of London. He has introduced midibuses to make sure that people sit in comfort and not in long, draughty buses, often empty during the middle of the day, apart from the odd one or two passangers.

Bus mileages have reduced over the years on some routes because the level of passengers per bus has been reduced. Therefore, one must expect to reschedule the buses to make sure that they are more efficient. The midibus system and competitive tendering will bring more attractive routes that are more responsive to individual's needs.

**Mr. Raynsford:** I was asking about one-person operated buses.

**Mr. Hanley:** The hon. Gentleman seems to believe that a bus is inherently more attractive if two people are working on it rather than one. What is important is that the system is efficient, cheap and works. Merely having two people on a bus does not achieve that. I readily admit that one of London Buses biggest problems is in one-person operation. There is a resistance to that among the public. There are routes where it will be discovered that passenger resistance is such that buses will have to go back to having extra staff. I do not deny that. But the professional management of London's buses is exactly what is needed to decide on the future of the bus network. That will not be decided on the narrow political point of having as many working on the system as possible. It will be decided upon giving the best service to the passenger and that is what Mr. Telford-Beasley is capable of.

I also want to congratulate Dr. Tony Ridley. His professionalism on the underground has been superb. Let us remember that the highest level of passenger usage on the underground was last summer when the fewest holidaymakers ever came to Britain, and especially to the capital. That is indeed a tribute to Dr. Ridley and his staff. Any hon. Member who looks at London's underground system can see how attractive, informative and clean it is. Not only that but the new station designs are appropriate to the areas they serve and enhance the original architecture, as at Baker street on the old metropolitan line.

**Mr. Dobson:** How many of the station improvements that the hon. Gentleman is talking about were planned or commenced under the Labour-controlled GLC and how many have been carried out since LRT took over that had not been started or planned by the GLC?

**Mr. Hanley:** The same GLC forecast the closure of 35 stations—[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer."] It was starting to do improvements in certain stations, but it is now an attractive scheme for the whole of London which spreads out into the provinces.

**Mr. Dobson** *rose*——

**Mr. Hanley:** No. The hon. Gentleman can make his own speech in due course.

Ticketing has been made more attractive. It has been a hard battle to persuade LRT that passengers should be able to buy a ticket where it is most convenient for the passenger. The increase in the number of ticketing outlets is bound to increase business. It is now easier to get on an underground train, and fraud has been heavily reduced.

I should like to remind the House of the intentions behind the London Regional Transport Bill. LRT was to restore a stable framework for public transport planning. That has been achieved. It was to reduce unnecessary costs and provide better value for money for travellers, ratepayers and taxpayers. That has been achieved. It was to bring bus and underground services into the same policy framework as the BR commuter services, and to improve co-operation. Through-routing has never been easier.

Plans that London Regional Transport and BR unveiled recently are exciting and what should have been introduced years ago. They have been achieved under this structure. LRT was to redirect resources to cost-saving investment. That is exactly what has happened. The capital investment programme has increased and the need for revenue support cut while fares have been held steady. It was to ensure fully professional management. Under Sir Keith Bright, who has not been mentioned, but to whom great tribute should be paid——

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Who appointed him?

**Mr. Hanley:** —we now have a system which is improving, not declining, is popular and serving the capital rather than union and Labour pressure.

11.27 pm

**Mr. Alfred Dubs** (Battersea): It is a matter of regret that there are so few opportunities to debate public transport in London. I get a steady stream of complaints from my constituents about the bus services in Battersea. I am surprised that the hon. Members for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples) and for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) seem to think that loyalty to their Minister is more important than loyalty to their constituents. The world that they describe is not that which is known in most parts of London.

During the past few years we have experienced a steady deterioration in bus services in London. This naturally attracts more cars. There is therefore more pressure for trunk roads. Therefore there will be more traffic, and therefore the environment will get worse. The evidence of the time under the Labour-controlled GLC was that public transport can win more passengers if services are reliable and fares are reasonable. That is the lesson of the past and the lesson of other cities such as Paris.

I shall concentrate on bus services in south London. Whatever are the planned services, the fact is that there are approximately 30 per cent. deficiencies on at least some of the routes in London due to staff shortages and shortages of spare parts for older buses. London Buses is some 800 drivers short, and in the Wandle district, which covers part of my constituency, there is a shortage of 160 drivers. In south-east Kent there is a shortage of 120 drivers.

**Mr. Hanley:** Will the hon. Gentleman ask bus conductors to take a promotion and apply for those jobs?

**Mr. Dubs:** I think that that is a somewhat irrelevant point.

I receive many letters of complaint and I should like to quote briefly from one of them. The letter complains about services on the 44, 137 and 170 routes. My constituent complains that for a week recently, and not during the heavy snow, she had to wait at least half an hour every day to get a bus from Battersea to Vauxhall or Whitehall. She concluded her letter by writing:

> "I wonder if there is anything further you can do to put pressure on LRT to improve the bus services in North Battersea. People are utterly fed up with excuses. We want an improvement, not excuses."

It seems that that attitude and those words typify the views of so many Londoners about bus services.

If all is as well on London buses as Conservative Members suggest, why is it that London Buses is estimating that revenue in the current year will fall by 8 per cent.? That is a sign of a service that is failing, not succeeding.

I have received bitter complaints from constituents about one-person-operated buses. The operation may be all right in far suburban areas or in the country, but in inner London it leads to congestion at every bus stop, to enormous difficulties for the disabled, who complain that if there is not a conductor on the platform they get no help to climb on the bus with the result that they cannot manage to use buses, and to similar difficulties for those with shopping or with young children.

One-person operation has been opposed by the London Regional Transport passengers' committee and criticised by the police. It is surely not the way to run an efficient and sensible bus service in inner London, yet we hear that because of less revenue support there are to be more one-person-operated buses and that London Buses will need an extra 440 new buses for this purpose. It seems that it has the money for only 65 new buses, based on £23 million of investment, and that it will have to buy 220 second-hand buses instead. Some of the 220 will be buses which it has previously owned and sold. This is ludicrous. London Transport will not have sufficient buses with which to tender for the 33 routes that will be put out to tender this year. The Minister knows that, so I am interested to know how he can say that London Buses will have to compete for routes when he is preventing it from having the resources with which to compete with private operators.

There is a list of the services that will be affected. We know that one-person operation will affect a number of routes in south London, such as the No. 1 from Marylebone to Greenwich. It will be converted to one-person operation in May. In September the 53 route from Oxford circus to Plumstead will be affected in that way. The southern section of the 88 route from Acton Green to Mitcham will also become a one-person operation. There is a long list of routes that will be affected by tendering, including many that may be lost entirely to public transport. These are services that will affect Plumstead, Norbiton, Harrow, Merton and Sutton. The tendering process may result in these areas losing public transport services. There is a list also of possible job losses.

I agree that London Transport's primary aim is to provide a decent service, not to provide jobs, but my submission is that London Buses is failing the people of London. This is clear if we listen to the complaints of our constituents and ascertain for ourselves how long it takes for buses to appear. If services are running to schedule all may be well, but time and again schedules are not maintained because of lack of resources, inadequate buses and poor repair facilities.

We know, for example, that London Transport has had to close its driver-training school at Chiswick. We know also that many of the training resources in the districts are inadequate. It seems that the bus services will continue to offer poor and deteriorating service for the people of London. It is time to say that we do not have to run our capital's bus service in that way. It is time to say that there is another way of doing it. Provided that the resources are made available, we can have decent transport for London. Transport is the lifeblood of the capital, and given the way in which bus services are deteriorating year by year, that lifeblood will cease to flow. It is up to the Government to say that they will provide the resources in future, instead of always saying, "Never mind the bus passengers, let them wait. They do not matter."

11.35 pm

**Mr. Michael Fallon** (Darlington): It would be quite wrong if consideration of this order was simply restricted to hon. Members with London constituencies. A large part of the estimated grant in paragraph 4 of the order must be provided, not by the ratepayers of London or by London Regional Transport's customers but by taxpayers throughout the rest of the country.

We should note—whether we represent London or elsewhere—that this year the total grant of £285 million provided to LRT exceeds the entire regional aid budget for the rest of the counry. It is only right that somebody from outside London should be asking some slightly harder questions than we have yet heard from either side of the House tonight about the performance of LRT.

Why is it that the most prosperous part of the country has the most heavily subsidised commuter network in the country? Why should taxpayers in the north fund those southern comforts?

**Mr. Dobson:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Fallon:** No. Why should taxpayers in Glasgow and Darlington subsidise the City slickers from Fulham broadway or Sloane square as they travel to work? Why does LRT make a loss? There has been a great deal of stale thinking on the issue of LRT—that has been displayed in previous debates on the Bill and during tonight's debate.

**Mr. Dobson** *rose*——

**Mr. Fallon:** No, I will not give way.

LRT has a virtual monopoly of the bus network and a complete monopoly of the underground network. Why does not LRT contribute — through profits — to the national wealth? Why does LRT not help to fund our schools and hospitals in the rest of the country instead of drawing resources from them?

We have an agenda for privatisation. Why is LRT not on that list?

**Mr. Hanley:** Is the metro in Newcastle making a profit?

**Mr. Fallon:** I apply the same argument to the metro, but I can assure my hon. Friend that the metro does not rely on as heavy a subsidy from public funds as LRT—that is the point. LRT is the most heavily subsidised network.

**Mr. Dobson:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Fallon:** I will give way, but I am anxious to let other hon. Members participate in the debate.

**Mr. Dobson:** As the hon. Gentleman is drawing attention to anomalies, does he think that it is ever so slightly anomalous that Britain's biggest education authority receives not one jot of subsidy from the taxpayer, as every penny comes from London's ratepayers unlike the hon. Gentleman's area?

**Mr. Fallon:** That question is entirely beyond the scope of the order.

Why is the privatisation of LRT not one of the Government's priorities? How can the Government justify taxpayers in the rest of country having to subsidise a merchant banker's journey from Fulham Broadway into the heart of the City when that same merchant banker is working on the privatisation of transit systems in the far east? It is ironic.

I have two specific questions for my hon. Friend. First, when will the estimated grant under paragraph 4(1) be zero rather than a figure reduced from £235 million in subsequent years? At what point will there be no estimated grant? At what point will taxpayers in the rest of Britain be free of the burden of subsidising southern comforts?

Secondly, when will my hon. Friend come forward not simply with guidelines that tell LRT how to manage its system better but with a positive plan of privatisation? That would free LRT of the politicking that we have seen tonight in the House. Privatisation would allow LRT to flourish as a fully commercial company and would allow those who work in it to share in the fruits of its enterprise rather than to rely on the generosity of the taxpayers in the north.

11.39 pm

**Mr. Harry Cohen** (Leyton): The Conservative Government have reduced public transport in London to a state of crisis. They took democratic control away with the abolition of the GLC, but since then they have made ratepayers pay a higher bill for a reduced service. The Government subsidy has more than halved and, as a result, fares have shot up. Services have been cut and jobs lost. That is due to get worse, as privatisation and deregulation increasingly hit London. Private operators will squabble over the profitable routes, leaving residents everywhere else to suffer. Frequent service changes, poor information, unreliable timetabling and short cuts on safety will bring chaos and dissatisfaction. The Government are responsible for this decline, and have no remedy but to make it worse.

I wrote to Sir Keith Bright, the chairman of LRT only this week, and I shall quote part of the letter:

> "Travelling regularly on the underground, including to the House of Commons from my home in Leytonstone, I am aware that there are frequently delays in service caused by signal failures, trains out of commission, staff shortages and other managerial problems, adversely affecting the service. I am also aware of the dingy state of many of the stations. I know that the GLC had plans and was undertaking a programme to invest in both rolling stock and station refurbishment, but that these plans have regrettably now mostly been delayed or abandoned."

I call on him to be ready with a plan that will meet the joint aims of improving public transport in London and creating jobs, which will be necessary with the next Labour Government.

I am going to raise this matter when the next general election is held. Public transport will be part of my campaign in the leaflet that I shall be producing, and I shall be demanding the reversal of this decline, and calling for a Labour Government to provide much-needed investment to modernise the road, rail, tube and bus network in London; to provide adequate finance for the services that people need at fares that they can afford; to restore democratic accountability so that local communities can have a say in their public transport; to undertake action on traffic management, with schemes such as bus lanes and selective road building to reduce traffic congestion; to guarantee the free travel passes for pensioners—when the Tories look for cuts, these could still be at risk—and to improve travel facilities and access to the buses and stations for disabled people.

That programme, started by the GLC, has been cut to nothing. Staffing levels should be increased to assist and protect travellers. There must be a proper maintenance programme to improve safety and reduce the dangers of crumbling roads. That is the programe for effective public transport in London. It is a much better programme for people to get around on public transport than the market mayhem and Conservative chaos that is being inflicted on the people of London.

11.43 pm

**Mr. Clive Soley** (Hammersmith): It is a bit much for the Minister to open the debate by saying that the GLC was politically motivated, with the implication that he was not. He is a politician, and the Secretary of State and the Minister are imposing political conditions on LRT. I make no complaint about that right, because they won an election just as the GLC won its election, and so had rights over London transport—until it was abolished in case the Labour party won another election, as it was bound to do.

Many Conservative Members show an appalling ignorance. All the station improvements, the fares card to cut fraud, the "Fares Fair" scheme and other improvements all came from the GLC, not the Government, and the Government are picking up some of them because it has turned out that they work. It was the GLC that appointed Dr. Bright, so the Minister's comments are even more out of tune with reality.

What the Minister said about dial-a-ride is grossly misleading. I wrote to the Minister and I have sent his reply to the dial-a-ride people. I can tell the Minister that not just my supporters but people across the political spectrum were angry with his reply, because it raised expectations. The tiny increases have allowed dial-a-ride to advertise its services more widely and provide new capital equipment in the form of buses. However, there is no provision for the increased use that will follow. All the Minister will do is upset many disabled people who will try to use dial-a-ride and find that the facilities are not available. I challenge the Minister: if he does not believe me, he should ask the dial-a-ride organisers because all of them, across the political spectrum, told me that, and I am prepared to give him further details.

The 207 bus route starts in my constituency and thereafter passes through several constituencies held by Conservative Members such as Ealing, Acton and so on.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Shame. We should re-route it.

**Mr. Soley:** All the Conservative Members from Acton to Uxbridge have come out in opposition and have given the Shepherds Bush and Hammersmith Gazette, the local paper that has taken up the issue, their commitment to oppose one-person operation. They have done that because they know that it is unpopular. It is unpopular because, as has already been pointed out, one-person operation, on average, increases journey time by between 15 and 20 per cent. On a route such as the 207, the journey time will be increased by much more. There have been complaints about that service for a long time.

The one area in which I was wrong in the past about one-person operation is that there is some evidence that crime and accident rates have gone down. However, it is wrong to associate that just with one-person operation. It is due to the automatic closing doors which stop people from falling off and so on. The lessening of attacks is probably due not only to the low fares in certain high-risk areas late at night, but to the shields that have been put up and radio links and so on. To say that it is because of one-person operation, as is implied in some of the recent publications, is grossly misleading and another example of the misuse of statistics of which Conservative Members have given such an appalling example this evening.

My main reason for intervening, as the Minister will know, is the development of the Hammersmith Broadway site. I realise that the Minister cannot reply at this time, because there is an appeal before the Secretary of State. However, my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford), the Members of the European Assembly, councillors and supporters of the Conservative party as well as myself, believe that the scheme for Hammersmith centre will be totally unacceptable in the form that has been proposed by LRT. That scheme is one of the biggest proposals of its type in the country — some say in western Europe, but I do not have all the figures. LRT has proposed that form because political pressure has been put on it by the Government to make money.

The interchange affects all hon. Members. Anybody returning from Heathrow comes through there and changes to the Piccadilly line. Many people use it to get to the Metropolitan line. It is a crucial interchange for buses, tubes and other traffic. By telling LRT that it must stay within certain cost limits and by not allowing it to fund the docks railway without finding its own revenue, the Government have put pressure on LRT to make sites such as Hammersmith pay. Therefore, there has to be a mighty office development on top. In Hammersmith centre there will be an enormous office development which will dramatically change the nature of the area. It was a major issue at the local elections and it will be a major issue again because it is ripping apart the town centre at a time when we are trying to rebuild the town centres of Britain because we know that by having them turned into derelict areas and office space areas we have created the problems of inner cities and made them worse in recent years. I ask the Minister to take away the message that if the Government allowed Dr. Bright and the LRT more flexibility on the money issue they would not have to build developments which alienate hundreds of thousands of people across the country. Even people who do not live in Hammersmith have been complaining about the nature and scale of that development. It is huge.

Dr. Bright has undertaken, following a meeting with some of us, to go away and look at that scheme again, but his room for manoeuvre is limited unless the Government alter their political instructions.

I understand that the Minister cannot reply to me on that tonight, but I ask him to take away the great seriousness with which people across the political spectrum view that issue. It is extremely important and will have a dramatic effect on the whole of west London. Priority must be given to passenger users and to people who live in the area, not to office development.

11.42 pm

**Mr. David Mitchell:** It may be convenient if I respond to a number of points that have been made. The hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Stott) opened in his usual style. He referred to some of the unfortunate side effects of improving efficiency which often means, in any business, that one operates with less manpower than one had before. A number of hon. Members on both sides of the House referred to the fact that it is not part of the work of LRT to provide an employment agency. It is its task to provide the best possible services for the citizens of London and others who use its services. The hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) interrupted the speech of the hon. Member for Wigan by saying that there were 393,000 unemployed in London and 36,000 registered vacancies. The hon. Member for Wigan must bear in mind that the registered vacancies are a third of the total vacancies—that is 100,000 vacancies—and that must be taken into account.

The hon. Member for Battersea (Mr. Dubs) told the House that LRT had a shortage of staff. If LRT has a shortage of staff, that is self-evidently an answer to the question about what happens to some of the people who lose their jobs as a result of improved efficiency.

The hon. Member for Wigan has said before that he deplores the decrease in subsidy. He appears to regard subsidy as some sort of virility symbol. I do not do that and I do not think those who pick up the bill, the ratepayers and taxpayers, regard it in that light either. The hon. Members for Wigan and for Battersea claimed that London Buses will not have enough vehicles to run all the routes which are being put out to tender. However, we know from experience that London Buses has won 41 per cent. of the tenders for which it has entered. It would be nonsense for it to put aside the 100 per cent. of vehicles required for the tenders that are coming up and then to find that it won the same proportion, or roughly the same proportion of tenders that it won before and had a whole lot of surplus vehicles on its hands. The hon. Members who pressed that point cannot have thought clearly about the matter.

I turn to OPO services because it is an operational matter for LRT. They clearly bring major cost savings, there are fewer accidents to passengers, fewer assaults on crew and service reliability is greatly enhanced by dependence on one rather than two persons to operate the service. LRT is not committed to 100 per cent. OPO operation, although that is the norm in most major cities throughout the world. London Buses appraises each stage of OPO conversion on its merits taking account of cost

*[Mr. David Mitchell]*

savings, time losses to passengers, and congestion effects. It is also looking especially at ways of achieving faster boarding times and reducing delay.

The hon. Member for Wigan threatened that if the Labour party was ever to win a general election, it would re-introduce political control over LRT operations. All I can say is that I am sure that that threat will be noted in the right quarters, and plenty of people will want to see that it does not happen.

My hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, West (Mr. Maples), in a hard-hitting speech, demolished much of the case against LRT, particularly the Labour party's prophecies that if the Greater London council ceased to run LRT, it would deteriorate. All that has been proved to be arrant nonsense.

The hon. Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) raised several points. He said that there was the lowest-ever figure for London Buses mileage. With great respect to the hon. Gentleman, he implied by that that fewer bus miles were being run in London. He is confusing himself with figures. While it is true that London Buses is running fewer miles, that is because the company has failed to win some of the contracts that have gone out to competitive tender. If he looks at the overall mileage in London, he will see that the deterioration that has gone on over many years has come to a stop. The crucial difference in the figures is that the 163 million miles to which he referred is the mileage by London Buses whereas the total mileage being operated in London is 169 million miles. I think that that will give the hon. Gentleman some reassurance.

The hon. Gentleman also referred to congestion on the tube. London Transport is well aware of that. We have helped by approving £45 million worth of additional rolling stock for London Transport. On top of that, as an emergency measure, some older stock is being brought into operation. The fact that there is such an increase in demand is a sign of success. It is perhaps one of the penalties of success, but the last thing that one should do is in any way to fail to recognise that it is success that has led to the problem.

My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) paid tribute to Sir Keith Bright—rightly so. I add to that a tribute to the role played by Dr. Tony Ridley and John Telford-Beasley. Those professional managers have achieved a great deal, and are responsible for the success that has done so much to improve the services in the capital.

The hon. Member for Battersea also referred to a reduction in the revenue of London Buses. That is because it failed to win the tenders. The same point was raised earlier. The hon. Gentleman is misleading himself if he thinks that there is any other reason for that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) asked me certain questions. He was concerned about when the subsidy to LRT would come to an end and why we had to subsidise it. That is because——

*It being one and half hours after the commencement of proceedings on the motion,* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *put the Question, pursuant to Standing Order No. 14 (Exempted business).*

*Question agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the draft London Regional Transport (Levy) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 17th December, be approved.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. May I place on record how thoroughly unsatisfactory it is to have a one-and-a-half hour debate on something as important as London Regional Transport at this time of night when many hon. Members have been unable to speak?

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).*

### NORTHERN IRELAND

That the draft Local Elections (Northern Ireland) (Amendment) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 13th January, be approved. —*[Mr. Durant.]*

*Question agreed to.*

### WELSH GRAND COMMITTEE

*Ordered,*

That, during the proceedings on the matter of the Public Expenditure White Paper (Cm. 56-11), as it relates to Wales, the Welsh Grand Committee have leave to sit twice on the first day on which it shall meet; and that, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Order No. 88 (Meetings of standing committees), the second such sitting shall not commence before Four o'clock nor continue after the Committee has considered the matter for two hours at the sitting.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

### PROCEDURE

*Ordered,*

That the Standing Order of 20th March 1984 relating to the nomination of the Select Committee on Procedure be amended, by leaving out Mr. Christopher Chope, Viscount Cranborne and Mr. Hugh McCartney and inserting Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours, Sir Carol Mather and Mr. William Powell.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

## PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSIONER FOR ADMINISTRATION

*Ordered,*

That Mr. David Clelland be discharged from the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration and Mr. George Howarth be added to the Committee.—*[Mr. Durant.]*

## Caterpillar Tractors (Closure)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn—*[Mr. Durant.]*

11.59 pm

**Mr. Michael Hirst** (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Any factory closure is usually a matter of great sadness, for the management, the work force, suppliers and the local community. When news of a closure is preceded by an announcement of a substantial new investment programme, which is started and then abruptly cancelled, that must surely be a matter of more than sadness. It is a matter of outrage involving justifiable accusations of rank bad faith. That is, in essence, the experience of the Caterpillar factory at Tannochside, Uddingston. A number of my constituents and constituents of other hon. Members derive their living directly or indirectly from that factory.

Caterpillar at Uddingston is typical of many of the United States-owned factories in central Scotland which have set up during my lifetime. By and large, these United States firms have been excellent employers and responsible corporate citizens. I am pleased that the hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Mr. Hamilton) is present, because I am sure that he can testify to my points as he has for many years represented the constituency which incorporates the factory. Caterpillar has known good times as well as difficult times. Over the past 30 years it has been a profitable and worthwhile operation. The management and work force have co-operated to respond positively to the many challenges that the automotive industry has faced through competition from the Japanese, through technological advance and through world economic and market conditions.

Given the concern about the number of factory closures in west central Scotland recently, it is hardly surprising that there was universal acclaim when, just a few weeks ago, senior executives of Caterpillar announced a major investment programme at Tannochside. The factory was to be designated a PWAF, a Caterpillar acronym meaning "a plant with a future". Some £62 million was to be spent re-equipping the plant with the most sophisticated robotic machinery in order to create a factory capable of achieving the significant production cost reductions necessary to be internationally competitive. A further £8 million was to be spent redesigning the factory layout and training the employees in the new technologies.

That investment programme was supported by a promise of substantial Government assistance. All that good news was announced during a visit to the factory by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. Indeed, the Caterpillar press release rightly identified the need for an ultra modern factory. The plant director was able to say on the occasion of the Secretary of State's visit:

> "Fortunately because of the new products that we are adding to this facility namely fabrications and transmissions, our manpower requirements in 1989 are forecasted to be approximately the same number—1,200—of people as we presently employ. The £62 million investment can be looked upon as insurance against the loss of 1,200 jobs. There is no alternative to investment and training."

I dare say that many people on the occasion of the Secretary of State's visit would have said "Hear, hear" to that. I am glad to say further that the plant director acknowledged in pretty generous terms the support that the Minister's Department was giving to that investment as well as the fact that the company intended to apply for assistance under the advanced manufacturing technology scheme administered by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Caterpillar thus symbolised the new hopes for Scottish manufacturing business, where employee skills and commitment, allied to the latest technology and flexibility in work practices, could manufacture a world-beating product.

All was presumably well with this new investment programme, because in the early part of this month a very expensive robotic machine was installed and started test production exactly two weeks ago, just hours before an announcement from Caterpillar's headquarters in Peoria, Illinois that not only was the whole investment programme to be abandoned, but that the whole plant at Uddingston was to close. PWAF—a plant with a future: how sick these words must sound in the ears of the work force. Understandably, the announcement has caused dismay and outrage among the work force, the suppliers, the local community and in Government circles in Parliament.

Caterpillar has signally failed to provide a persuasive explanation for its decision, so soon after starting a major investment programme, to abandon it and close the factory. What has happened in the short time since that announcement to invalidate the corporate strategy that supported the new investment? Caterpillar's senior executives should have been aware of future market trends and production requirements when they made their announcement in September. Every hon. Member must know that investment decisions are made on a medium to long-term basis and are generally unaffected by short-term market hiccups — if that is what prompted the Caterpillar United States decision.

Why have the executives of Caterpillar in the United States been so unforthcoming about their reasons for closure? Can my hon. Friend the Minister, who met them last week, shed some light on the reasons for their abrupt decision? Caterpillar cannot slide out of its obligations as a major employer. It must explain its conduct, especially in view of the high-flown declaration of business ethics in Caterpillar's "Code of Worldwide Conduct and Operating Principles", from which I rather ruefully quote. It states:

> "We intend to hold to a single high standard of integrity everywhere. We will keep our word. We won't promise more than we can reasonably expect to deliver; nor will we make commitments we don't intend to keep. The goal of corporate communication is the truth—well and persuasively told."

In the light of that and the earlier admissions by the company, I am prompted to think that, at best, the senior managers at Caterpillar have been guilty of gross incompetence in the planning of their corporate strategic objectives. At worst, their conduct borders on corporate treachery.

I accept that those are strong words of accusation, but do not the circumstances of this unique case suggest that Caterpillar has deceived a loyal and co-operative work force, that it has dealt shabbily with its suppliers and sub-contractors, many of whom have recently become recognised sub-contractors and, to do that, turned away business that might otherwise have been available to them, and that, more than anything else, it has betrayed a local community that is struggling to cope with unemployment at 20 per cent.? I do not generally support the occupation

*[Mr. Michael Hirst]*

of a factory by its work force, but I can readily appreciate the sense of betrayal that prompted the Uddingston work force to take the dramatic action that it has.

I have some questions for my hon. Friend the Minister, and I hope that he can give me some answers. Where do matters stand with Caterpillar's senior management? When does he or my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State expect a reaction from Peoria — a reaction which I understand was promised when the president of the company met him last week? Can my hon. Friend say whether the Government have made any contribution to the investment support which they promised? What contingent plans will be made to try to protect employment at Uddingston if Caterpillar pulls out? Is my hon. Friend aware of another manufacturing operation that could secure a future for the huge Tannochside factory? Will he confirm that the United Kingdom does badly out of the decision, and that Leicester will not benefit materially from the closure of Uddingston?

We all recognise that business conditions change, sometimes rapidly, and that no factory has a God-given right to remain in production for ever. Caterpillar's decision might have been easier to understand, if not to accept, had it warned in September of overproduction or market problems rather than made that bullish announcement of investment plans. The whole House will wish to join me in condemning the actions of the senior management of Caterpillar in the United States and in supporting the valiant efforts of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State and my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State to persuade the Caterpillar management to reconsider its decision to close the factory.

12.9 am

**Mr. James Hamilton** (Motherwell, North): It is most unusual for an hon. Member to have an Adjournment debate on a factory in another hon. Member's constituency, but on this occasion I welcome it because it means, in essence, that the Government very much condemn the action taken by the Caterpillar management. I have been associated with Caterpillar since 1956. As a member of a local authority, I greatly assisted it. We gave it every possible assistance. We demolished houses to give it a green field site. We built new houses for people whose houses were demolished, and we built houses for incoming workers. At the outset of our negotiations with the company, we found that, true American company that it was, we had great industrial relations trouble. However, we managed to right that problem, and since 1956 industrial relations have been of the best order and the product has been excellent. They are not my words but those of management.

My first intimation about the closure was when the shop steward, who happens to be a friend and constituent of my hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson), phoned me at my home to tell me that, in Illinois, consideration was being given to closing two or three of the factories within the Caterpillar combine, and that our factory was one of those under consideration. To say that I was shattered is to put it mildly. I was absolutely flabbergasted; indeed, I thought that the shop steward was going stark raving bonkers.

When the Queen made her speech opening Parliament, I met one of the top management of Caterpillar in London, at his request. He told me how fortunate I was because our factory was doing well. He mentioned the £62·5 million investment. It is not just true to say that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for Scotland visited the factory, but it was set up that he should go and assist the general plant manager to make the announcement himself. He made that announcement. Indeed, in his new year message, in glowing terms he also praised the investment that had been made by the Caterpillar tractor company.

All this was done in September last year. A few short weeks afterwards — in fact, to be precise, on 16 December — the shop steward sent for the work force, and told them that the factory was to close. This closure was to be done without any consultation with the unions, the shop stewards and, indeed, me. Bearing in mind that, before the advent of the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service, I performed many miracles in the factory by acting as a mediator to keep good industrial relations, these are the thanks that we got from the company.

The Secretary of State for Scotland, it is true, met the Illinois top management. The trade unions met the Illinois management, and I met them before they boarded their plane to go back to America. We put the case to them and pointed out that it was not only a case of 1,221 men becoming unemployed, but of smaller companies that were dependent on Caterpillar also going to the wall. On that basis, many of the workers had given loyal service to the company for 25 years — some of them for nearly 30 years. They were being thrown on the scrap heap with no possible chance of getting employment anywhere because there is 22·1 per cent. unemployment in Lanarkshire.

That is the thanks that we get from an American company. To say that it is scurrilous is to put it mildly. The Minister was present at the Caterpillar negotiations—if one can call them negotiations—when we tried to get the company to keep the factory open. What is the up-to-date situation with the negotiations? What inducements were given or offered by the Government to keep Caterpillar at Tannochside? What is the situation with the Belgian factory? My information is that the work from Tannochside will go to Belgium. What is the Belgian Government giving that we cannot give? What do multinational companies have that we do not? All these questions must be answered.

I am pleased that the hon. Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst) stated that he fully supports the union members' sit-in at the factory. It goes without saying that Labour Members support them 100 per cent. Indeed, some Labour Members have visited the factory on two occasions, and I intend to do so again on Friday morning. I want these men to know that we recognise that they are fighting for their very existence. If they do not fight now, and fight all the way, their jobs will be lost for ever.

I also want a catergorical assurance from the Minister and the Secretary of State—indeed, from the Cabinet as a whole—that they are prepared to support us 100 per cent. in our fight to ensure that that factory is re-opened and its workers returned to full employment.

12.15 am

**Sir Hector Monro** (Dumfries): During a week when we have had some particularly good news about new jobs, it is sad that we have tonight a united House condemning the disastrous decision of Caterpillar to close its works. Our sympathy — and, I hope, a great deal more — goes to those who will lose their jobs.

I want to show that the repercussions go much further afield than Lanarkshire. In my constituency of Dumfries, Penran Engineering has provided the cabs for Caterpillar — worth £1·6 million last year, which is 41 per cent. of its sales. Fifty jobs will be lost if Caterpillar does close its factory. Penran was, of course, encouraged by Caterpillar to invest £150,000 last year in robot machinery, and because of the confidence shown by Caterpillar in the very large investment that it promised to make, Penran had gone ahead with other preparations to step up production.

Hopes have been sadly dashed, and tonight I want to support my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst) and the hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Mr. Hamilton) and urge my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State to keep up the pressure being exerted on the directors of Caterpillar. I am sure that he is supported by my hon. Friend the Minister, who is responsible for industry. We all feel that every endeavour must be made to persuade the directors of Caterpillar to change their minds and retain what is a thoroughly efficient and effective factory that provides jobs not only in Lanarkshire but, indirectly, further afield.

12.16 am

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Ian Lang):** I welcome the opportunity given to me by my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst) to explain the circumstances surrounding Caterpillar's declared intention to close its Uddingston plant. This decision has aroused feelings of shock and anger and has led to accusations of deceit, and even betrayal, from within all political parties—not only at the decision to close, but at the manner in which it was taken and announced. Many of those sentiments are widely shared by the public at large, and the Government, through the statements of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, have made their concern known.

I especially welcome the speech of the hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Mr. Hamilton) and the unity of purpose displayed in his remarks. I pay tribute to him for his work over the years with Caterpillar, which is in his constituency. I am sure that the House will readily understand his strong personal feelings about what has happened and his concern for his constituents in these circumstances. He and my hon. Friend asked a number of questions, and I shall try to answer as many as I can in the time available.

In December 1985, Caterpillar of the United States of America announced a five-year 600 million dollar modernisation programme to automate its manufacturing facilities worldwide. In the light of group investment intentions, Caterpillar management at Uddingston put together a five-year investment plan which my officials were advised had received group approval in principle, subject to the availability of an acceptable level of financial support through regional assistance. The intention to invest was widely publicised at that time throughout the Uddingston plant, which had been designated by the company as a PWAF — the corporate acronym for a "plant with a future".

Caterpillar UK Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary of the US Caterpillar Inc. The United Kingdom company, with plants at Uddingston and Leicester, employs over 1,900 in the manufacture of tracked vehicles, lift trucks and backhoe loaders, plus spares and components for use in products assembled at other group facilities. The Uddingston factory was established some 30 years ago and now produces the D6 range of earth-moving tractors for sale in Europe, Africa and the middle east; this is regarded as the plant's prime product, although the same range is produced at Caterpillar plants in France, Japan and the United States of America.

The manufacture of replacement parts and components for other product types now accounts for a substantial part of the plant's output in which Uddingston is effectively operating as a sub-contract supplier to the group. The vast majority of its production goes to export markets, via other group plants and subsidiaries. Having at one point employed some 2,500, the 1 million sq ft plant now has a work force of less than 1,200. Until 1979, the Uddingston plant produced three models of earth-moving equipment, but is now reduced to one main product type, the D6 tractor. In 1983, application was made for regional selective assistance in order to secure continuing manufacture of the D6 range, and a substantial offer of selective grant was subsequently offered to, and accepted by, the company. This offer of assistance was in addition to the company's entitlement to regional development grant, payment of which has proceeded in the normal way.

In July 1986 the company received a further offer of substantial regional selective assistance grant towards a major capital investment programme to modernise the Uddingston facility, with the intention of improving its efficiency, driving down production costs, and broadening its product base. This offer of assistance was again in addition to the company's entitlement to regional development grant. The offer of regional selective assistance was accepted by the company in August 1986. However, I can assure the House that no payments of either regional selective assistance or regional development grant have been made to the company in respect of this major project.

My right hon. and learned Friend visited Uddingston in September 1986, and in applauding the development praised both management and work force for their efforts in attracting such an important project which would ensure the plant's future for years to come. In reply, the Caterpillar representative spoke of the need to invest and train, and said that the project could be looked upon as an insurance, as my hon. Friend said, against the loss of 1,200 jobs at Uddingston. All seemed set fair for the future.

It was on 8 January 1987 that my officials first learned of the possibility that the company might not proceed with this major investment programme, and might close the Uddingston plant. The possibility of closure was being considered in the light of a further review of the group's global capacity. On 9 January my right hon. and learned Friend contacted Caterpillar in Peoria, Illinois, urgently asking for clarification of the position and indicating that he had instructed an official from our Locate in Scotland Chicago office to call on the company to discuss the matter. An official from Chicago visited the company in Peoria on Monday 12 January. At that stage the company

*[Mr. Ian Lang]*

was not prepared to discuss the outcome of its review but confirmed that one option being considered involved the closure of Uddingston.

There were further contacts with the company the following day, 13 January, but on 14 January Caterpillar formally announced its intention to close the Uddingston plant. The announcement also made it clear that two plants in the United States of America were also to close — one at Davenport, Iowa, and a second at Dallas, Oregon. We understand that the company's plant at Leicester, which manufactures backhoe loaders, is secure.

My right hon. and learned Friend sought urgent talks with the company and on 20 January my right hon. and learned Friend and I met the president of Caterpillar and his senior colleagues in London. We left the company in no doubt about the strength of feeling in the United Kingdom following its decisiion—particularly following the very positive announcement in September. I am sorry to say that we received no satisfactory explanation of the company's change of mind. At the conclusion of the meeting, my right hon. and learned Friend invited Caterpillar to reconsider its decision to close Uddingston. We await the company's response.

Following the meeting with Caterpillar's senior management, my right hon. learned Friend met leaders of the Amalgamated Engineering Union and representatives of the work force.

I have felt it useful to recount this narrative to the House at some length to underline two important points. First, the Scottish Office had little forewarning that the company had changed its plans, but as soon as we became aware of the possibility, high-level contacts were immediately made with the company. Secondly, when the intention to close was announced, my right hon. and learned Friend took immediate steps to make his concern known to senior representatives of the company.

I should also emphasise that the Government's concern arises not from any wish to intervene in the affairs of private companies. The circumstances of this case are highly unusual. In September the company accepted an offer of Government financial assistance for a major new project, the specific purpose of which was to give the Uddingston plant a future. My right hon. and learned Friend, at the company's invitation, participated in the public announcement of the plans. Three to four months later, and with no warning, not only is this major new investment cancelled but it is announced that the plant itself, which has been there for 30 years and which has successful products and a good work force, is to close, with the loss of 1,200 jobs. What happened in those three to four months to cause such a dramatic change of plan has as yet not been explained other than in the most general terms.

The company made plain, both in September and subsequently, its satisfaction with the package of regional aid offered to it. The hon. Member for Motherwell, North referred to Belgium. I can reassure him that there have been no problems over regional assistance. If it were a case of trying to find more regional assistance, and if that would resolve the problem, we would be willing to consider it.

In these circumstances, the Government's great concern should come as no surprise to anybody. My hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) referred to the circumstances of one of the suppliers of Caterpillar, Penran in his constituency. I fully understand the serious impact that this decision could have on that company. All I can say to my hon. Friend at this stage is that if the worst were to happen, we would be anxious to do what we could to help that company find alternative markets.

Having described the circumstances surrounding Caterpillar's declared intention to close its Uddingston plant, it may be helpful to hon. Members if I add one or two comments concerning the wider implications of these events for our policy on inward investment. I know that this has been a subject of considerable comment in recent days.

I do not for one moment underestimate the gravity of the consequences should Caterpillar untimately implement its declared intention to close the Uddingston plant. Nevertheless, we must still not get things out of perspective. Within a few days of Caterpillar's announcement, there were two other important announcements of major new inward investments. Together these will bring to the west of Scotland roughly as many jobs as there are presently at Caterpillar. I refer, as hon. Members will have guessed, to the anouncement by Compaq Computer Corporation to site its new European manufacturing plant at Erskine. I also refer to the announcement made only a few days ago by the Kymmene-Stromberg Corporation of Finland of its intention to construct a new paper mill at a site in Irvine. This will be the largest-ever single inward investment and will provide around 480 new jobs directly and 400 related jobs throughout Scotland. Together, then, these two announcements promise something over 1,200 new jobs within the next few years.

Serious and regrettable though Caterpillar's announcement may be, it is no reason for us to jump to hasty and unwarranted conclusions about the important overall role that multinational firms are playing in Scotland, and I am quite confident they will continue to play as far ahead as we can see.

Turning back to Caterpillar, I do not think it is profitable at this stage to speculate on what will happen if the company is not prepared to review its latest decision. For the moment, as I have indicated, we await the company's response in the light of its meeting with my right hon. and learned Friend and myself. Our objective remains quite clear. It is to do everything possible to try to ensure the continuation of manufacturing operations and employment at the Uddingston facility. To that end, we have indicated to the company a readiness to discuss with it what possibilities of achieving this may exist. We have made it clear that this is not a question of trying to persuade it to do something that is against its commercial interest. We believe, however, that, given the success of the plant's products and the strength of its work force, a careful review of the apparently hasty decision to close is worth undertaking. I and my colleagues stand ready to help in whatever way is possible to find a way forward.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-eight minutes past Twelve o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Thursday 29 January 1987*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords]*

*Order for Third Reading read.*

*Queen's consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified.*

*Read the Third time, and passed, with amendments.*

BRITISH WATERWAYS BILL

*Read a Second time, and committed.*

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (BECKTON) BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

*To be read a Second time upon Tuesday 3 February.*

LONDON UNDERGROUND (GOODGE STREET) BILL *[Lords]*

*Read a Second time, and committed.*

BRITISH RAILWAYS (STANSTED) BILL *(By Order)*

*Order for Third Reading read.*

*To be read a Third time upon Thursday 5 February at Seven o'clock.*

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[Lords] (By Order)*

*Order for Second Reading read.*

*To be read a Second time upon Thursday 5 February.*

BRITISH RAILWAYS BILL *(By Order)*

*Order for Second Reading read.*

*To be read a Second time upon Tuesday 3 February.*

BEXLEY LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL *(By Order)*

CITY OF WESTMINSTER BILL *(By Order)*

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

*Orders for Second Reading read.*

*To be read a Second time upon Thursday 5 February.*

ADVOCATES' WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL

*Read the Third time, and passed.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Personal Debt

1. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement regarding the rise in the accumulated level of personal debt.

**The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. John MacGregor):** Over the last five years personal sector financial liabilities, including borrowing by unincorporated businesses, have been rising at a steady rate, matched by similar growth in personal sector financial assets.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** Will the Chief Secretary acknowledge that the official figures do not tell the full story, because they do not include things such as building societies, families, friends and employers who lend money? Has he seen last year's estimates by the market research analysts Mintel? They show that consumer debt was increasing at £8 billion to £10 billion per annum. Does he think that that level of increase is sustainable? Does he agree that the consumer debt increase is simply contributing to the worsening trade figures?

**Mr. MacGregor:** The hon. Gentleman ought to be aware that building society lending and things like that are included in the figures that I have quoted. Although lending has been going up, as I have said, assets have been going up as well. An important point in this context is that net financial wealth, which is assets minus liabilities, has increased by nearly 150 per cent. since 1980. Obviously, it is important that people should borrow prudently so that they can service and repay their debt. It is clear that, on balance, consumption is rising at a moderate level, and investment is rising at about the same level.

**Mr. Latham:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that the biggest item of personal debt for most people is the mortgage repayment? Is he doing his best to try to get interest rates down in the interest, apart from anything else, of the counter-inflation policy?

**Mr. MacGregor:** A mortgage is certainly a major item in a person's financial affairs and it is healthy that more and more people have the opportunity to obtain mortgages. There is a question about interest rates later on the Order Paper, and I will deal with that point when we come to it.

**Mr. Ashley:** Is the Chief Secretary aware that irresponsible pressure is brought to bear on some people by credit organisations which make no effort to ensure that loans can be repaid? Is there not some way in which he can protect consumers against these ruthless people who are behaving in an irresponsible manner, damaging individuals and the economy?

**Mr. MacGregor:** As the right hon. Gentleman knows, consumer protection is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. The right hon. Gentleman will have noticed that the Bank of England recently issued a letter to all lending institutions urging them to observe prudent lending measures in their lending. My hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction has echoed that point to the building societies in respect of lending for housing. It is important that these institutions observe prudent lending policies. I believe that, coupled with prudence by those who borrow, that is the best way to deal with the matter.

**Mr. Powley:** If it is right that we should be concerned at the accumulated level of personal debt, does my right hon. Friend agree that it is absolutely right to be extremely concerned at the level of accumulated debt by local authorities in London and the level of debt incurred by this country in public spending?

**Mr. Speaker:** The question concerns personal debt.

**Mr. MacGregor:** Of course, the growth on both sides of the balance sheet — and I have said that this has occurred not only in borrowing but in the level of financial assets that people have acquired — is seen in most industrial countries. My hon. Friend's point about local authorities in London is a separate matter. Those authorities identified by the Audit Commission have been showing grave imprudence in the way in which they have managed their financial affairs.

**Mr. Blair:** Now that the Chancellor has arrived at a position, 15 years on, that is considerably worse than that provided for by Lord Barber, will the right hon. Gentleman explain why he is so much in favour of individuals borrowing to consume, but so against the Government borrowing to invest?

**Mr. MacGregor:** I have said that I am in favour of individuals borrowing to build up financial assets and to consume, provided they do that prudently. The Government have been borrowing prudently, and we have also been investing. Capital investment has been maintained in real terms under this Government, whereas under the Labour Government it substantially dropped in real terms.

### Africa (Debt Crisis)

2. **Mr. Janner** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action has been taken to combat the debt crisis in Africa.

**The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Norman Lamont):** The United Kingdom has helped directly to relieve the debt burden of African countries by a combination of rescheduling and converting loans to poor countries into grants. Our bilaterial aid to the poorest countries is now all in grant form and so does not contribute to their debt. United Kingdom bilaterial aid to Sub-Saharan Africa amounted to £285 million in 1985.

**Mr. Janner:** Is Oxfam in Leicester right to say that in many of these countries in Africa, especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa, the amount paid each year to service debts —the amount of interest—actually exceeds the amount of aid that they receive, so that the debts increase each year? While I welcome efforts that this and every Government make to assist, does the Minister recognise that, in the light of the mass starvation and misery in those countries, the efforts are totally inadequate at present?

**Mr. Lamont:** I welcome the opportunity to reply to that question, because the point that Oxfam has made is not correct. The total aid flows to the 29 poorest countries in Africa are twice the level of debt service payments in 1984. Oxfam's point is therefore not correct.

**Sir John Farr:** Does my right hon. Friend recognise that such a question from a Labour Member of Parliament shows that even the Opposition recognise the strength of our international and national financial stature at the moment, which enables us to contemplate giving financial assistance to the whole of Africa? Can my right hon. Friend confirm that the Labour Government could not succeed in running the national economy or balancing the books at home?

**Mr. Lamont:** My hon. Friend is right. Because of our financial strength we have been able, through retrospective terms agreements, to convert £240 million of old aid loans to countries, including Ethiopia, into grants. That is what UNCTAD had urged us to do. Britain is the second among OECD countries in converting loans into grants.

**Mr. Nellist:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that if I can find out the latest figures on debt, so can he? Is he further aware that in 1985 — not 1984 — the total aid given to African countries by charities and Western Governments was $3·5 billion and that in that year the 29 poorest countries repaid exactly twice that sum in debt service charges? Given that in those countries one child dies each second from malnutrition and hunger, is not the real solution not just sympathy and charity, but cancellation of the leaching of the banking and commodities system by the cancellation of debts to those countries?

**Mr. Lamont:** The figures that I gave are correct, and I stand by them. I do not believe that the figures for 1985 will show a different picture. I do not have the figures for 1985.

**Mr. Nellist:** I do.

**Mr. Lamont:** The figures that have been quoted by Oxfam are not correct. The Government have taken substantial measures to help the poorest countries of Africa. It is also a fact that 80 per cent. of our bilateral aid goes to the poorest countries, whereas the OECD average is 60 per cent. That shows that our aid has been concentrated where it ought to be — on countries that face a very serious problem.

### EC (Finance)

3. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in resolving the financial problems of the European Economic Community since the last meeting of the Council of Finance Ministers; and if he will make a statement.

**The Minister of State, Treasury (Mr. Peter Brooke):** Since the last ECOFIN, the Agriculture Council has agreed important reforms in the milk and beef sectors. The Budget Council has rejected the Parliament's proposals for exceeding the maximum rate of increase in non-obligatory expenditure in 1987.

**Mr. Taylor:** As the indications are that the Common Market is likely to exceed its legal spending limit by £3 billion this year, can my hon. Friend explain how Britain will obtain the payment of its corrected rebate for 1986, which he has said is a substantial sum, without the supplementary budget that we were promised would not happen this year?

**Mr. Brooke:** A substantial amount of the abatement is already in the existing figures. In forthcoming budgets we have secured that the amount which remains due to us for 1986 will be in the main budget for 1988. Under treaty law it could be as late as the supplementary budget in 1988, but we have secured it earlier than that.

**Mr. Dykes:** As all member states of the Community have deficits which total about £100 million, is it not a little irrational and hysterical for certain hon. Members to go on about a minuscule de facto deficit to the European Community, bearing in mind the fact that the United States farm support system is much more wasteful and expensive? I believe that if the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) were here, he would agree with that.

**Mr. Brooke:** We shall not know until the summer the deficit which may have been carried over from 1986. As to the larger figures which my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) quoted, money beyond that which has been authorised cannot be expended, and the Commission is obliged to bring forward recommendations about how it should be reined back.

**Mr. Skinner:** Is the Minister aware that the pro-Marketeers, such as himself and his hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes), sound as though they are parodying the old phraseology of Churchill—that we will fight them on the beef mountains and swim in the wine lakes until we drown. It is stretching things a bit when it has cost Britain more than £6 billion to be a member of this club. I can join the miners' welfare at Derbyshire for 4s 4d.

**Mr. Brooke:** The language of the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner) is less memorable than that of Sir Winston Churchill. I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for his achievements in reining back expenditure, which he secured in December.

### Public Expenditure

4. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increases in public expenditure.

**Mr. MacGregor:** No representations as such, but I have had correspondence with the Labour party about its proposals for increases in public expenditure.

**Mr. Lawler:** Is it not highly dishonest for any political party to make a large number of expensive promises without stating precisely how they will be paid for? Given that the Labour party has made pledges amounting to £28 billion, would my right hon. Friend speculate which would be most damaging to the economy—an income tax rate of 53 per cent., a VAT rate of over 40 per cent. or a PSBR of £28 billion, with a consequent rise in interest rates?

**Mr. MacGregor:** I am sure that the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) has a good excuse for being away this afternoon. He clearly did not want to be here to be probed on the Labour party's £28 billion spending programme. My hon. Friend is quite right. Making pledges on that scale is misleading to the electorate. Those pledges have still not been denied or withdrawn, and they would undoubtedly have savage consequences if they were ever implemented.

In answer to my hon. Friend's second question, he is right to say that the equivalent is 53p on income tax, which the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook has said he will not do. Therefore, it will mean a massive increase in VAT or in the PSBR. Opposition Members have already promised a big increase in the PSBR. Either would greatly fuel inflation and savagely increase interest rates.

**Mr. Madden:** Is the Chief Secretary aware of the all-party representations that have been made by hon. Members representing Bradford, including Conservative Members, about the Government's refusal to allow the city of Bradford to borrow more to deal with the housing and education crisis that is gripping it?

Is he also aware of the protests made by hon. Members of all parties who represent Bradford, including Conservative Members, about the Government's refusal to allow the city to use more of the money from the sale of council houses to improve the city's housing?

Finally, will he urge the Prime Minister to accede to my request this week to meet representatives of the city, including Conservative Members, so that we can urge her to change her policies and allow the city to overcome the social and economic problems which the Government have brought upon that city?

**Mr. MacGregor:** Those representations have, quite rightly, not been made to me. I would advise the hon. Gentleman that in the public expenditure White Paper this year we have considerably increased the rate support grant for local authorities and the provision for housing maintenance. However, to engage in overall public expenditure planning on the scale that some Labour-controlled local authorities would wish, or are doing through deferred purchase and other creative accounting measures, would be very damaging for the economy and, in the long run, extremely disadvantageous to the ratepayers and the electorate in the local authorities.

**Mr. Gow:** In view of the Labour party's recent further commitments to public expenditure, will my right hon. Friend revise his figure of £28 billion as being the total cost of the extra spending by the Labour party and make sure that his revised and higher figure is well know to all the people of this country?

**Mr. MacGregor:** I am certainly willing to revise the figure each time it becomes clear to me that the spending pledged by some of the spending shadow spokesmen is withdrawn. However, I shall equally add to it any additional spending pledges that they make.

My hon. Friend is entirely right in saying that it is important that, when the election comes, the electorate are aware of the tax, interest rate and borrowing implications of the Labour party's proposals.

**Mr. Gould:** In order to bring an end to this increasingly ridiculous exercise and fanciful invention, will the right hon. Gentleman take one or two of his hon. Friends aside, in a gentle manner, and invite them to read any one of the independent surveys of Labour party's economic programme — for example, that produced by the Institute for Fiscal Studies or Philips and Drew, the stockbrokers — which all show the fanciful nature of those inventions? While he is about it, will the Chief Secretary read those surveys himself so that we hear no more of that nonsense from the Dispatch Box?

**Mr. MacGregor:** I do read them and they do not bear that out. I advise the Labour party that it could put the matter right by making clear which of the pledges that I have put forward—and they have all been put forward in the pages of *Hansard*—it would withdraw. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked the right hon. Member for Sparkbrook the other day which pledges he would withdraw on health, education and aid. It was significant that the right hon. Gentleman simply did not answer. It is up to the Labour party to make that matter clear.

## Personal Equity Plans

5. **Mr. Lawrence** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has received about the response to the personal equity plan scheme since its introduction.

**The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Nigel Lawson):** The personal equity plan scheme has had an excellent start. Although it only began on 1 January, more than 150 plan managers have already been registered, and the response from investors has been most encouraging.

**Mr. Lawrence:** In view of the recent criticisms of fund managers, that they engage in short termism, is it not particularly welcome that individual shareholders, who, after all, have shown consistent loyalty to British industries, are welcoming so enthusiastically this splendid Government initiative?

**Mr. Lawson:** I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend. Of course, there is a great deal in what he says. This Government have been consistently seeking to enlarge share ownership in this country. We did it first by new concessions for employee share schemes, then through the privatisation programme. As a result of those two things combined we have trebled the number of shareholders in this country, and now there is the personal equity plan scheme under which according to the press, some £200 million was invested in the first week of January alone.

**Mr. Wrigglesworth:** Does not the survey carried out by the *Financial Times* show the claims that the Chancellor is making for this scheme to be nonsenes? Is it not the case that higher tax-paying people and existing investors are buying personal equity plans, as we warned they would during the passage of the Finance Bill? Will the Chancellor look at the scheme again to seek to ensure that it attracts not existing but new investors?

**Mr. Lawson:** The hon. Member is mistaken. Barclays, for example—one of the biggest of the plan managers—recently announced that roughly a quarter of its personal equity plan investors were first-time share buyers. The hon. Member owes the House an explanation of where the so-called alliance stands on financial and City issues, given the fact that, in the important debate last night, the leader of the Liberal party voted in one Lobby and the leader of the SDP voted in the opposite Lobby.

**Mr. Cash:** Does my right hon. Friend agree, following up the point that he has just made, that this Government have helped the small shareholder and helped to distribute wealth throughout the country? Has not the alliance demonstrated, by what it did yesterday, that it does not have the slightest interest in those principles for which it purports to stand?

**Mr. Lawson:** My hon. Friend is right. As I have indicated, the only Government and the only party who are dedicated and are effectively bringing about wider share ownership in this country are this present Conservative Government. We have already, as I indicated earlier, trebled the number of shareholders in this country, and with the further progress on the privatisation programme and with the further progress on personal equity plans, which, despite the many critics, are proving an outstanding success, we shall increase this further.

## Interest Rates

7. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what factors he attributes the current real level of United Kingdom interest rates in relation to those prevailing in the other six main Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries.

**Mr. MacGregor:** One factor is the need to keep interest rates at levels which maintain downward pressure on inflation.

**Mr. Sedgemore:** Bearing in mind that the goods in the monetarist pantheon were ritually slaughtered in the autumn statement, and the Chancellor was found cowering in the crypt with the blood of an impending election on his hands, is it not time that the idolatry stopped and we started reducing interest rates for industry, borrowers and home owners as part of a wider plan to get Britain working again?

**Mr. MacGregor:** The first part of the hon. Gentleman's question is untrue. As the public sector borrowing requirement is being fulfilled for this year, and will be for next, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor has not done what the hon. Gentleman suggests.

As to the level of interest rates, I have made it clear that bringing down inflation is a crucial factor. There is nothing more important to most people, and to industry, than keeping inflation at the level that we have at the moment, or preferably lower.

Investment is at record levels, the profitability of industry is back to the levels of many years ago, and liquidity is high. The plain fact is that investment is going ahead strongly.

**Mr. John Browne:** Does my right hon. Friend accept that the dismantling, and even the smallest possibility of a resurgence, of Socialism has an upward push on the real level of interest rates?

**Mr. MacGregor:** My hon. Friend is entirely right. The policies that the Opposition intend to pursue, particularly their spending policies—they have admitted this—with a big increase in the public sector borrowing requirement, would indoubtedly push up interest rates and drive us back to the negative rural interest rates of the previous Labour Government, and that in itself can be very damaging to the confidence of investors. They achieved a high level of inflation then and will achieve the same again if those policies are pursued.

**Mr. Roy Jenkins:** Will M0 follow M1 and M3 in being discarded, and, if so, what will be the point of discipline to which interest rate policy will be related? Will it be an exchange rate target, and, if so, what is the point of pursuing that outside the exchange rate mechanism of the EMS?

**Mr. MacGregor:** My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has said on many occasions that he looks at a number of factors and guidelines when determining monetary policy. He has spelt that out clearly in many speeches; so much so that one noted City economic commentator on monetary matters says that no Chancellor has ever done so much to explain publicly his monetary policy.

**Mr. Maples:** Is not one of the reasons why real interest rates are so much higher here than in other countries the fact that our bank lending is growing so fast, and thus interest rates have to rise to attract the deposits to fund that increased lending?

**Mr. MacGregor:** One of the factors has been the heavy corporate demand for investment finance in recent years. The freeing of the financial system from various inefficient and unfair controls has been another factor. However, it is worth stressing again that the current level of interest rates is not inhibiting a high level of investment in Britain.

**Mr. Gould:** The Chancellor does a lot of explaining because he has a lot to explain. Is it not perfectly obvious that if the Chief Secretary was brave enough to be honest with us he would admit that the only reason why we have real interest rates twice as high as Germany is that that is now the Chancellor's only means of warding off a sterling crisis? Is that not further evidence of the fragility of our economic situation and the dangerous high wire that the Chancellor has to tread?

**Mr. MacGregor:** That is certainly not the case, as is borne out by many economic factors at the present time. It is quite difficult to establish the precise parallels in international real interest rates, as I think the hon. Gentleman would agree. Taking the consumer price index as well, to suggest that our real interest rates are twice the level of West Germany is wrong. It is rich of the hon. Gentleman to suggest that interest rates are too high, when his own PSBR policies would undoubtedly increase our interest rates even more.

### Public Expendtiture

8. **Dr. Marek** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received concerning the Government's White Paper on public expenditure.

**Mr. MacGregor:** None.

**Dr. Marek:** Did not the Chancellor and other Ministers deliberately riddle their proposals with measures that would be generally beneficial this year, and include other measures that would have a gravely adverse effect next year? Were there not measures such as doing nothing much for the level of regional assistance this year with the intention of halving it next year, and increasing prescriptions by 2 per cent. this year, with the intention of increasing them by 8 per cent. next year, with a forecast inflation target of only 3½ per cent.? If the Chancellor did this deliberately—however much he tries to squirm and deny it—will he tell the House the truth and admit that he was trying a blatant, cynical manoeuvre to bribe the voters in a few months' time?

**Mr. MacGregor:** I do not follow the logic of suggesting that we have cut expenditure in areas that the hon. Gentleman thinks are attractive to the electors, and then suggesting that that is an election bribe. However, the hon. Gentleman will know that the changes in regional policy — regional development grants and regional selective assistance — followed a substantial review which was undertaken a few years ago, which is now being implemented. The effect of that is that regional development policy is now targeted more on the areas of high unemployment and on the need for investment which helps with additional labour. He will also know that we do not just measure the amount of money that is entering the regions by regional development grants. A range of other things, including, for example, the new urban development corporations, form a very cost-effective way of helping the regions, as we have demonstrated, and should be added to regional development grants.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Following the White Paper, has my right hon. Friend received any representations to increase public spending by £360 million to educate within the state system those currently educated in private schools, which is a vital part of Labour's charter for pupils and parents?

**Mr. MacGregor:** I have not received any representations, but representations should certainly be made to the Labour party. My hon. Friend is right. That additional spending commitment by the Labour party has many other disadvantages and I am sure that it would prove to be a big electoral liability.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the anger throughout the northern region in all industry over the two-month moratorium on the payment of regional development grant, which was announced in the small print of the public expenditure White Paper? Does he realise that, in imposing those cuts on the Department of Trade and Industry his Department is literally kicking people out of work and destroying the ability of many firms to expand? Will he consider that, because industrialists throughout the north are demanding that the policy be reversed?

**Mr. MacGregor:** The hon. Gentleman has this wholly out of perspective. In the first place, compared with last year's public expenditure White Paper, there will be an increase of £46 million in total regional development grant and regional selective assistance expenditure in the coming year. It is important to understand what the two-month moratorium is. It will not stop the payment of regional development grants for two months. It is easing out over the year, for good public expenditure control reasons, and in accordance with our plans, the payments to get the cash flow equal. I do not believe that that will have the kind of effect that the hon. Gentleman talks about.

**Mr. Yeo:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is widespread public support for the kind of selective increases in spending which were revealed in the public expenditure White Paper, particularly as those are being achieved within the context of reducing public expenditure as a whole as a percentage of the gross domestic product at the same time as tax is being cut? Will he assure the House that that policy will be continued?

**Mr. MacGregor:** I am sure that my hon. Friend is right, and I can assure him that the policies will continue. As the public expenditure White Paper says, we are determined to continue to reduce public expenditure as a proportion of GDP, as we originally pledged in 1979. But my hon. Friend is also right in that, because of the success of our economic policies—we are now moving into the sixth year of steady growth—we have been able to increase in real terms many key and critical areas of public expenditure at the same time as we are achieving our overall public expenditure bill.

**Dr. McDonald:** With the worst-ever trade deficit in manufactured goods, at over £8 billion at the end of the last year, have the Government not got their policies wrong in their determination to cut capital spending in order to increase consumer spending during this year and the years to come, which will only continue to suck in imports and make the balance of payments deficit far worse?

**Mr. MacGregor:** The hon. Lady has got it wrong. In the past few years consumption has been rising by about 3 per cent. a year and investment by about 4 per cent. That is in sharp contrast to what happened under the previous Labour Government, when consumption rose twice as fast as investment.

## North Sea Oil

11. **Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the total amount of revenue raised through North sea oil since 1978-79.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** £56 billion.

**Mr. Ross:** Since all the analysts, even at the Scottish Office, are now suggesting that there will be increased redundancies this year in the North sea oil industry, how does the Minister respond to the charge that in the past six years the Government have wasted £56 billion? What level of tax does he think Britain would be enjoying if he had not wasted that £56 billion? Can he tell us one single thing that we have as a result of that £56 billion from North sea oil?

**Mr. Lamont:** In no way has the £56 billion been wasted. First, it has been used to reduce overseas debt. Secondly, it has been used to acquire overseas assets that will benefit this country for many years to come. Thirdly, it has been used to support a prudent level of expenditure in the country under this Government, including an increase in National Health Service resources way above what the previous Government were able to afford. The hon. Gentleman is also aware that we have introduced the Advance Petroleum Revenue Tax Act 1986, whichwill help to modify some of the consequences to which he referred.

**Sir William Clark:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that part of North sea oil revenue has been used to pay back the International Monetary Fund loan that was borrowed by the previous Labour Government? Does my right hon. Friend also agree that since 1979 our overseas assets have increased by far more than £56 billion? It is with the returns from those overseas investments that we shall be able to replace North sea oil revenue when North sea oil disappears.

**Mr. Lamont:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The overseas debt has been reduced by 14 per cent. The figure that he gave concerning our overseas assets is also right. The country will be able to enjoy the benefits of that stream of dividends for many years to come, and way beyond the life of North sea oil.

## Privatisation

12. **Mr. Barron** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the amount the Government hope to raise by way of revenue from the sale of nationalised industries.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Proceeds from privatisation so far are nearly £11 billion. A further £5 billion is expected in each of the next three years.

**Mr. Barron:** At the end of the first day's trading on both British Telecom and British Gas the shares were found to be undervalued by £2 billion. Can the Minister tell us what protection there will be for the public purse with regard to the selling off of British Airways?

**Mr. Lamont:** The pricing of privatisation issues is based upon the best banking and stockbroking advice available to the Government. I suggest that the hon. Gentleman is totally wrong if he says that the British Gas issue was underpriced. The general verdict of all commentators was that it was rightly priced and gave good value to the taxpayer. Furthermore, the exceedingly good thing was that it attracted a large number of small, first-time investors, and that is something that is welcomed by everybody in this country other than the Labour party.

**Mr. Forman:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that, quite apart from raising useful amounts of revenue, those sales were important to the Government's objectives because they provided an opportunity for widening share ownership, especially to the employees of the undertakings concerned? I refer, in particular, to the excellent record of the National Freight Corporation in recent times.

**Mr. Lamont:** My hon. Friend is right. No doubt he will have noticed that there have been a number of surveys that have drawn attention to the considerable increase in share ownership in Britain. Last week, one such survey, by Dewe Rogerson, suggested that perhaps 20 per cent. of the population now own shares. There are different estimates, but it seems clear that share ownership has probably increased some threefold. That again is something to be welcomed by everybody other than those who have a vested interest in a "them and us" attitude.

## Third World (Debt)

13. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent meetings he has had with the other Finance Ministers regarding financing of Third world debt; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lawson:** The financing of Third world debt was among the matters discussed at the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank in Washington last September, in which I took part.

**Mr. Skinner:** Is it not true that the Tory Government have double standards with regard to assisting the debtor countries in the world? Will the Chancellor admit that they were very quick to respond to the need for a massive loan to Fascist Chile and that, in 1986, they encouraged their friends in the City, to make a deal — by backdoor methods — to bail out the South African Government when they faced a £20 billion debt? They provided tax credit to the banks to bail out Argentina, but the poorest countries in the world have been left to fend for themselves.

**Mr. Lawson:** The hon. Gentleman is mistaken. Moreover, if he is concerned about the problem of indebtedness he should look much closer to home, at those Labour authorities reported on today by the auditors of local government for financial mismanagement and creative accounting on a massive scale.

**Mr. Moynihan:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the existence of a discounted secondary market in debt offers substantial opportunities for the Government to use, this financial mechanism to fund developing countries programmes?

**Mr. Lawson:** My hon. Friend is right. The debt problem is still a very serious one, which all the major countries are addressing. A number of methods such as those that he has suggested need to be brought into play.

## PRIME MINISTER

### La Belle Discotheque

Q1. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister, pursuant to her answer of 12 January, *Official Report*, column 3, what assumptions, as opposed to evidence, have been conveyed to Her Majesty's Government by the other Governments consulted regarding possible Syrian involvement in the La Belle discotheque nightclub terrorist bombing in Berlin; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** None, Sir.

**Mr. Dalyell:** With regard to what happened in Berlin, why does the Prime Minister suppose that her sources for certainty are better than those of the West German Department of Justice, the West Berlin police and *Der Spiegel?*

**The Prime Minister:** As we understand it, the position has not changed since I replied to a question last January, and the hon. Gentleman knows what that is. We have evidence of Libyan involvement in the bombing of La Belle discotheque in Berlin on 5 April, but the Germans have evidence of Syrian involvement in relation to the German-Arab Friendship Society. The position has not changed since I answered a question many months ago.

**Mr. Latham:** Will my right hon. Friend confirm that there is at least one correct assumption behind the hon. Gentleman's question — that when it comes to violent terrorism Libya and Syria are as bad as each other?

**The Prime Minister:** As my hon. Friend is aware, we have taken strong action against both.

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** Does the Prime Minister consider that the information from the German police sent to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) was right or wrong?

**The Prime Minister:** I am answering about what I understand to be the Government's position——

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Do they not tell the right hon. Lady?

**The Prime Minister:** I have given the answer many, many times. We have evidence of Libyan involvement in La Belle discotheque. The Germans have evidence of Syrian involvement in the matter of the German-Arab Friendship Society. That is the position.

**Mr. Hickmet:** My right hon. Friend will be aware of the damage done to national security by the contacts between the Leader of the Opposition and members of his party in the Peter Wright case and——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Does this relate to the specific question?

**Mr. Bell:** As the West German Government evidence is clearly of Syrian involvement, was it not a tragic mistake by the Government to allow American fighters to attack Libya from this country on the basis of faulty information and evidence — a tragic mistake as a result of which innocent people lost their lives?

**The Prime Minister:** I have given the answer with regard to our evidence about Libyan involvement and about our understanding of German knowledge of evidence of Syrian involvement which came out in the trial. I have answered debates about the raid on Libya for which facilities were given from this country. I believe that to have been the right action against terrorism.

**Mr. Dalyell:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. In view of the unsatisfactory nature of the Prime Minister's reply and her economality with the truth, I give notice that I shall seek to raise the matter on the Adjournment.

### Engagements

Q2. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 29 January.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I attended a presentation about the Government programme for action for jobs. I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

**Sir John Biggs-Davison:** As the First Lord of the Treasury was not on the Treasury Bench when this was raised in Treasury Question Time, may I ask my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister whether she has studied the *Official Report* of yesterday's debate on the City? If so, is she surprised that in the very week of the umpteenth relaunch of the alliance the SDP leader and the Liberal leader voted against each other? One hears about guarding one's flanks, but this is ridiculous. Is not their claim to be a true alliance as spurious as a 50p note?

**The Prime Minister:** I studied both the debate on the City and the Division List which followed the debate. I understand that at the very time that the two right hon. Members were appearing together on television last night they were voting differently in the House, one with the Government and one with the Opposition — walking proof that the so-called alliance is not an alliance.

**Mr. Kinnock:** Can the Prime Minister confirm that, following his speech and interviews yesterday, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is giving serious consideration to enacting extra-statutory powers to replace voluntary compliance with the takeover panel's fair dealing code? Does this proposal by the Secretary of State have her full support?

**The Prime Minister:** The Secretary of State made an excellent statement yesterday. He announced a review of the takeover panel — if that is what the right hon. Gentleman is referring to — and we shall wait to see what that produces.

**Mr. Kinnock:** Is the right hon. Lady correcting the quotations in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Financial Times* this morning of the Secretary of State saying that failure to secure compliance would ensure extra-statutory powers? If that is the case—and I quote from c. 372 of yesterday's *Official Report*—can the Prime Minister tell us why that is the case now and why in June last year the Government voted against exactly that proposal when it came from Opposition Members?

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry yesterday announced a review of the operation of the takeover code. As I understand it, the right hon. Gentleman wants us to prejudge that review. We do not prejudge the outcome of the review, but if practitioners do not respect the system we shall replace it with one making greater use of statutory powers and sanctions.

**Mr. Kinnock:** In that case, how long is the period of proof, given that the review that the Secretary of State set up last June is not, according to his hon. and learned Friend, expected to report before the end of this year, so that we will not be able to consider it this side of the election?

**The Prime Minister:** The right hon. Gentleman is aware that this Government have done more that any other to bring in legislation to prevent abuse in the City. Perhaps he might look at what *The Guardian* said on Tuesday 20 January:

> "Opposition taunts of too little, too late dissolve when it is remembered that the last Labour administration jettisoned legislation drawn up by the outgoing Heath Government which would have made insider trading a criminal offence in the early seventies."

**Mr. Watts:** What action would my right hon. Friend take if one of her hon. Friends were to suggest that political power in this country should be won by violence on the streets? Has she any advice to offer to the Leader of the Opposition on this matter?

**The Prime Minister:** Any suggestion that political power should be exercised by violence on the streets is the very denigration and opposite of democracy.

Q3. **Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 29 January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Wardell:** Bearing in mind the fiascos of Westland, the Wright case and Zircon, should the country now regard the Attorney-General as having been made to look more like a fool than a fall guy?

**The Prime Minister:** No, Sir.

Q4. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 29 January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Atkins:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that thousands of my constituents who work in local defence industries are obliged, and honour the obligation, to keep details of their work secret? Do they not have a right to be angry and frustrated at the activities of Left-wing activists and journals in publishing information which could damage our national security? As the Government have done all in their power to limit this subversion, will the Prime Minister prevail upon the Leader of the Opposition, on Privy Council terms if necessary, to stop the activities of his so-called supporters, which is so disgraceful?

**The Prime Minister:** My hon. Friend is right. The *New Statesman* deliberately chose to publish information which could be of benefit to our potential enemies. We are still waiting for a clear condemnation from the Labour Benches. With regard to any further showing of that film outside this House, the Leader of the Opposition said, when he spoke last Thursday, that he would uphold the Government's view that the showing of a particular film would prejudice national security. The Leader of the Opposition also agreed that one breach, or threatened breach, does not justify a further breach.

**Mr. Nellist:** Will the Prime Minister take time to consider the fact that 10 days ago in Warwickshire there was an armed raid on a post office? Following that raid the police requested four emergency lines to the incident room. While members of the National Communications Union were willing to install those lines, on an unpaid basis, they were prevented from doing so by local management, who removed their vans, clearly under the instruction of Mr. Michael Bett, to bring this dispute to a head sooner rather than later. In that regard, is not the lack of emergency cover in the BT dispute clearly down to management?

**The Prime Minister:** The trouble is the strike itself, which can only put people out of work and make older people suffer if their telephone communications are not kept working. The trouble is the strike itself.

Q6. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 29 January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mrs. Bottomley:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the package of training and employment measures announced yesterday offers real hope to the unemployed with the prospect—*[Interruption]*—of jobs today and tomorrow? Does she further agree that attempts by the Labour party to denigrate these measures should be disregarded by us all, but most of all by the unemployed, who stand to benefit most directly from them?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. My hon. Friend is right. No other country in Europe, even though some of them have a bigger proportion of unemployment among youth and a longer or greater proportion of long-term unemployed than we have, has such an excellent package of individual help to each and every unemployed person. That is evidence of the Government's commitment to provide the fullest possible help to all those looking for work.

**Mrs. Renée Short:** Can I ask the Prime Minister whether she will reconsider the support that she gave to a highly emotional and not very helpful speech by the chief constable of Greater Manchester, when he said that AIDS victims were whirling about in a cesspit of their own making? Does she not accept that this was an extremely unhelpful speech to make? Will she make sure that she now supports those, both in this House and outside, who are trying to deal with this very difficult problem?

**The Prime Minister:** I refer, not to the sentence which the hon. Member quoted, but to what I said. I do not have it with me, but she can find that from the transcript. I said that some people, whether from the Church or elsewhere, had spoken out to the effect that morals do matter in AIDS and that, while Governments cannot prevent people from getting AIDS, people themselves, by their own conduct, can do so. That is correct.

Q7. **Mr. Anthony Nelson** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 29 January.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Nelson:** Adverting to the point made by the Leader of the Opposition, may I invite my right hon. Friend to agree, with reference to the takeover panel, and code, that it would have been wholly improper to have imported statutory provision for that into the Financial Services Bill, that it was the Conservative Government who introduced that Bill, which tightened up in an unprecedented manner control and regulation of the supervisory structure of the City, that it was the Conservative party which amended that Bill to tighten up very significantly the powers of the Securities and Investment Board, and that the Conservative Government will not hesitate to take further measures if necessary?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. It was the Labour Government who ran away from introducing legislation to make insider trading a criminal offence. It was this Government who have done so much about it. With regard to the takeover panel, a review has been announced. If hon. Gentlemen wish me to prejudge that review, I will not do so. If practitioners do not respect the system, we shall replace it with one making greater use of statutory powers and sanctions.

**Mr. Beith:** Will the Prime Minister find time to take a personal interest in the question of issuing free disposable syringes to diabetics? Does she agree that it would be morally wrong to deny disposable syringes to those who have no choice but to inject themselves daily for the rest of their lives when she is able to find the resources to make disposable syringes available for drug addicts so as to prevent AIDS?

**The Prime Minister:** I already have a number of letters on that subject and I am giving considerable attention to it.

**Mr. Gow:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You have heard my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer say that last night the leader of the Liberal party and the leader of the Social Democratic parties voted in opposite Lobbies——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I cannot see that that has anything to do with me.

**Mr. Gow:** If you look at the *Official Report*, Mr. Speaker, you will see that. Surely there must be some mistake.

## J. E. Hanger and Co. Ltd.

3.32 pm

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras) *[by private notice]* asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the latest developments in the industrial dispute at J. E. Hanger and Co. Ltd., artificial limb maker.

**The Minister for Social Security and the Disabled (Mr. John Major):** The industrial dispute at J. E. Hanger & Co. Ltd. has centred on the company's manufacturing facility at Roehampton, one of 23 Hanger establishments throughout the country. There has been no sign of the dispute spreading to other Hanger establishments or to the other intermed limb companies Vessa and Kellie of Dundee.

I understand that yesterday, following weekend discussions at ACAS, proposals for the settlement of the dispute were put to a mass meeting of the company's former employees at Roehampton by national officials of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union and of the Technical Advisory and Supervisory Section of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

It is not clear whether the national officials recommended acceptance of the proposals, although they had resulted from discussions between the unions at national level and the company. In any event, the local work force apparently rejected the proposals on a public ballot at a mass meeting.

Following this rejection, the company issued a statement that it now proposed to make alternative manufacturing arrangements to continue its service — although Roehampton is to remain the headquarters of the company and will continue to operate a clinic and repair service only.

The Government's primary interest is to ensure that a prompt and efficient limb service remains available to patients. Accordingly, last night I invited the managing director of J. E. Hanger to meet me this morning to discuss how this might be maintained. I made it clear at that meeting that I expected every action to be taken to protect patient service and clear the current backlog.

In order to achieve this I sought and obtained a number of assurances this morning. First, it has been agreed that a joint team will be established immediately between the Department and the company so that we may monitor the service to patients and ensure that urgent cases receive priority treatment. This is in addition to the procedures I established last October.

Secondly, I have received detailed assurances that alternative facilities are available to cope with the manufacture of those specialist limbs for adults and children that were previously undertaken at Roehampton. Such cases can, and will, be dealt with without delay.

Thirdly, I am assured that the specialist spare parts facility at Roehampton can be replicated elsewhere within the firm.

Fourthly, the company proposes to recruit an additional 80 staff throughout the country to maximise production capability, and this process is now well advanced.

This is a very regrettable dispute that could, and should, have been resolved. It has delayed some services to limb patients, although such delays are not widespread. Any patient facing difficulty should not hesitate to contact his local limb centre or my Department so that urgent action can be taken to deal with emergencies.

The Government will continue to regard the interests of patients as their first concern.

**Mr. Dobson:** That was a most unsatisfactory statment about a most unsatisfactory situation. It betrayed the continuing complacency of the Government and the pretence that, in some way or other, the dispute is not in any way their responsibility. I remind the Minister that the contract for the supply of limbs is not between J.E. Hanger and those who need limbs but between J.E. Hanger and the Government.

Will the Minister confirm from his Department's records that no fewer than 111 limb fitting appointments have had to be postponed because of the failure of the company until now to supply repaired or new prostheses on time, in breach of the contract that J.E. Hanger has with his Department? Will he confirm also that the number of patient attendances for fittings in the months affected by the dispute, compared with the number of attendances in the same months in the previous year, show that there were 487 fewer in October-November, 325 fewer in November-December and 145 fewer in December-January, giving a total of 957 fewer people getting fittings? Will he confirm also what I was told today, that the number of people getting primary fittings — that is, people who have just had an amputation and need a first fitting—has markedly declined? How has this reduction come about?

Are amputees being kept waiting, or are surgeons postponing amputations that can be postponed, even at some risk to patients? Is it not plain, from the history of this dispute, that the owner of Hanger, BTR, which every hon. Member was convinced was totally unfit to take over Pilkington, has demonstrated also that it is quite unfit to have a virtual monopoly of the supply and fitting of artificial limbs for people within the National Health Service? [HON. MEMBERS: "Is this a question?"] Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind the hon. Gentleman that this is a private notice question, not a statement.

**Mr. Dobson:** It is an important matter.

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** (Tatton): The hon. Gentleman does not have a leg to stand on.

**Mr. Dobson:** We could do without jokes from Conservative Members about my not having a leg to stand on. This is a serious matter.

When will the Minister, as a party to the contract for the supply of limbs, act to make sure that limbs are supplied to those who are entitled to get them? When will he talk not just to the managing director of J. E. Hanger? When will he show some impartiality and talk to representatives of the work force, to try to find a satisfactory solution to this dispute, instead of leaving them standing on the pavement when they would far rather be inside the factory doing what some of them have done for 20 years, and that is providing a good, decent and dedicated service to limbless people? When will the hon. Gentleman act and look after these people?

**Mr. Major:** I am in no single sense complacent about the difficulties created by the dispute. That is precisely why I set out a series of detailed actions to be taken last October. Those actions have been followed through on a daily basis since then. I regard the dispute as serious. I have made no secret of the fact that I wish to see this dispute resolved without delay.

The hon. Gentleman's figures are correct in broadly two cases out of the three that he cited. The number of appointments postponed over a period of 18 weeks is 112. That needs to be set against a total of some 3,000 appointments per week throughout the service during that period. There were about 420 fewer patient attendances rather than the 900, or so mentioned by the hon. Gentleman.

I am not aware of delays in primary fittings of the sort set out by the hon. Gentleman. However, it is precisely to ensure that that does not occur that I have established the extra procedure that I outlined in my statement. I wish to ensure that primary amputees and those in special need are given the priority treatment which both the hon. Gentleman and I wish to ensure they receive.

On the matter of complacency, if the hon. Gentleman cares to examine yet again the statement that I made in answer to his private notice question in October he will see a series of actions set out, which have been maintained, and I have built upon those today.

On the hon. Gentleman's final point, I have declined before, and I decline again, to take a stand in the dispute between employer and employee. I am prepared to discuss with those with whom we have a contract how they are to maintain the contract and meet it. That is what I am doing.

**Mr. Roger Sims** (Chislehurst): Will my hon. Friend confirm that there are other companies which manufacture artificial limbs? Are we not reaching the point where their services should be used, rather than let patients suffer?

**Mr. Major:** I am aware of my hon. Friend's point. I reiterate that I am keeping the matter under careful review. The service to the patient remains my first concern.

**Mr. Jack Ashley** (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Minister aware that he is wrong when he says that he declines to take a stand between the employer and the work force, because this is not an industrial dispute? The Government are the sole customer of this firm, and it is the Minister's responsibility to intervene to obtain a settlement. A settlement could be achieved quite easily if the firm will accept the fundamental principle that no self-respecting trade unionist will go back to work while some of his fellow members are locked outside. That is what this firm is trying to do. If the Minister will accept that advice and intervene in the dispute, it can be settled, disabled people can be helped and they can get their limbs. He must intervene and not say that it is none of his business.

**Mr. Major:** I cannot accept the right hon. Gentleman's comments. It is an industrial dispute. It is precisely for that reason that at this Dispatch Box some time ago I urged the first reference to the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service, which has repeatedly been in touch with both sides in the dispute, separately and collectively since that time. I cannot determine whether the dispute can be settled. It was certainly my understanding that a concordat had been reached between the national officers of the union and the company, and that it was at the local work place that that agreement was rejected.

**Miss Janet Fookes** (Plymouth, Drake): I have every confidence in my hon. Friend's ability to deal with this dispute. However, I urge him to look closely at other firms which may be able to supply the goods and services, and, if they do not exist, he should encourage them to be invented.

**Mr. Major:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for her remarks. She echoes some of the observations of the McColl report about monopoly supplying, and I take her remarks to heart.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Shields** (Ryedale): Has the Minister arranged for someone in his Department to take a personal interest in the dispute on a day-to-day basis so that we can look forward to a resolution of the conflict?

**Mr. Major:** I can give the hon. Lady the confirmation that she seeks. Several officials in my Department have direct day-to-day contact with the company and with the hon. Lady's proposition. I am receiving daily reports of the circumstances so that we may judge whether the dispute is capable of solution and take any action that may be helpful.

**Mr. Roy Galley** (Halifax): Does not the dispute suggest a marked lack of compassion by a small number of workers and trade union officials for the least fortunate and most vulnerable section of our community? My hon. Friend is quite right not to intervene in the detailed matters of the dispute, and he has taken some positive and reasonable steps today to help further with the matter. I join my hon. Friends in urging him to take action soon to allow a greater element of competition in the contracting for this work.

**Mr. Major:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his remarks. It is my firm judgment that a solution was available yesterday and I share the regret of my hon. Friend that the opportunity was not taken.

**Mr. Alfred Dubs** (Battersea): Is the Minister aware that many people in the Hanger work force are my constituents? There could not be a more dedicated work force in the country. These people have dedicated their lives to helping disabled people to benefit from artificial limbs. What the Minister has said is a tragedy, because, in effect, he has announced that the factory will be closed and that people who require limbs will no longer have them made adjacent to Queen Mary's hospital. Does that not mean that, inevitably, there will be a poorer standard of service for disabled people?

**Mr. Major:** My discussions this morning were precisely to ensure that the service throughout the country would not be poorer. If there is a tragedy, it is that a solution that was there yesterday has been rejected.

**Mr. Patrick Thompson** (Norwich, North): Can my hon. Friend assure me that the actions that he has taken, and the actions that he will take in future, will lead to more hope for families, especially families with growing children, who are being affected by this serious dispute? Can he offer hope to my constituents, the Elsegood family? Growing children need limb replacements at regular intervals. Whoever is at fault in this dispute, it is causing a great deal of distress and I appeal to my hon. Friend to do all that he can to bring it to a speedy conclusion.

**Mr. Major:** There is no doubt that in some cases this dispute is causing distress, worry and inconvenience—a dispute of this nature will do that. That is why it is imperative to have it resolved as speedily as possible. The

*[Mr. Major]*

people most seriously affected are those requiring primary limbs and those left without a limb. The emergency actions that we have taken ensure that people are not left immobilised. If any hon. Member hears of a case in which someone is immobilised, I hope that he will draw the case speedily and personally to my attention. Delays thus far appear to relate to replacement limbs, and although that is unsatisfactory, it is not as difficult a proposition as the unavailability of primary limbs.

**Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones** (Eccles): Does the Minister agree that this dispute has probably more to do with McColl, the re-signing of the contract with the DHSS and the case now before the court about contracts? Does he not think that drastic needs require drastic action? Will he try to approach the chairman of BTR and tell him that this dispute is not doing his company any good at all?

**Mr. Major:** The whole House knows the hon. Gentleman's deep concern in this matter and of his long connection with the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association. We admire his commitment to that cause. The reasons for this dispute are many and complex and it would be unwise of me to be drawn into them.

**Mr. Richard Holt** (Langbaurgh): Will my hon. Friend take it from me that my mother-in-law suffered as an amputee for 10 years because of an ill-fitting limb from that establishment? I have had a long association with the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union, and there is written into that union's national agreement a binding arbitration system which ought to be invoked so that no more people are made to suffer because of the shortage of properly fitting limbs.

**Mr. Major:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for those helpful remarks.

**Mr. Dave Nellist** (Coventry, South-East): First, will the Minister condemn the Tory MP who, when my hon. Friend asked his first question, joked about his not having a leg to stand on? That lowers the tone of any debate on a dispute like this. Secondly, will the Minister confirm his first answer, in which he spoke about the company recruiting, I think, 80 specialist workers? Will he confirm that no Department of the Government such as the Department of Employment, is involved in assisting this company to recruit strike breakers while the dispute is going on? Will he say that, from its monopoly position, a well-known, vitriolic, anti-union firm, BTR, is trying to destroy the trade union agreements at Hanger and that in its lust for profits it is trying to make sure that these suffering, disabled people have to wait all this time for replacement limbs? BTR is the guilty party in this dispute and the hon. Gentleman ought to condemn it.

**Mr. Major:** It would not be helpful or productive to deal with each of the hon. Gentleman's points in turn. He asked whether we proposed to employ fresh personnel. That is a matter for the company, not for me.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind the House that this is a private notice question. I am sorry that I am unable to call any more hon. Members, but perhaps business questions will provide another opportunity.

## Business of the House

3.49 pm

**Mr. Neil Kinnock** (Islwyn): May I ask the Leader of the House to tell us the business for next week?

**The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen):** The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY—There will be a debate on the Royal Navy on a motion for the Adjournment of the House.

TUESDAY 3 FEBRUARY — Remaining stages of the Channel Tunnel Bill.

Motions relating to the Dockyard Services (Devonport) (Designation and Appointed Day) Order and the Dockyard Services (Rosyth) (Designation and Appointed Day) Order.

WEDNESDAY 4 FEBRUARY—Until about Seven o'clock, Second Reading of the Rate Support Grants Bill.

Afterwards, Second Reading of the Parliamentary and Health Service Commissioners Bill.

Motions on the Rent (Relief from Phasing) Order and the Protected Shorthold Tenancies (Rent Registration) Order.

THURSDAY 5 FEBRUARY—Second Reading of the Social Fund (Maternity and Funeral Expenses) Bill.

Motion on the Education (Northern Ireland) Order.

The Chairman of Ways and Means has named opposed private business for consideration at Seven o'clock.

FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY—Private Members' Bills.

MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY—Until Seven o'clock, Private Members' Motions.

Remaining stages of the Social Fund (Maternity and Funeral Expenses) Bill.

**Mr. Kinnock:** I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman.

Before I consider matters of future business, will the right hon. Gentleman have a word with his hon. Friend the Member for Tatton (Mr. Hamilton) about his interjection during questions by my hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) a few moments ago? The hon. Gentleman used words which would be deeply offensive to those affected by the J. E. Hanger lockout.

The House will recall that on Tuesday, before the Government conceded on the matter of your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and decided that the issue should be referred to the Committee of Privileges, the Leader of the House spoke on behalf of the Government, resisting that proposition. That was a somewhat invidious position for a parliamentarian such as the Leader of the House to be placed in. However, to his credit, he conveyed the impression strongly to the Opposition that neither his heart nor his head favoured the Government's motion, although his voice was obliged to favour it.

Can the Leader of the House confirm that I am right in believing that, as Chairman of the Committee of Privileges, he now wants to act thoroughly but expeditiously to resolve the matter? When is the Committee to meet to consider your ruling, Mr. Speaker? Can the Leader of the House estimate when a report will be produced and debated in the House?

Can the Leader of the House tell us, in this the United Nations Year of Shelter for the Homeless, when we will be able to debate that problem, especially in the absence of any significant Government policy to assist the growing number of homeless people in this country?

There is growing concern about the Government's neglect of community carers in our society. There are 1·25 million people caring for severely or very severely disabled people at home. Can the right hon. Gentleman ensure that the House has an early opportunity, in Government time, to debate this growing crisis, which is severely affecting the most deprived sections of the community?

When will we have an opportunity to debate the Layfield report on the Sizewell B inquiry? As the construction of a PWR nuclear power station at Sizewell will have huge public expenditure implications, does the right hon. Gentleman not think that the least the Government can do is to arrange for full consideration of the expenditure implications by the appropriate Committee of the House?

**Mr. Biffen:** I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the points that he has made. With regard to his first point, the House is a mercurial place. Comments are made, some formal, some informal, and things are often said quickly, and in a moment which, upon reflection, one may have wanted to say differently. The House is also a charitable place, and we should leave the matter there.

As I have referred to charity, I want to refer to the charming but wholly incorrect interpretation that the right hon. Gentleman placed upon last Tuesday's debate and my modest part in it. He will understand that there are conventions which very properly affect the handling of next week's business in relation to the activities of Committees upstairs. I am anxious to help the House. Perhaps I may have a more liberal interpretation of that and allow myself to say that I very much hope that the Committee of Privileges will meet next week.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): The right hon. Gentleman sounds a bit more confident than he did last Tuesday.

**Mr. Biffen:** There is nothing in *Hansard* to record that.

**Mr. Skinner:** There is now.

**Mr. Biffen:** I should like now to consider the two important social topics which the right hon. Gentleman mentioned—the homeless and community care services. These are matters which can be pursued through the usual channels, and I hope he will think that they could possibly be topics for an Opposition day.

I thank the right hon. Gentleman for raising the important question of Sizewell. I hope that it will be possible to arrange a debate on the Sizewell report in the week commencing 23 February. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy has told me that he intends to make a decision on the Central Electricity Generating Board's application as soon as possible thereafter.

**Mr. Terence Higgins** (Worthing): Rather than spend more time on the Floor of the House discussing the rights and responsibilities of Select Committees, will my right hon. Friend now confirm that the conventions regarding inquiry into security matters have been well established under his predecessor and have worked well? At the same time, does he agree that, from time to time, the Defence Select Committee has had classified information relevant to its inquiries and that its record of maintaining confidentiality, if necessary by the traditional sidelining procedure, has been impeccable? That being so, does my right hon. Friend agree that the sooner we get back to business as normal, the better?

**Mr. Biffen:** I can wholeheartedly confirm the conventions to which my right hon. Friend has referred. I am grateful to him, as Chairman of the Liaison Committee, for reminding us of them. I believe that those conventions have been honoured by both sides and that the work of the Select Committees has benefited from them. I agree that the sooner we get back to business as usual, the better.

**Mr. David Alton** (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): I thank the Leader of the House for the assurance that there will be a debate on the Sizewell report. Does he think that this is an issue which might properly be put before the electorate, come a general election, and that the decision should perhaps be postponed until after a general election? Will the housing debate on Wednesday consist of two separate debates, or one?

**Mr. Biffen:** Perhaps I can consider the hon. Gentleman's second point. Whenever he asks for two debates within a motion, I suppose that there is to be one for one party and another for the other. I suggest that the scope for procrastination over Sizewell is almost endless. We have gone on for years before reaching this point, when a decision might properly be made. Any decision that is made will still have to be validated in reality at the general election.

**Mr. Michael Mates** (Hampshire, East): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the Defence Select Committee is very grateful for confirmation that there was not, and is not, any intention to interfere with the proper work that it carries out for Parliament? Is he further aware that, unlike some hon. Members, who do not seem to care whether national security is harmed, I know that I speak for every member of my Committee when I say that nothing that we do or say, collectively or individually, will ever be done to harm or endanger national security, although the work that we have to do may not always be for the comfort of the Government of the day?

**Mr. Biffen:** I note and take comfort from what my hon. Friend has said.

**Mr. Jack Ashley** (Stoke-on-Trent): I am sure that the Leader of the House will help on this issue if he can. Is he aware that there are a large number of severely disabled people, such as the mentally handicapped, autistic people and those who are deaf or blind, who need the mobility allowance but are not getting it because of a perverse court ruling? Legislation is not required to give it to them, only regulations are necessary, and it would not cost much. Will the Leader of the House see what he can do to ensure that a statement on the subject is made next week? If we get the regulations, all these people will get the mobility allowance and it would be a godsend to them.

**Mr. Biffen:** I take note of what the right hon. Gentleman has said, and I shall refer his points to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services.

**Sir Kenneth Lewis** (Stamford and Spalding): Has my right hon. Friend noted reports in the press that the Government's so-called A team — I do not know whether my right hon. Friend is a member of it — is busy preparing an election manifesto? Will my right hon.

*[Sir Kenneth Lewis]*

Friend note that the Home Secretary once wrote a book entitled, "The End of Promises"? Those of us who are retiring from the House recommend to my right hon. Friend that, in an election manifesto, we leave the making of promises to the Labour party, which will not be able to keep them, and that we have the minimum of promises in our election manifesto.

**Mr. Biffen:** As I understand it, by the discipline of our trade we are supposed to be unaware of the committee to which my hon. Friend referred. However, an end to promises would be an excellent theme for a balanced ticket.

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): The issue of national security is a matter of opinion, and the opinion of Conservative hon. Members may not necessarily be the opinion of all hon. Members, even on the right hon. Gentleman's side of the House, and it is certainly not the opinion of many Opposition Members. Action was taken against the *New Statesman* and an individual journalist, and pressure was applied to the BBC, and this raises the question of the future of the freedom of the press. In view of those matters, and quite apart from the matters that are connected with what has happened in this House and with the rights of the House, can the Leader of the House assure us that there will be a debate on this issue at the earliest possible moment so that we can thrash these things out in the House, which is the proper place for doing so?

**Mr. Biffen:** The hon. Gentleman will not be surprised if I say that I strongly contest much of the preface to his request for a debate. I realise that there is general interest in the House on these matters, but I can offer no prospect of a debate in Government time in the near future.

**Mr. Eric Forth** (Mid-Worcestershire): Does my right hon. Friend recall that no Liberal Member was present to take part in last night's important debate? That may account for the fact that the Liberal party and the Social Democratic party managed to vote in different Lobbies. Can my right hon. Friend arrange for a re-run of last night's debate so that Liberal Members can participate in, and listen to, the debate, because that might help them to make up their minds on how they want to vote?

**Mr. Biffen:** Absolutely not. I would not dream of making such a gesture to enable second-turn thoughts to be asserted. The alliance parties were not much present in the debate, but knew perfectly well that they had to be present in the Division Lobbies, and they have shown the consequences. They have given us a foretaste of what life would be like in a no-majority Parliament, in which they would not have the cohesion of a single group.

**Mr. Roland Boyes** (Houghton and Washington): Is the Leader of the House aware that my constituency is part of the borough of Sunderland and that today I have been informed by the careers office of the latest unemployment figures? There are about 2,067 unemployed people and 3,300 on special schemes, but there are only 44 vacancies in the entire borough of Sunderland. If one estimates that there are about 30,000 unemployed people and that the cost is £6,000 per unemployed person, that means that £200 million a year is being poured down the drain, when it could be paying for jobs for those people, and especially for unemployed youngsters. It is a scandal that people are kept unemployed, with a long-term risk to health, when the money is available to create jobs in my constituency. May we have an early debate on the scandal of youth unemployment?

**Mr. Biffen:** The hon. Gentleman has portrayed a situation which I well understand exists in certain constituencies which have been affected by the decline of the heavy engineering base of the national economy. However, I remind him that we debated that matter only a few days ago. In the absence of another debate in the near future, the hon. Gentleman might wish to seek to make his point at Question Time next Tuesday.

**Sir John Biggs-Davison** (Epping, Forest): Has my right hon. Friend studied the early-day motion on the subject of identity cards for all the population?

*[That this House notes the use of identity cards in various Commonwealth, European and other countries, and the requirement in Northern Ireland that driving licences shall carry the driver's photograph; believes that the universal issue of identity cards in the United Kingdom would assist the prevention and detection of crime, including social security fraud and illegal immigration and that, far from lessening civil liberty, it would protect the law-abiding from troublesome and unnecessary inquiries by police and security officers; and therefore urges the Secretary of State for the Home Department to consider the early introduction of identity cards bearing the holder's photograph.]*

Despite the dismissive written answer that I received from the Home Office, will my right hon. Friend ask our right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to consider the matter afresh, bearing in mind that the Home Office sometimes changes its mind, as it did on the issue of crossbows?

**Mr. Biffen:** My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary will answer questions on Thursday, and my hon. Friend might seek to make his point on that occasion.

**Mr. Ken Weetch** (Ipswich): Can the Leader of the House inform us whether there is any prospect of the Second Reading debate on the Leasehold Reform Bill coming to the House? Does the right hon. Gentleman recall that in the Gracious Speech it was promised that that would be part of the Government's legislative programme? I should not like to see that Bill fall as a casualty to an early election. Is there any prospect of the Bill coming before the House, and if so, when?

**Mr. Biffen:** Leaving aside unseemly speculation about the date of an election, I shall consider that point and possibly get in touch with the hon. Gentleman about it.

**Mr. James Couchman** (Gillingham): Will my right hon. Friend give the House an early opportunity to consider the Audit Commission's report on local government, especially that part which concerns central London? The report highlights the grotesque inefficiency and incompetence, and the bureaucratic muddle and meddle, in certain inner London boroughs compared with boroughs in outer London, even those which are Labour-controlled, and especially with district councils elsewhere in the country.

**Mr. Biffen:** I understand the point that my hon. Friend is making, and it is one of general interest. I should have thought that, subject to your judgment, Mr. Speaker, it would be possible to make many of the remarks related to the Audit Commission's report on the Second Reading of the Rate Support Grants Bill.

**Mr. Clive Soley** (Hammersmith): I understand that Mr. Alasdair Milne of the BBC has just announced his resignation. We know little detail as yet, but, in view of the Government's recent involvement with several BBC matters of some contention, will the Leader of the House consider making a statement in the near future?

**Mr. Biffen:** I am not sure whether the implication was that the Government had in some way been involved in Mr. Alasdair Milne's resignation. This is a matter for Mr. Milne and the governors of the BBC. However, I shall consider the hon. Gentleman's point.

**Mr. Andrew MacKay** (Berkshire, East): My right hon. Friend has already been good enough to convey to the House the provisional date for the recess. Can he go a shade further and give us the date on which the House will return, because then—correct me if I am wrong—the dates for Questions to Departments can be published and the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) can check his luncheon engagements and turn up for Treasury Questions?

**Mr. Biffen:** That is an interesting reason why I should undertake what has been requested. I shall consider the matter, because I wish to help the House as much as I can in such matters. However, I think the important piece of information is about when we shall start the recess.

**Mr. Greville Janner** (Leicester, West): Will the Leader of the House be good enough to refer to the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister the remarkable Scottish television programme, "Tonight", about war crimes, especially the allegations made in it against Antanas Gecas, who lives in Scotland, and the remarkable and shocking documents that have hitherto been secret, but which are produced on that programme? Will the right hon. Gentleman then ask for a statement from the Home Secretary, and also from the Prime Minister, who, in her letter to me of 7 November 1986, promised an early reply to the investigations that were being made into the alleged presence of war criminals in this country, but no substantive reply has as yet been received?

**Mr. Biffen:** The hon. and learned Gentleman raises matters with which he has been closely identified over a period of time, and I have had some occasion to learn further of them. I have also heard the rebuttal by the gentlemen in Scotland. I shall, of course, draw the attention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and that of the Prime Minister to the request that the hon. and learned Gentleman has made.

**Mr. David Gilroy Bevan** (Birmingham, Yardley): Further to the reference by my hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison) to early-day motion No. 439, which my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary had the kindness to refer to as an important matter of principle this time last week, and bearing in mind that it is intended to help, in every possible way, in the restoration of law and order by introducing identity cards with photo passes, will my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House now make certain that, as nearly 50 Members have signed this important motion, we have an early chance to debate the matter in the House?

**Mr. Biffen:** I have to be candid with my hon. Friend and say that I do not see any prospect of Government time being available for an early debate. Therefore, he should try such opportunities as are available through the private resources of hon. Members.

**Mr. Skinner:** Is the Leader of the House aware that it would be worth while to have a debate on the Audit Commission's report on local authorities, including those in London? This would enable many hon. Members to explain precisely, in some cases using John Banham's words, that the real reason for the problem is the near £17,000 million that has been withdrawn from local authorities during the Tory Government's period of office. If we had that debate, we would be able to show that it was not creative accountancy that was causing the trouble. Local authorities are merely doing what the Government did last September when they got involved, by borrowing $400,000 million on the exchange markets, to look after their foreign reserves. What is right for the Government should be right for local authorities,

As to the Liberals and their voting last night, I do not know why the right hon. Gentleman is getting so het up. They were just using the opportunity to show what tactical voting is all about.

**Mr. Biffen:** Whom God has divided let no voter put together.

I note the somewhat ungenerous, contentious and, in my view, inaccurate observations about Government policy, but, in terms of the procedures for next week, all these matters can, within reason, come within the ambit of the Second Reading of the Rate Support Grants Bill. The hon. Gentleman, with his recognised subtlety in these matters, should be able to make a speech.

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): Is my right hon. Friend aware that I have received a most moving and courageous letter from the alleged victim in the Ealing vicarage rape case of last June? This is a serious matter. She has asked me publicly to draw attention to her strong view that the law needs to be reformed to protect alleged rape victims before charges are brought. As the matter comes up at the Old Bailey on 2 February, and in view of the importance of the issue, may we have an early statement from my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, so that the matter can be pursued vigorously?

**Mr. Biffen:** My hon. Friend makes an exceedingly serious point. Clearly, any change in the law would proceed only after the House had given it careful and traditional consideration. I shall draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary to what my hon. Friend has said, and meanwhile he might wish to press the matter at Question Time next Thursday.

**Mr. Paddy Ashdown** (Yeovil): With regard to the events of last night, is the Leader of the House not aware that my hon. Friend the Chief Whip of the Liberal party—*[Interruption.]* I shall stay here until I am heard. My hon. Friend the Chief Whip of the Liberal party has bluntly, plainly and honestly admitted that was a mistake. I am sorry to disabuse the Leader of the House, but it has no greater significance than that. In view of the catalogue of mismanagement, blunder and bungle that has characterised this Government, does the Leader of the House realise that such criticisms come strangely from him? Has he no shame?

**Mr. Biffen:** If I had any shred of shame, I should not be following this profession. As to the other point, it was Lloyd George who said that politics are too serious to be left to amateurs.

**Mr. Michael Hirst** (Strathkelvin and Bearsden): Has my right hon. Friend noted early-day motion No. 467:

*[That this House is gravely disturbed at the announcement of the closure of the Caterpillar plant in Uddingston, which will threaten the employment of the 1,221 workforce, within weeks of the company accepting an offer of government financial support; welcomes the statement by the Secretary of State for Scotland that Her Majesty's Government is prepared to discuss further ways to help to save the plant and the jobs; and expresses the hope that, in the light of the assurances given by the Secretary of State for Scotland, the United States management of Caterpillar will now reverse the decision to close the plant.]*

The motion is in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Sir H. Monro) and is supported by all his Scottish Back-Bench Friends. Is my right hon. Friend aware that the United States management of Caterpillar, weeks after accepting an offer of substantial Government support for a major investment programme at Uddingston, abruptly cancelled that and closed the plant? In view of the importance of this matter to the west of Scotland, will my right hon. Friend make time for a debate on it?

**Mr. Biffen:** I take note of what my hon. Friend has said, and I endorse the seriousness of the situation that he outlined. I cannot see the immediate prospect of a debate in Government time, but this matter might be considered for an Adjournment debate.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): In view of the Leader of the House's emollient answer to the Chairman of the Select Committee on Defence, the hon. Member for Hampshire, East (Mr. Mates), will the right hon. Gentleman reflect on these accusations against certain Members of Parliament being not so careful about matters of security? Will he take aside the Prime Minister, who complains about ferrets, and say quite gently that ferrets are bred by those who are economical with the truth? People start ferreting on sensitive issues because they are not told the full truth.

Will the Leader of the House cast his mind back to those far-off days when Prime Ministers answered Questions properly, and reflect on the House of Commons issue in question No. 1, not an open question, but a specific question in detail, which had been on the Order Paper for 14 long days? Could not the Prime Minister have got herself properly briefed? If Prime Ministers make mistakes during Question Time, should they not come the following week to the House and, if there has been an error and they have been given the wrong information by security sources, or whoever, frankly say that, in the light of new information, such as I gave the Prime Minister in a three-page dossier, carefully put together by Dr. Richard Ware and Mr. Chris Bowlby of the Library and other sources, there has been an error? If she is wrong, could she come next week and say so? If she disagrees with the Library statement and the West German sources, should she not also say so?

**Mr. Biffen:** As to the first point, the exchange had the purpose of underlining the excellent record that there has been of the observance of security and intelligence constraints and restrictions by the Select Committee, and it is no bad thing that that point is again read into the record. As to the second point, I cannot accept the hon. Gentleman's strictures against my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, but I shall of course see that her attention is drawn to his points.

**Mr. Michael Brown** (Brigg and Cleethorpes): Will my right hon. Friend reconsider his answer to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer)? Surely we need a debate in Government time. I recommend that such a motion, if he is able to agree to such a debate, should convey all the sentiments of the Leader of the Opposition, so that we can find out how many of his hon. Friends would support it.

**Mr. Biffen:** I understand the significance of the subject and the compelling interest that it should be taken in Government time, but that is a scarce commodity. I know that my hon. Friend has a debate on Monday week, so perhaps he might choose this topic.

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): In view of the reported resignation of the Director-General of the BBC, does the Leader of the House recognise that, rightly or wrongly, many people will connect that with the relentless pressure by Tory central office and the Government on the BBC? As so many people, of all political views, are rather sick and tired of the attempt to make the BBC an agency of the Tory party, does the Leader of the House recognise that a statement is required?

**Mr. Biffen:** The hon. Gentleman makes a repugnant observation, which I reject. I can go no further than the remarks that I have already made.

**Mr. Jonathan Aitken** (Thanet, South): Will my right hon. Friend cast his mind back to last summer, when he came to the Dispatch Box to explain away a timetable published by the Department of Transport which forecast that the Channel Tunnel Bill would receive the Royal Assent by December? Now that this piece of legislation is limping towards its Report stage in February and faces a hard-fought passage in the other place, with petitions and Select Committees still to come, will my right hon. Friend give the House guidance on what the Government's policy will be should Parliament be prorogued for a spring or summer general election before the Bill has received the Royal Assent, if, indeed, it is going to do so?

**Mr. Biffen:** I certainly cannot do so from the Dispatch Box this afternoon in the context of the debate that is to take place next week, but I take to heart my hon. Friend's point.

**Mr. Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough and Horncastle): Should my right hon. Friend not show more charity to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), because we know that it was simply a mistake when the leader of the Liberal party in solemn conclave disagreed with the leaders of SDP so publicly over nuclear policy? When considering the formation of the alliance, should we not show the same charity as the bishop showed the nun when she said, "It was just a mistake"?

**Mr. Biffen:** The scope for analogy in this affair is almost endless, and every Member can undertake it to his own satisfaction. I wish to be charitable to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Ashdown), so let me finally observe that I deeply regret that he has had to make all his remarks in the total absence of the SDP. Not one Member of that party has lingered to hear that soul-searching and breast-beating.

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. what's-his-name?—Bruinvels.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** (Leicester, East): I can confirm that I am standing up, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** My sincere apologies. We all make mistakes.

**Mr. Bruinvels:** We have all heard, Mr. Speaker the mistakes on the Liberal side.

Will my right hon. Friend look most carefully at council house provision for the 1990s and after the year 2000? Is it not welcome that more than 62 per cent. of council tenants have bought their own homes? Therefore, may we have a debate on whether more council houses should be built? I appreciate that the Labour party likes council houses because it tries to trap its voters in them, but for the rest of the community and the very caring people who are in council houses, should council houses not be repaired rather, than new ones built? If my right hon. Friend looks at Leicester and the Hamilton area of my constituency, he will find that 4,000 council houses may be located there, despite the fact that the majority of my constituents are oposed to them. I appreciate that the council has 34,000 council houses already and wants to increase its majority, but will my right hon. Friend encourage people to come to the House to debate the role of "buying your own house and the future of private house building in the year 2000."?

**Mr. Biffen:** I shall take account of that request, and clearly it will be considered with many others when planning the programme for the coming weeks. In the meantime, I should have thought that my hon. Friend had a sporting chance of relating local authority housing to the rate support grants issue.

**Mr. Tim Yeo** (Suffolk, South): Is my right hon. Friend aware that the Lewis Carol verse—from which the title of the alliance policy document, "The Time has Come", is taken, contains some valuable suggestions for future debates in the House? The lines run:

> "'The time has come,' the Walrus said"

—I believe that this is a reference to the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins)

> "'To talk of many things: Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—Of cabbages—and kings ."

I believe that it was at the insistence of the leader of the Liberal party that the reference should be to "kings", but it is the last two lines that are crucial. They say:

> "And why the sea is boiling hot—and whether pigs have wings"

It way be that those are issues upon which the alliance could demonstrate its unity.

**Mr. Biffen:** Yes.

**Mr. Patrick Nicholls** (Teignbridge): Will my right hon. Friend find time next week for a debate to consider the constitutional implications of the matters raised by Lord Chapple in an article in the *Daily Mail* today, in which he called upon the Leader of the Opposition to resign his leadership of the Labour party to his right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Monklands, East (Mr. Smith). While Lord Chapple was probably unrealistic——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman must ask about the business for next week.

**Mr. Nicholls:** Will my right hon. Friend consider a debate on the circumstances relating to those Members of the House, other than members of the Government, who draw public salaries? Would that not provide an opportunity to discuss the matters raised by Lord Chapple? Even if it is too much to expect the leader of the Labour party to go quietly—bearing in mind the recent incident outside an Indian restaurant—there would be opportunities to consider the implications.

**Mr. Biffen:** That is an interesting point, but I ask my hon. Friend to take heart. Under our existing procedures, those are precisely the sorts of things that we are talking about every day of the week.

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): May I support the request of the hon. Gentleman—what's-his-name?—for a debate on council housing, so that we can also refer to those who have purchased council housing and are now being threatened with eviction because of the change in the regulation covering mortgage interest payments?

**Mr. Biffen:** I note what the hon. Gentleman has said. He will appreciate that in my reply I explained that local authority housing might conceivably fall within the ambit of the debate next Wednesday. The hon. Gentleman is now trying to extend it to issues for which I can hold out no prospect of time in the near future.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): Is the Leader of the House aware that yesterday I communicated on a private basis to the Under-Secretary of State, the hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), the name of a licensed security dealer in the City who was trading fraudulently, where investors were at risk and where I believed that no action was being taken by the Government? Is the Leader of the House aware that Department of Trade officials are today denying that they had knowledge of those matters, when I have clear proof that they have known for at least eight or nine weeks? Will he ask the Minister responsible to come to the Dispatch Box and make a full statement, so that the position of investors can be cleared up?

**Mr. Biffen:** This is the first that I have heard of the matter, because I was not in the debate yesterday, but I will draw my hon. and learned Friend's attention to the point that the hon. Gentleman has raised.

## National Security

4.27 pm

**Mr. Patrick Nicholls** (Teignbridge): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and urgent matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the breach of national security posed by the Welsh Campaign for Civil Liberties' intention to show to a public audience the BBC film 'The Secret Society, Project Zircon' this Saturday."

The matter is specific because it has already been revealed in the press—specifically in the *Western Mail* yesterday—that a time and place have been fixed for the showing of the film—Saturday 31 January at 6 pm in a club in Warnaby street, Cardiff.

The matter is urgent because it has been agreed on all sides that the showing and contents of that film represent a breach of national security. It is quite clear that this is a subject for urgent debate, because not only has it been said on the Conservative Benches that the showing of that film would be a breach of national security, but it has even been agreed by the Leader of the Opposition, despite his usual record on matters of national security, that the showing of that film would represent a real breach of security. A debate upon this subject would enable us to consider the fact that, although the Government have used all available legal remedies to stop the showing of the film, it may still be shown legally. That shows that there is a gap in the law which requires urgent legislation. If the Leader of the Opposition is to maintain the position that he has previously taken, his co-operation should be sought to enable that legislation to be passed.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

"the breach of national security posed by the Welsh Campaign for Civil Liberties' intention to show a public audience the BBC film 'The Secret Society, Project Zircon' this coming Saturday."

I listened with great care to what the hon. Member has said, but I regret that I do not consider that the matter that he has raised is appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20, and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

## European Community

**Mr. Speaker:** Before the Minister rises, I must tell the House that I have not selected either of the two amendments on the Order Paper. However, the arguments that they contain may be pursued during the course of the debate.

4.29 pm

**The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mrs. Lynda Chalker):** I beg to move,

That this House takes note of the White Paper on Developments in the European Community, January to June 1986 (Cmnd. 9911); and supports the emphasis which the Government placed during the United Kingdom Presidency on developing Community policies of practical benefit to industry, business and the consumer.

At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the House would wish to be informed that agreement was reached early this morning between the European Commission and the United States over the trade effects of enlargement. The agreement has yet to be formally confirmed on both sides, but I am confident that it will be. Of course, the immediate point for the United Kingdom is that the threatened trade war will be avoided. This will be welcome to all hon. Members especially those who have written to me and my colleagues expressing concern at the effects on our exporters if agreement was not reached.

There will be no increases in United States tariffs on gin or other exports from the European Community. The European Community has confirmed its offer of a reduced levy quota for corn and sorghum exports to Spain, mainly from the United States, plus some other lesser concessions, and agreement has been reached on that basis.

This outcome has been possible because of the skill and tenacity with which the Community has negotiated. It is an obvious and practical demonstration of the way in which our combined negotiating weight in the Community can defend British interests in a way that we could not hope to do on our own. It also shows the effectiveness of the approach that my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and I have consistently urged on the Commission and on our colleagues in the Council of Ministers.

The Community has made clear throughout its determination to work wholeheartedly for a settlement. It has also made it clear that if the United States proceeded with any unilateral raising of tariffs, the Community would be ready to respond in defence of our interests. It is that which helped to bring agreement in this dispute, as in the earlier negotiations of equal importance to us over access to the United States market for steel products. In accordance with the mandate laid down by the Council of Ministers, Commissioner De Clercq has negotiated well and effectively on the Community's behalf and deserves our congratulations.

The growing United States global deficit, estimated at $170 billion in 1986, has made the negotiations particularly difficult. The Community will need to be equally firm over the protectionist measures passed by the last Congress on which action is already being taken in the general agreement on tariffs and trade. Those could affect a considerable volume of British trade. Both the Community and the United States are committed to avoid new protectionist actions by the agreement which launched the Uruguay round, and it is essential that both should honour that commitment.

Here too, the House will wish to know that a further agreement has been reached today in Geneva on the procedures which will enable the Uruguay round negotiations, launched at Punta del Este, to begin in earnest. Their success will be vital to preserving the open trading system on which this country depends. The further liberalisation of world trade is as important to our prosperity and the creation of jobs as the creation of the internal market within the EC. The House will agree that those are important themes of the White Paper with which I shall now deal.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** (Southend, East): Was any cash compensation for the United States included in the agreement with the United States, which I am sure everyone will welcome, and, if so, how much?

**Mrs. Chalker:** I may return to the figures when I reply to the debate, but I understand that the cost is minimal compared with even a short period of a trade war. We shall publish the details in the *Official Report*.

The White Paper describes in detail the situation in the Community up to the moment when the Government took over the presidency in July last year. In the first half of the year Spain and Portugal joined the Community, a significant achievement for their democracies. The Single European Act, amending the treaty of Rome, was also signed. In April a somewhat shorter but no less vital negotiation in the Agriculture Council resulted in a tough but necessary CAP price fixing, including important reforms. A new production tax on cereals, a cut in dairy quotas and big price cuts for Mediterranean products were included in that. A new action programme for the internal market was agreed and some significant measures were adopted — for instance, on transmission standards for direct broadcasting by satellite. Those are dealt with in full in the White Paper.

All the same, a number of difficult and unresolved issues awaited the start of our presidency last July. On EC-United States trade there were problems on steel, citrus and pasta, and on the effects of enlargement; disagreement with Japan over access to her markets; renegotiation of New Zealand's dairy trade agreement; and the opening of a new GATT round to set the pattern of world trade for the next decade.

Nearer home, the Community had no budget for 1986. Despite the price freeze in April, the costs of the common agricultural policy were increasing as a result of the fall in the value of the dollar which determines the world price of most agricultural products. Therefore, as with all presidencies, much of the agenda was set by the obligations that those problems placed on us. But there were opportunities as well as obligations.

First of all, there was an opportunity to achieve further reform of the common agricultural policy. Such reforms are traditionally achieved at the annual price fixing at the first half of the year. In last year's price fixing the Council had agreed to introduce a co-responsibility levy on cereals coupled with a tightening of intervention criteria. We were determined to build on those decisions and not to lose the momentum achieved at the June European Council when Heads of Government expressed their determination to bring Community agricultural prices closer to those of the world market. Therefore, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary told the House on 5 March — at columns 176-77 — we concentrated our efforts on further reform, in particular in two key sectors, milk and beef, where expenditure was running at a combined total of over £6 billion a year and where surpluses were at record levels.

Secondly, after a lengthy period of institutional introspection, we were determined to show that institutional reform could be put to practical use for the benefit of the Community's citizens. We had identified four significant areas for action. First, there was the internal market, where the lack of common rules has placed this country at a disadvantage compared with our competitors in the rest of the Community. Secondly, we wanted progress on air transport and in shipping. We wanted cheaper services and better access to them. We wanted protection for Community shipping in its dealings with third countries and open access to Community coastal trade.

Thirdly, we wanted specific measures to help small business and to promote employment growth. All the member Governments of the Community, of Left or Right, were agreed on one overall economic strategy. But at that time there was no coherent plan for bringing together the action against unemployment which was being taken in each member state. Fourthly, there was action at the Community level to deal with the problems of terrorism, crime and traffic in drugs.

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The second area to which the hon. Lady referred included coastal shipping. How far have the discussions on cabotage advanced? Shall we see a greater input into British coastal traffic by British vessels in the near future?

**Mrs. Chalker:** We have so opened up the cabotage proposals that that should indeed be so. I may deal with that in greater detail when I reply to the debate.

Let me explain why action in those four areas was so important for Britain. Of the 48 internal market measures agreed during our presidency a number were of obvious practical benefit to the public — for instance, the agreement on maximum noise levels for motorbikes which will help to reduce a serious public nuisance; the agreement on standards for fire safety in hotels, an important protection for travellers; agreement on permitted food additives, improving safety standards for the consumer and the introduction, largely under United Kingdom instigation, of proposals governing toy safety in the Community.

A number of the other measures taken were of less immediate benefit to the consumer but of obvious benefit to industry — for example, the directive requiring compatible standards for direct broadcasting by satellite; the agreement on a standardised tractor control layout and standardised pedal layout for forklift trucks. Each of those agreements alone may seem only a small step towards the completion of the common market in goods and services. But each is important for our industry and each is a positive step forward. After all, the European tractor market alone is worth £130 million a year to our exporters.

The internal market is not just about breaking down existing barriers to trade. Our aim is to avoid the creation of barriers in new industries. That is why our action programme focused on the new technologies. We secured agreement to more open rules for public purchasing;

*[Mrs. Chalker]*

agreement on the use of European standards for the purchase of information technology and telecommunications equipment and on advanced data network systems.

In air transport, we had already shown, through bilateral agreements, that liberalisation could lead to a dramatic reduction in air fares and an increase in new services. By the end of our presidency we had secured majority support for two significant changes in the organisation of Communitywide aviation.

The first is a shift to new capacity sharing arrangements that will improve competition between the carriers. The shift is not as much as we would like but it represents a major change from the deadlock of earlier years that I remember only too well. There has also been an opening up of routes between hub and regional airports—for instance, the service between Paris and Bradford. Those are significant advances.

The next and major priority must be air fares. We want airlines to be free to set fares and conditions according to their commercial judgment.

**Mr. George Foulkes** (Carrick, Cumnock and the Doon Valley): Such as services between London and Glasgow?

**Mrs. Chalker:** Between all areas of the Community. It is something that not all member states accept. At the beginning of our presidency only two states were in favour —Britain and the Netherlands—but by the end of our presidency seven member states accepted the proposals. I hope that when the Single European Act is implemented majority voting will enable those proposals to go through under the Belgian presidency.

The internal market measures are important, not only for business, not only for people, but for jobs. We are determined to do more in this respect.

Another genuine success has been in reducing the regulatory burden on small firms in this country, which is now being repeated across the Community. I read in today's *Financial Times* of the French campaign launched by Alain Madellin, the French Industry Minister, to reduce red tape and the burden of administration for French companies. That is happening across the Community. We require that all new proposals should be assessed for their impact on business and therefore on job creation. Existing regulations are also being re-examined.

During the presidency, we negotiated a £1 billion package of loans for small firms. We got proposals brought forward to increase the VAT exemption limit to £25,000. Those measures to help small business parallel to the steps outlined in the resolution agreed by the Social Affairs Ministers on employment growth. This was not just a United Kingdom initiative. It had the support from the outset of other member states and was discussed and eventually agreed with the European TUC. The measures provide a framework for proposals which the Commission will now bring forward covering the creation of new job opportunities, improved training and help for the long-term unemployed and for disadvantaged groups.

In addition there has been an intensification of European co-operation in the fight against terrorism and drugs; and new impetus has been given to co-operation in seeking better prevention and treatment of cancer and of AIDS. Those steps demonstrate that the Community is determined to work for its citizens. It has already started and that work will continue.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): I am sure that the Minister will recollect that in parliamentary questions and in correspondence I have raised with her and her colleagues at the Foreign Office the question of the European cancer initiative. What is being done regarding funding in Europe and help for centres of excellence—mostly universities and Medical Research Council units —in Britain? Some of us get the impression, perhaps wrongly, that the initiative is a great gimmick and that not very much is happening. Will we be persuaded that something is being done? Perhaps her parliamentary private secretary will bring her information by pigeon post.

**Mrs Chalker:** I had already heard, earlier this week in Brussels, that the Commission has agreed to bring forward new proposals which will be presented to Ministers at the next round of Council meetings. Although health is not my particular responsibility, I assure the hon. Gentleman that my colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Security have been pushing for such proposals. Those proposals are regarded with all seriousness, and I hope that when we are further down the track the hon. Gentleman will welcome those proposals.

We want to increase, not diminish, the personal liberty and choices of individual European citizens. The Government see the European Community as a vehicle for widening the scope for enterprise in Britain and Europe and for widening the freedom enjoyed by the people of Britain and Europe. As a country we have succeeded in loosening the dead hand of state control over individuals and enterprises.

**Mr. Robert N. Wareing** (Liverpool, West Derby): Ask the local authorities.

**Mrs. Chalker:** As a continent we are succeeding in relaxing the grip exercised by other states.

That approach is shared by most of the rest of the developed world. A wind of popular enterprise is sweeping Europe. Two years ago, there were only 2 million small shareholders in Britain. There are now about five times that number. The story is the same all over Europe.

The European Community ensures that personal enterprise is allowed greater expression by letting it expand across national boundaries as well as flourishing at home. The difference it makes is that it creates more trade and more business, and that is the way we create enterprise.

Britain is a trading country. It must trade to survive. Europe is an excellent, stable and expanding market in which to do business. The rest of the Community agrees with us on an agenda which is increasingly devoted to realistic, immediate goals. They are tackling the problems of the CAP, achieving a fair trading relationship with the United States and Japan, completing the internal market and helping business and creating new jobs.

The record of the six months of our presidency gives us good reason to believe that these problems can be tackled successfully. In international trade the multilateral trade negotiations in the GATT were successfully launched. As we told the House last year, we secured agreement with the United States on steel, citrus and pasta. We have successfully renegotiated New Zealand's dairy trade agreement with the Community and we took vigorous action with Japan on discrimination in trade.

Far from neglecting the problems of the common agricultural policy, as has sometimes been alleged, we made reform of the beef and milk regimes a top priority of our presidency. A 3 per cent. cut in milk production had been agreed in April last year. In December we secured a further cut in production of more than double that amount and an effective cut in milk production of 9·5 per cent. over the next 15 months. In April we reached agreement on a price freeze for many agricultural products and in December we agreed an average price cut for beef of 13 per cent.

We know, of course, that further steps are needed to level the butter and beef mountains and that we need further cuts in cereal prices and a further reduction in the availability of intervention. We need a limit on the levels of guaranteed production, not just for products already in surplus, but for those such as vegetable fat crops which threaten to go into surplus if action is not taken. We must not only curtail the cost of individual agricultural commodities but achieve a mechanism to ensure that the Community budget alone does not bear the costs of surplus production.

Many of those arguments are familiar, but the Community has changed since the negotiations of the early 1980s. The case for CAP reform is now not just compelling but widely accepted. We must ensure that money devoted to Community policies gives added value over money devoted to national policies. We must ensure, too, that the structural funds address the needs of the unemployed and of areas of industrial decline. The reorganisation of those funds, which is called for under the Single European Act, gives us the opportunity to press ahead with those reforms.

I shall not disguise from the public the true state of the Community today. Significant problems remain, as they are bound to do in a Community of 12 nations, but the record is also one of solid achievement. I do not underestimate the task for the year ahead. There will be difficult negotiations on the future financing of the Community and the continued adaptation of the common agricultural policy, but in a year in which we achieved a record number of internal market agreements and a record level of CAP reform, we proved Britain's capacity to achieve results. There are many challenges ahead and there are many opportunities. We have begun a very great change. That change is embodied in the motion, which I commend to the House.

4.52 pm

**Mr. George Robertson** (Hamilton): Given the state of the Minister's health and of my own we should perhaps be talking about a common cold policy rather than a common agricultural policy.

There is something absurd about debating on 29 January 1987 developments in the European Community between January and June 1986, and it was notable that the Minister disposed of that and the preceding period in four and a half minutes before going on to the following six-month period and the British presidency. It cannot be beyond the wit of the Government to produce reports and arrange debates at earlier stages so that we can discuss matters that are real and relevant and a good deal more immediate than those before us today.

Perhaps the Government's view on this is similar to their attitude to the treaty of Rome. When I asked the Vote Office for a copy of that most fundamental of laws affecting this country, I was told that it was out of print and that there were no plans to reprint it. I was flabbergasted to receive such a reply in the very week when the Government were hosting the summit of all the Community nations. I therefore took the matter up with the Prime Minister, who replied five weeks later that the Stationery Office ought to have told me

"that the House of Commons library would in any case be able to supply photocopies for members."

The Services Committee might have something to say about the idea of the Library being asked to photocopy 900 pages.

**Mrs. Chalker:** As the hon. Gentleman well knows, when he acquainted me with the rather inept reply that he had received from the Vote Office, I made inquiries immediately. I was informed that the treaty was being reprinted to bring it up to date with the Single European Act. That is taking place. In the meantime, I think that to require all 900 pages for simultaneous study would be unusual, even with the hon. Gentleman's capacity. I hope that he will get those parts that he needs—or he can even borrow my copy.

**Mr. Robertson:** I am grateful to the Minister for that generous offer. I am sure that the Government have plenty of copies. Nevertheless, their unwillingness to print the basic law of the European Community gives us some idea of their commitment to the idea of European unity.

Among the many surprises — mainly of omission rather than inclusion—in the Minister's speech was the absence of any reference to Sir Henry Plumb. I had expected joyful cheers from the near empty Conservative Benches at the elevation of Sir Henry to the presidency of the European Parliament, albeit by a small majority, but perhaps the attitude today has something to do with the less than ecstatic response from No. 10 Downing street to Sir Henry's ideas. *The Guardian* perversely described him as "one of nature's diplomats", who was no sooner in post as President of the Parliament than he announced his conversion to an element of proportional representation in British Euro-elections. When one adds to that Sir Henry's belief in fiscal harmonisation and harmonisation of VAT in the Community, even if the Prime Minister feels that any Tory is better than no Tory, he is unlikely to receive much support from her for those ideas.

**Mr. Stephen Dorrell** (Loughborough): Does the hon. Gentleman support them?

**Mr. Robertson:** That question is a waste of time, as the answer is self-evident.

Before dealing with the major issues, I should stress two developments in the Community that are worthy of praise. First, I welcome the decision to convene a new conference on the middle east. Rarely has there been greater need for a new initiative to make a start on the sordid jungle of wars, threats of war, killings and kidnappings that are going on in that part of the world and could yet engulf us all. That was a proper decision for the Community to take.

Secondly, we should applaud the decision, albeit belated and characteristically slowly implemented, to distribute some of the ludicrous food stockpile to the old and the needy in this bitterly cold European winter. Some welcome should certainly be accorded to that.

**Mr. Hugh Dykes** (Harrow, East): Does the hon. Gentleman agree that the Venice declaration remains the best international document on solving the middle east problem and that, if the conflicting parties would only accept some of the suggestions in that still valid document, there might be the beginnings of real peace in the area?

**Mr. Robertson:** I agree that the Venice declaration made a major contribution to progressing the argument, but it has taken the Community too long to get round to a new initiative. The priority now being given to the matter is therefore welcome.

The Minister talked about the British presidency of the Community, and no doubt there will be more of the propaganda parade of trivia that is being used to sell the tarnished British presidency. *The Times* described it as "lacklustre". The *Financial Times* said that the failure to tackle the main Community programmes was

> "the result of deliberate policy by the United Kingdom Presidency"

and described the United Kingdom's record as "patchy."

An unnamed EEC official was quoted in another paper as saying:

> "To some people it looks as if Britain has deliberately engineered a cash crisis so that the EC will be forced to take drastic measures—unfortunately, it falls to Belgium to deal with the crisis."

In June the Foreign Secretary said that he wanted the Community to

> "make a real contribution to the lives of ordinary people."

But what was the result? The legacy of that six-month presidency is striking both in its failure and in the damage that it left behind for the Belgians to pick up.

First, there was the trade war with the Americans, which the Minister has mentioned. The fact that a last-minute face-saving device may well be found by the weekend by means of satellite-televised diplomats will not diminish the damage done to European-United States relations by the bitter and often near-hysterical exchanges across the Atlantic since November. No splitting of the difference at midnight on Saturday will wipe out the abuse and counter-abuse, as first the Americans threatened sanctions against their principal European allies and then the EEC made its justified and savage counter-threats.

**Mrs. Chalker:** I do not think that the hon. Gentleman listened to a word I said at the beginning. We worked consistently through the whole of the second half of last year, from the time that we settled the steel dispute, the citrus dispute, the pasta dispute—we cannot leave pasta out—to make sure that every mortal thing was done to avoid a trade war over the effect of the enlargement of the Community. Throughout the months of our presidency the Commissioner, Willy de Clercq, made repeated visits; so did some of the Americans and so did the Ministers in the presidency—I for one.

Before Christmas we believed that there was a way to avert the trade war, but it had to be agreed on both sides of the Atlantic. The fact that on Monday in the Foreign Affairs Council it was reported to us that there was a good chance of success—and that news came through early this morning — should be something for the hon. Gentleman to welcome. It prevents the imposition of a tax of 200 per cent. on exports of British gin and of taxes on all sorts of other goods from different countries in the Community. It is actually a great success which has been shouldered not only by the Commission but by the British presidency as well as the current Belgian presidency.

**Mr. Robertson:** Now that the hon. Lady has got that off her chest, perhaps she will get from her civil servants an answer to the question posed by the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), because we require to know the cost. At what cost has this solution been found—the solution that we should so rejoice about?

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** I should make it abundantly clear that it is not the cost that bothers me. I understand that it will be about £400 million. What really worries me is where the money is to come from when the Common Market has none.

**Mr. Robertson:** The hon. Gentleman is right, and I will come to this catastrophe of the finances in just a moment.

Whatever the Minister says and whoever she seeks to convince, the fact is that most of the acrimony could have been avoided and the real damage done to the Western alliance as a consequence of this looming trade war could still have been averted if the spirit of compromise and skill on display this week had been encouraged by Britain when it had the reins of power. Instead, the problem was avoided and it was left to the Belgians to pick up the pieces.

The second legacy of our presidency was the so-called triumphant deal on the common agricultural policy, engineered with maximum public relations trumpeting by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. In the cold light of day a month later, the deal that his little bespectacled friend brought back to the House in December looks pretty threadbare. It was claimed that the milk agreement would cut production and save £1·2 billion for the Community over three years, but earlier this month the distinguished *Agra Europe* published an article pointing out that the agreement will not solve the Community's milk problem nor give the budgetary savings associated with it. The milk and beef arrangements, the basis of the December package, represent only the start, no more, of the process to reform the common agricultural policy before it relentlessly destroys the European Community itself.

The third legacy of the presidency is the botched job on promoting the internal market, always seen by the Prime Minister as the export of Thatcherism, with all the clearly manifested British failures of it, to our European partners. The drive to deregulation crashed, as she implied, on the rocks of its first and only tangible objective—breaking the cartel of maintained air fares in Europe. Without the essential safeguards for the weaker economies and more vulnerable areas of the Community which are mentioned in the Single European Act, there will be no real progress in breaking down barriers in Europe. Jacques Delors, the president of the European Commission, has repeatedly said it, but our Prime Minister continues to ignore the fact, and the result is the wishy-washy list of advances faithfully and unconvincingly broadcast to us by the Minister—and by the Back-Bench sycophants with a script later on, no doubt.

The fourth legacy of the British presidency's failure is the rightly exposed bogus plan to tackle unemployment. The Minister has the nerve to proclaim this as one of the successes of the presidency, when we all know that it was simply a feeble gimmick dressed up to placate an increasingly worried electorate throughout Europe. It was the *Financial Times*, almost the establishment voice now in Europe, which in December said:

> "On unemployment, the UK Presidency has perhaps been most cunning of all. Fearing pressure from other sides, including the European Commission, for some acceptable form of concerted action, the British produced their own plan which effectively requires very little action at all".

In the face of the largest single challenge to our continent today, that telling and humbling indictment by the *Financial Times* shows precisely what the Government's record is.

If we require any more evidence, today's *Financial Times* gives it only too clearly. The figures published yesterday in *Social Trends* show how far this Government have gone down the road. The number of unemployed people in this country rose by 2 million between 1979 and 1986, but, as Mr. Joe Rogaly says in the *Lombard* column today,

> "that statistic alone does not tell us the full extent of the human devastation. For in 1979 a mere quarter of the unemployed had been out of work for over a year; by last July this figure was 41 per cent. Nearly 18 per cent. had been unemployed for over three years."

Mr. Rogaly says that is

> "575,000 people on a long trip down from the top left to the bottom right of the graph."

That is the evidence of the Government's record in this regard. How much value can be placed on their pious words during their presidency?

The other legacy of the British presidency, of course, comes in the special category of the financial chaos of the budger, the unmentioned, unspoken legacy that did not even figure in the Minister's opening speech. There is no budget for the European Community for 1987, and when the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office opened this debate, she did not even tell us that. We are so used to the soap opera of the European Community budget crisis that we may be forgiven for thinking that this is just another one of the same. But no way. This one is in a special category, a category all of its own, and it is much worse because British Ministers last year deliberately and cynically pushed the problem off their plate and on to that of the Belgians.

**Mrs. Chalker:** We solved the problem of the 1986 budget within a week.

**Mr. Robertson:** The hon. Lady is probably the only person in the House or in the country who believes that the Minister of State, Treasury solved anything at all. When one looks at the figures for 1987, one sees what a triumph the juggler at the Treasury managed to get away with—the size of the deficit inherited by the Belgians. Even if one takes away the difference with the European Parliament, it will still be 4 billion ecu — almost £3 billion — for 1987. That is the gap, the deficit, the overdraft, that has to be covered.

The overdraft of £3 billion—so lovingly, eloquently and dishonestly called the negative reserve—cannot be covered by a 1·6 or 2 per cent. increase in the VAT ceiling, even if the British rebate of £1 billion is confiscated. We all know from the Prime Minister's recent weasel words when she faced the House of Commons after the summit, that before the summer is out the hapless Minister of State, Treasury will come crawling to the House of Commons asking it to agree to yet another intergovernmental agreement on a non-reimbursable advance. One can bet a lot of money that that is going to happen, but the Prime Minister and the Minister of State, Treasury really should not be betting that it will get through this House.

**The Minister of State, Treasury (Mr. Peter Brooke):** As the hon. Member has been good enough to bring me into this debate, let me remark on the subject of the negative reserve. The hon. Member for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald) did not understand it in July and the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) did not understand it last December. Indeed, he has demonstrated today that he still does not understand it. That sounds to me like somebody who does not expect to be in government.

**Mr. Robertson:** That is the least convincing argument —that nobody understands it except the Treasury or the Minister of State, Treasury. How often in the past have we heard that? We all know that these figures have been published. If I have got it wrong, so has everybody else. We will wait to see whether we are all proved to be wrong.

There is an inbuilt suicide mechanism in the common agricultural policy which will relentlessly drive the Community into more wholly unproductive debt. Normally, when one acquires a debt in this world, one at least gets some pleasure out of it, but not in the common agricultural policy fruit machine. One simply loses money and gets nothing out of it at all. Few, if any, proposals are being put forward by this Government to solve this crisis.

The casualties of this crisis will not be the agricultural empires, because they are drowning in money. The social and regional funds—about which the Minister dared to speak a word of welcome — the research budget, the energy and industry budget and the aid budget will be caught in the vice of obligatory spending on agricultural surpluses that nobody wants. The Minister is not alone in being enthusiastic about the regional fund. On 10 December her hon. Friend the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry, referring to the European regional development fund, said:

> "I intend to ensure that next year's discussion in the Community takes full account of the claims of those regions which have a disproportionate share of the declining industry."

It is peculiar that the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry does not share that view with the Minister of State, Treasury. They should get together and agree with the common-liners, because the guy in the Department of Trade and Industry who is trying to get the maximum for this country is battling not only with the European Community but with the Treasury, which is trying to squeeze the regional fund down to negative figures, if it can get away with it.

In this country we need it and we need it well. Of the European Community's 40 most depressed areas 28 are in the United Kingdom. If ever we needed evidence—if we did not see and represent the evidence of this country's decline in this region—the Government's own evidence to the European regional development fund earlier this year provides eloquent testimony to prove the case for us.

What did the Government say about Merseyside? The Minister comes from that part of the world, representing Wallasey. The Government's own analysis is:

> "Prospects for reducing unemployment are frighteningly bleak."

How did the Minister explain that to her constituents? I wonder how they can explain that away.

What about Greater Manchester? The Government say:

> "The scale of the problem is far in excess of the level of the resources which are available."

What about Scotland, which I and my hon. Friends represent? Of Strathclyde, the most populous and economically important region of Scotland, the Government say:

> "there appears to be little possibility of sufficient expansion in the economy to reduce unemployment significantly in the next few years."

The analysis goes on. About the west midlands it says that there is

> "little prospect of an improvement in the region's basic unemployment problem in the period between now and the end of the decade."

*[Mr. Robertson]*

As regards Wales, the report states:

> "The overall economic activity in Wales is lower than any other region of Great Britain and is expected to remain so during the period that this programme covers."

On Northern Ireland, it says:

> "In the absence of an increase in labour demand there is every likelihood that unemployment will increase."

About south Yorkshire it says that until the upturn comes "the area is likely to remain fairly depressed."

The comment on the north-east of England is:

> "the present, unacceptable high levels of unemployment will not improve until other fundamental problems, such as water supply, land drainage, waste disposal, telecommunications, industrial land . . . are resolved."

That is an indictment of the Government in their own words and by their own evidence. How can that be explained?

My hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) unearthed this treasure trove of Government culpability. If he catches your eye, Mr. Speaker, to wind up this debate, I am sure he will point out, as will others of my hon. Friends, how the Government have wrecked this country. No wonder, when the objective of regional policy has been laid down.

The Government's objective is to reduce regional disparities in employment opportunities on a stable long-term basis. What a sick joke that is. No wonder the *Financial Times* last Monday said:

> "In the wider context, Government regional policy has clearly failed."

There is all the evidence of damage in the Government's own words—a record of where this country has gone wrong. Yet at the same time the Government inexorably squeeze the resources that are available from the European regional development fund to assist areas in this country. This is today's Tory Britain. In the Government's own words, their own report from their own point of view—the least we can call it is a confession of failure. They have no remedy or answer and they seem to have no genuine care—although they display it so often that even their own supporters come to believe it—about the damage that is being done.

Oblivious to the misery, hopelessness and heartache over which they are presiding, which even their own experts have identified, this Government are devoid of caring. The British presidency last year could have been a chance for vision, given the tasks and challenges both here and in our partner countries. Instead we got short-sightedness. It would have been an opportunity for joint action on jobs and high-tech projects that Europe needs to compete with the United States and the far east. Instead, we got more short-term self-seeking. It could have been a time for tackling the roots of the running problems. Instead, they were swept under the carpet again and again. There is disarray at home and complacency abroad. This Government are played out. The sooner they go, the better for all of us.

5.18 pm

**Sir Anthony Meyer** (Clwyd, North-West): What would the Labour party have said if the Government had not put forward the strongest possible case for getting a large share of the European regional development fund? I think it was Harold Nicholson who once said that democratic statesmen at an international conference were rather in the position of a chap trying to play cards with somebody behind him commenting on the cards in his hands for everybody to hear. The attitude of the Labour party in this matter is, as one might expect, very unhelpful.

I look forward to the day when the hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) is able to come out and openly admit that he is a crypto-European and be obliged no longer to disguise his real views with a welter of rather irrelevant rhetoric. It will be no doubt some consolation to him that the impending third consecutive defeat of the Labour party at a general election will for ever remove from serious debate the issue of continued British membership of the European Community, as in fact it has already been removed from serious consideration.

I agree with the hon. Gentleman that it is silly that theoretically we are debating events in the European Community from January to July of last year. As my hon. Friend made clear in her eloquent speech, what we are really talking about is the British presidency. The mere fact that the debate is apparently irrelevant may account for the poor attendance. We have not on this occasion—for the first time that I can recall — the pleasure of the company of the Liberal party's European policy spokesman — in other words, the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber and pretty well every other point on the road to the isles. We very much miss him from our debates and look forward with interest to what the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) will say.

**Mr. A. J. Beith** (Berwick-upon-Tweed): I hope that the hon. Gentleman has taken notice of certain appointments that were made only a week or so ago. I might point out that my hon. Friend the Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) has 'flu, or he would be here to make sure that he approves of what I say.

**Sir Anthony Meyer:** I know the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber well enough to realise that nothing else would have kept him from the debate. As usual, we observe the crowded Benches of the Social Democrats, the other party of Europe as they claim to be.

I give a wholehearted welcome to the agreement that was concluded only a few hours ago with the United States. It has averted a threatened trade war which would have been intensely damaging in itself and would have gives a fresh momentum to the growth of protectionism across the Atlantic and probably worldwide. The agreement shows the immense benefits that flow from a firm and united stand by the European Community.

At first sight, and before I heard my hon. Friend's speech, the achievements of the British presidency looked a trifle meagre, apart from the startling achievement, against all expectations, of my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in securing agreement on measures that will check the accumulation of agricultural surpluses. All the expectations, right up to the moment of agreement, were that no such agreement was possible.

The presidency now looks bleak only to those who, like myself, are never satisfied that progress in this sphere is fast enough, or to those who never read beyond the headlines in the popular newspapers. What is happening is that the process of European Community integration is going ahead slowly — oh, how slowly — but the semi-inertia, as it seems to be to those who look at it superficially, is in itself steadily promoting the setting of the European mixture. In this perspective the steady, efficient, conscientious work of British Ministers during the presidency has contributed its share of pectin to the mixture.

Criticism in other EC countries of Britain as a member of the European Community is far from dying down, but what is dying down is doubt about Britain's commitment to the Community. It was significant that the President of the French Republic, Mr. Mitterrand, chose to come to London, to Chatham house, especially to make a speech about his views on the future of Europe. Those of us who heard it judged that speech to be aimed primarily at a French audience rather than a British audience. Clearly it was part of his internal political activity, but none the less it was significant that he should have chosen to make that speech in London. Those of us who listened to it had no doubt that the whole operation had been most carefully thought out in advance. If we were now to do ourselves a good turn by joining the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system, we would finally and for ever lay to rest any lingering doubts about our permanent commitment to Europe.

The process can be seen at work in the history of attitudes towards the Single European Act. When it was first proposed, the Government regarded it as totally misconceived and sought to sidetrack it. Then they went along with underwhelming enthusiasm with the negotiations that led to the Act. Now, in paragraph 1.4 of the White Paper, we have this statement:

> "It is the Government's view that the Single European Act will enhance the Community's ability to respond to the challenges of the 1980s and 1990s, and will strengthen the ability of the twelve member states, acting together, to make their voice heard in international affairs. It advances the United Kingdom's interests by making it easier to break down the remaining barriers to trade and the provision of services (a long-standing United Kingdom objective); by helping the Community to compete in the new technologies; and by making co-operation in foreign policy more effective. As the Prime Minister told the House of Commons on 5 December 1985, it will enable the United Kingdom 'to realise more fully the benefits of our membership of the European Community'."

That is music in my ears. It gives me great encouragement to see those words in black and white in a Government White Paper.

My hon. Friend told me before the debate that the Single European Act played no part in the remarkably successful conclusion of the negotiations on the common agricultural policy, but these things cast a shadow ahead of them. We have seen more than once, for example, that the threat of privatisation has been as effective as privatisation itself in inducing more realistic attitudes. Whatever the direct impact of the Single European Act on the agricultural negotiations, they must necessarily have been influenced by the prospect that the use of the national veto would be seen as less and less respectful and that the use of majority voting in its turn would become more and more the ordinary course of events.

**Mr. Eric Deakins** (Walthamstow): The hon. Gentleman will be aware of the well-known quotation of Dr. Johnson:

> "when a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully."

But that is not an argument for hanging.

**Sir Anthony Meyer:** That is right; it is an argument for second thoughts. I think I am justified in saying that we are moving steadily away from the total paralysis which the opponents of the Community, on both sides of the House, had hoped to see.

An element in the Single European Act is the enhanced role given to the European Parliament. I was much impressed by the remarkable record of attendance of United Kingdom Ministers at plenary and Committee meetings of the Parliament. I should like to congratulate in particular my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Treasury, for the part that he played in proceedings of the Committees of the Parliament where he gained an enviable reputation for his assiduity, courtesy, knowledge and diplomatic skills.

Ministers have proved that they take the Parliament seriously. I wish that the same could be said of this House. We continue jealously to refuse access to this place to Members of the European Parliament, eyeing them suspiciously, like locals eyeing visitors to the saloon bar. Of course, feeling unwanted, they no longer wish to come here. That is our loss, not theirs. It is we who are cutting ourselves off from wider perspectives, new ideas and the chance to break away from the parish pump mentality which so often prevails in the House.

The election of Sir Henry Plumb as President of the European Parliament provides an opportunity to break bad habits and to enlist popular support for better links between the European Parliament and this one. Despite his antipodean connections, it would be difficult to envisage a more typically British personality than Sir Henry. The fact that the 12-nation Parliament has elected him as President shows that, for them, to be British and to be European are two sides of a single coin, as Sir Henry Plumb so clearly demonstrated by saying that he was born British and would die a European. If Sir Henry, as President of the European Parliament, wished to call on Mr. Speaker, he, in theory at any rate, would be obliged to undergo the humbling process of the security search.

**Mr. Deakins:** Why not?

**Sir Anthony Meyer:** Any stranger visiting this Palace is rightly expected to undergo a security search. I doubt whether Sir Henry Plumb would receive such treatment in any of the other 11-member Parliaments of the European Community. I have no doubt that an expedient method can be found to enable Sir Henry to visit this place in the style to which the President of the European Parliament is entitled.

Ours is a two-Chamber legislature. For the life of me I cannot understand why the Prime Minister, who has never hesitated to put some fairly run-of-the-mill past Members of the House into the other place, will not do the same for the leader of the British delegation to the European Parliament, and indeed for its President.

**Mr. Deakins:** How can he do two jobs?

**Sir Anthony Meyer:** Four Members of the European Parliament are already Members of the other place. It would make sense that the President of the Parliament — obviously, he could not be in the other place very often — had the occasional right to speak there, and most certainly this applies to the leader of the British delegation.

If there were complaints—no doubt there would be complaints from the Labour party — that to do that would give an unfair advantage to the Conservative party,

*[Sir Anthony Meyer]*

I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister would be prepared to balance this matter by conferring peerages upon Mr. Alf Lomas and Mr. Les Huckfield, and grant them admission to the other place. Their contributions, I am sure, would be of enormous benefit to the Labour party and, indeed, to the other place.

In his wisdom, Mr. Speaker decided not to select the amendment that I put down. I quite understand the reasons why he did so, but in a way I am rather sorry about it. In the past, amendments to take note motions have often been put forward by some of my hon. Friends. On occasions, we have voted on them. I should have welcomed the opportunity to demonstrate that a substantial number of Conservative Members while supporting the Government's stance on Europe, would be glad to see a little more forward motion and a little swifter progress than we have seen to date. By and large, my hon. Friend has presented us with an encouraging report and we look forward to further progress in the same direction.

5.33 pm

**Mr. A. J. Beith** (Berwick-upon-Tweed): I share the sense of disappointment expressed by the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) that hon. Members will not have the opportunity to go to the Division Lobby in support of his amendment, since it contains a great many things with which I agree. It would be interesting to see who is prepared to join him and who is left to vote against us. The amendment contains, among other things, that note of welcome to Sir Henry Plumb that was missing from the Minister's remarks.

**Mrs. Chalker:** I said it last week.

**Mr. Beith:** Things like that should often be said. On occasions as appropriate as the first debate after Sir Henry has assumed the presidency, it is right to wish him well and to set out some objectives for what we consider should happen during his presidency.

I have tried to commence my remarks by looking back as far as the White Paper with which we are dealing looks back. As some hon. Members have said, it is an odd feature of these debates that we pin them to a period over a year ago. In looking back, we must recall the accession of Spain and Portugal. It is important to remember that their accession to the Community represented a significant political event for those countries. Quite explicitly, for the Government and the peoples of both countries, membership of the Community, to which they attach great importance, was part of their commitment to democracy, which they each had been denied for so long. That is a point that we can usefully recall, and perhaps usefully draw to the attention of the United States in the arguments that seem to lead to threats of a trade war between the United States and Europe arising out of the application of levies by Spain and Portugal—Spain in particular—on United States agricultural exports.

It behoves the American Congress in particular to remember the significance for Spain and Portugal of their membership of the Community and to set those vital political considerations about the future of democracy and the Atlantic alliance alongside the economic and trade considerations which loom large in any discussion in Congress. The two aspects must be looked at alongside each other. Our American allies might well remember the democratic and strategic importance of the accession of those countries to the Community.

We can look back also to the Single European Act, which we certainly welcomed as a step forward. I endorsed the note of welcome that now features in Government statements on the subject.

**Mr. George Robertson:** I do not wish in any way to be irreverent, but if the Liberal party, on whose behalf the hon. Gentleman speaks, is so much in favour of the Single European Act, why is it that only the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber (Sir R. Johnston) came to any of the debates to put that measure through the British Parliament?

**Mr. Beith:** That is not true. I attended some of the debates myself. The hon. Gentleman should look around his own Benches to realise that there is a higher proportion of Alliance members in the Chamber, as on most occasions, than there is or was of the parliamentary Labour party. I can see five Members of the parliamentary Labour party, plus two Members on the Labour Front Bench. That makes seven. If one puts that figure into a couple of hundred and determines the proportion involved, one will see the responsibilities which rest upon a couple of dozen Alliance MPs in the proper perspective.

**Dr. Godman:** What about the Conservatives?

**Mr. Beith:** The hon. Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) addressed me from the Labour Front Bench. He must have a reply in terms that relate to his own position.

The British presidency has been disappointing because of its lack of vision. That view is reflected by those hon. Members who desire to see the European Community develop and become a more effective and democratic institution. The British presidency has involved a major effort by individual British Ministers—I pay tribute to the effort that they have put into it—and a major effort by the British diplomatic service. Considerable additional work has been done. I noticed it when I visited the United Nations in the latter part of last year. An enormous effort went into trying to secure a European position on issues arising in the United Nations by British Foreign Office representatives there. They deserve some credit for the amount of effort that went into that period of the presidency. It is a precedent that we might adopt in other areas. A lot more could be done in Commonwealth co-operation if that kind of effort were deployed. It certainly brought out some of the best characteristics of our diplomatic service.

The British presidency was marked yet again by a failure to join the European monetary system. The Prime Minister says that she is in favour of joining the European monetary system when the time is right. I interpret that, in the Prime Minister's language, to mean when she is no longer around. The only definition of "when the time is right", according to the Prime Minister, is 'over her dead body'. I see no sign in any of her comments so far that she has any serious intention of committing Britain to the European monetary system. That makes her stance absurd. Obviously, it is one of those compromise phrases which somebody in the Cabinet Office has dreamt up to patch up the difference between those who believe that we should join now and those who believe that we should never join at all. We set our position quite firmly. By now, Britain should have seized the opportunity to join the European monetary system and gained considerable advantages in doing so.

**Mr. Roger King** (Birmingham, Northfield): I am in some confusion about this matter. As the hon. Gentleman may possibly be aware, some concern was expressed today about the difficulty of trying to ascertain whether it is a Liberal or Social Democratic viewpoint. As the hon. Gentleman is probably aware, last night, when the time came to vote, they disappeared into the sunset in various Lobbies. When the hon. Gentleman says "We", does he express a Liberal, SDP or alliance point of view? It is essential that we know.

**Mr. Beith:** As an ex-Whip, I can supply the hon. Gentleman with a list many volumes long of the occasions on which Conservative Members have done what two of my hon. Friends did, which was to stray mistakenly into the wrong Division Lobby. The list would include serving Ministers. Clearly, the hon. Gentleman has not been attending debates on this subject, or he would have heard my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) describe the Prime Minister's commitment to the European monetary system as rather like somebody trying to live in a lift, constantly saying that she has not yet reached the right floor at which to alight. There is no doubt about the shared commitment of the alliance partners to British membership of the European monetary system and British commitment to the development of the Community.

Another disappointment of the British presidency has been the failure to come to terms with the problems of the common agricultural policy. It is a partial failure, because one has to acknowledge the efforts made by the Government in two areas. However, they have left agriculture desperately wondering which way to turn. The industry was told to "produce, produce, produce" and then quotas were slapped on it overnight. The fear, based on what happened in the dairy sector, has now spread abroad among the other agricultural sectors. The Government owe it to agriculture to set out what they are trying to achieve and how they are going to do it.

I recognise that the process, which is one of negotiation, necessarily means that the Government cannot say at this stage what the end result will be. However, they must give a much clearer lead to the agricultural community, which simply does not know what to do. The figures of declining agricultural investment are there to be seen. That decline is inexorable. The industry can hardly be encouraged by what the Chief Secretary to the Treasury said at the Oxford farming conference a few weeks ago. He was referring to the CAP budget when he said:

> "It would be wrong to encourage the belief that as savings . . . are made, so the current subsidies can be automatically diverted to alternative support systems."

That sent a tremor, understandably, through all those who heard it and through those in the industry who listen to such things.

There is clearly no way of resolving the problems that the industry will face unless the withdrawal of support necessary to bring supply and demand into some sort of balance is followed by investment into other uses of agricultural land, other employment in the countryside and other activities that can be related to farming so as to replace that which will be lost. Merely setting aside land to lie fallow, as the Government propose, could mean that more is produced on smaller amounts of land. The British farming industry has shown its willingness, capacity and ability to grow ever-increasing amounts by sheer efficiency and productivity.

Setting aside land to lie fallow will not solve the problem of balancing supply and demand in the long run. That is why anybody who looks at the problem realistically, including the National Farmers Union, goes to some trouble to look at alternative ways in which it would be possible to ensure that the support given by the CAP does not go beyond the requirements and needs of the Community. We cannot afford to go on supporting and financing surpluses which we then have to store at considerable expense. The industry knows that and it is looking for a lead from the Government and a sign that the Government are determined to find a way out of the problem that will provide a future for the communities that depend upon agriculture.

As long as that is not done, the other crucial current objective for the Community — sorting out budgetary discipline and budgetary coherence—cannot be attained. No sort of budgetary discipline can survive the open-ended nature of the financial commitments of the CAP. As long as budgetary discipline cannot be achieved, it will be increasingly difficult to win the necessary support for enlarged activity in other areas of policy in Europe, such as environmental policy, social policy, economic policy, and regional policy.

**Dr. Godman:** When the hon. Gentleman talks about the alternative use of land, I hope he does not mean the frivolous utilisation of such land such as the creation of more golf courses. Surely it is the small farmer who requires the most vigorous of defence measures.

**Mr. Beith:** If anyone seriously imagines that the entire agricultural estate of this country can be covered with golf courses, he over-estimates the golfing capacity even of a nation in which there is a great deal of affection for the sport. There are already 15 golf courses in and around my constituency and there is not much scope for creating more.

The changes that we are talking about, whether achieved by alliance proposals or by the Government's set-aside policy, will involve looking for some alternative uses of land. One would expect to see an increase in the recreational use of agricultural land on the edge of towns. The best recreational use of agricultural land for many people, however, is to see it in agricultural use when they walk through the countryside and enjoy it as one of the most attractive features of life in Britain. For agriculture to cease to be the main activity of the countryside would not only be an economic disaster; it would lead to a considerable loss in its recreational value for many people who enjoy travelling in areas of the countryside, in which farmers are the caretakers who keep the land looking as people have grown accustomed to seeing it.

I want to deal with regional policy. The Government, by their decisions on development area status, control the availability of European regional funds, even under the existing regional fund provision of the European Community. They have done that so rigidly that they have brought about a situation in which areas which staff in Brussels know deserve support cannot obtain it. They have drawn a map of assisted areas which is increasingly out of

*[Mr. Beith]*

touch, even in the two or three years since it was last revised, with the real unemployment problems of the country. For example, the Alnwick and Amble travel-to-work area in my constituency, where male unemployment is 22 per cent., even before the impact is felt of the recent closure of Whittle colliery, is denied assistance from the European regional fund because of the map that the British Government have drawn. I ask the Government to look at whether they can expand, within the rural development areas, the physical area to which European regional development assistance is available because the population involved in those areas is small.

I usually speak on foreign affairs, and one of the areas in which I would expect to see some benefit from the British presidency is foreign policy. The British presidency coincided with an issue of foreign policy which is of major concern to Britain as well as to many other member countries—that of South Africa. The Foreign Secretary found himself the emissary of the European Community after the Hague summit and the agreement to consider a range of sanctions. He was sent on a mission that was bound to fail. We wished him well, although we were in no doubt that it would prove to be abortive, because any useful contact that he could make, or persuasion that he could apply to those in South Africa was better than nothing. I am sure that he used his natural charm and abilities to the full as he went on that ill-fated tour, but there was no indication at the start of the tour, during or after it, that it would lead to any change in the circumstances in South Africa, which have got infinitely worse since then.

The Foreign Secretary went to South Africa against the background of the Prime Minister having already dismissed the sanctions package that had been put together by Commonwealth leaders. That package was put together in the face of great difficulties posed by the British Government, and even when it was agreed it was devalued by our Prime Minister. Therefore, it was much more difficult for the Foreign Secretary, speaking on behalf of the European Community, to give South Africa the impression that he was speaking with the sort of authority which, if it was not respected, would lead to the imposition of measures seriously challenging the regime's ability to carry on in its present way.

Nobody, I hope, has any illusion about the possibility that large-scale sanctions could bring the South African Government to their knees or overturn the system of apartheid. However, sanctions are an essential part of demonstrating our willingness to make sacrifices because of the extent of our opposition to apartheid, and they are a vital part of the process by which change will eventually come about. That was made clear by the Eminent Persons Group and the Foreign Secretary was aware of it. His ability to carry that forward into concerted policy was undermined by what had already happened at the Commonwealth Ministers' meetings. At the end of the day, we know that the European package of sanctions lacked that essential element—the ban on coal imports that was part of the original proposals.

It is perhaps on the issue of terrorism that the need for European co-operation is the most urgent. One is bound to express disappointment at the fact that member countries are still going off in different directions, often impelled by the most urgent humanitarian considerations. One thinks, for example, of the position of the French and the Germans because of the holding of hostages from both these countries. When the EEC Foreign Ministers agreed to act against people engaged in international terrorism they combined that agreement with a declaration that increased military tension was dangerous and ought to be avoided. The Foreign Secretary was a party to that agreement and was present at the meeting, but within three days of the meeting the Government gave consent to the United States to use British airbases for the strike against Libya. What kind of concerted European policy was that, within three days to do precisely what the Ministers had agreed would increase international tension?

Hon. Members have mentioned the important contribution that the Community can make to the middle east. An international conference is highly desirable and the Foreign Secretary said that when he met Mr. Peres in London. It is clearly important for the EEC to play a positive role in such discussions. I hope EEC Ministers also recognise that the Soviet Union must be brought into those discussions so that it can bring some influence to bear on some of the other actors involved in this increasingly desperate situation.

The White Paper mentions EEC support for the Contadora Group, the efforts of which have recently been revived, so far without much promise or success. There is to be a meeting of EEC Foreign Ministers and central American Foreign Ministers in Guatemala on 10 February. It is important to continue to keep a European dimension on this issue and for Europe to make it quite clear to the United States that its continued support for the Contras in Nicaragua does not enjoy the backing of an European country, and ought not to enjoy the backing of the Community, just as it does not enjoy the backing of large parts of Congress or of the American people. It ought to be part of a mature relationship with our allies, the United States, that we are prepared to tell them when we think the President is mistaken.

In the matter of foreign affairs, it would be wrong not to mention the Philippines. The EEC has made declarations of support for democratic government there. There is considerable European industrial involvement in the Philippines by companies such as Unilever, Shell, Hoechst, Bayer, and Telefunken. Many people there who seek to sustain democracy want to see a broader international base of support than is provided by the Philippines' present close relationship with the United States of America. Europe must be seen there as one of the supporters of the frail democracy which, thankfully, has survived the assaults of the last few days.

I said earlier that I welcomed the amendment tabled by a number of hon. Members, including the hon. Member for Clwyd, North-West. The amendment contains comments about Sir Henry Plumb, who made it quite clear when he gained the support on the last round of the ballot of the European Liberal and Democratic Group in the European Parliament, that he believes that the United Kingdom should become a full member of the EMS, that the power of the Parliament democratically to control the Community's policies should be increased, that he will press for greater use of majority voting in the Council of Ministers, and that he supports proportional representation in European elections in all member states. I wish him every success in the pursuit of those aims. I know that they are shared by a distinguished but small minority of

Conservative Members, some of whom have their names to the amendment. I wish Sir Henry success during his period of office.

The European Parliament is soon to debate a uniform electoral system, and it is about time that the Government stopped using their power to defraud the British public and, indeed, all the people in the Community out of fair representation. No other country in the Community attempts to distort representation in this way. Even this Government do not attempt to do it in one part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland, but continue to deny England, Scotland and Wales fair representation in the European Parliament. When speaking on behalf of the Conservative party in opposition, the present Home Secretary said that only the first European election should take place on the system that we now use, and that from then on a common system would have to be used. Now he is the Home Secretary and is responsible for electoral law and he ought to ensure that the system used at the next European election is fair.

The failings and weaknesses in the institutions of the Community cannot be reformed and put right without a real commitment to the success of the Community. We will not get that commitment from the Labour party, which rather mutedly in this House, but much more clearly at Strasbourg, displays that deep hostility to the Community that is part of the siege mentality of post-war Socialism. That hostility is heard again and again from Labour party representatives at Strasbourg and if they were brought back more fully into the precincts of Westminster, as one hon. Member asked earlier, we would hear that anti-European voice even more stridently.

The Government give us a mixed picture. Clearly, there is a willingness to remain in the European Community, but there is a reluctance to accept the implications of that, and that goes along with the Prime Minister's well-known habit of lecturing all foreigners as if they were of some inferior social status to her own. It amounts to a failure to recognise that we cannot make democracy work in Europe unless we are prepared to make some sacrifice in sovereignty. Unless there is willingness to surrender some sovereignty, there can be no strengthening of the Parliament and no real budgetary accountability. We must believe in Europe if we are to make European institutions effective.

5.56 pm

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** (Southend, East): We are grateful to the Minister for turning up despite a bad cold and showing once again her essential effervescence and optimism. I suggest that perhaps the Government are making an error in being quite so optimistic and looking for a bright side that does not exist. All hon. Members will welcome enormously the agreement between Europe and the United States of America, but perhaps it might be unrealistic for us to suggest that this was achieved by a combination of Europe being firm and of Sir Henry Plumb threatening the equivalent of war.

As I understand it, the United States, justifiably, said that the action taken following Spain's accession was such that it was entitled to cash compensation under the GATT rules. The United States felt strongly about that and said that it was entitled to compensation either by a concession in kind or by cash. I understand that negotiations took place, but that no progress was made, and that the Americans threatened to do to gin the equivalent of what the Japanese do to Scotch whisky—for reasons other than temperance. Of course, we said that if they carried on like that we would do something nasty. Understandably and correctly, we have accepted our responsibilities under GATT. I welcome this, but I hope that the Minister will give a further explanation of the details of the agreement.

Looking back over the six months of the European presidency one sees that there are no grounds for excitement, or for the optimism which my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) exhibits. We talk, as did the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), about progress in foreign affairs. It is splendid that the member states of the Common Market can meet and express collective views on what they think might happen in south America, Nicaragua, South Africa or the middle east, but when it comes to the hard crunch issues, where is the huge benefit of this speaking with one voice and Britain not being alone?

The only recent example that I can think of was in the United Nations when Britain was condemned in a vicious and spiteful motion attacking this country and calling upon us to do things about the Falkland Islands which we thought were against our national interests and an insult to those who lost their lives in the war. Where was that popular united front when it came to the vote? We got support from countries such as Oman, Belize and Sri Lanka but not a single vote of support from any member state of the European Community. Indeed, some of them voted against us.

I suggest to the Minister that we should bear this in mind and not claim that there has been a dramatic and fundamental change in the attitude of different member states about speaking with one voice and acting in one way.

We have not heard a word about trade. I wish that the Minister had been here yesterday to hear the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry understandably express his serious concern about the appalling gap in the balance of manufactured trade. That is more than 100 per cent. a Common Market problem. There is now a gap in our trade in manufactured goods of more than £10 billion with the Common Market and a substantial surplus with the rest of the world. Before membership, we always had a profit. This is a matter of serious concern and the problem appears to be getting worse.

In such circumstances, I suggest that there are insufficient grounds for optimism. I want to concentrate on the budget and the EEC. However, before I discuss those points, I want to consider sovereignty. The Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry has said that he is very worried about our trade balance, the state of which is a serious threat to jobs and employment in Britain. He explained that the causes of the present state of the balance of trade are not Government policy, either Labour or Conservative. The causes are an aggregation of consumer choice. As other Ministers have suggested, he said that we should consider what we are buying and where the product is made in our purchasing decisions.

However, we shall not be able to do that from next year, not because the Government want to change the rules but because the Commission—a wholly non-elected body—sent a letter to the Government saying that our law on origin marking, whereby goods must display the country of manufacture, is illegal in European terms. If I wanted to buy a clock at the moment, it might have a label saying "Made in Taiwan", "Made in Japan", "Made in

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Germany", "Made in Italy" or "Made in Britain". The country of origin must be displayed. At the moment, as the Minister is aware, the Consumer Protection Bill is in another place. That will remove the legal responsibility for labelling the country of origin. That means that other countries will not have to display the country of origin. Unless a British manufacturer decides to put "Made in Britain" on his goods, consumers will not have the slightest idea where goods originate.

My point is not simply that I regard that as a bad thing —although I do, because the Government rightly said in the Trade Descriptions Act 1968 that consumers were entitled to know the country of origin as that adds to consumer knowledge. I am upset at the fact that the Government did not want to make the change. The Government have put it on the record in *Hansard* that they regretted the move, but were forced to make the change because of the letter from the European Commission and because Government lawyers advised that they would not win a case in the European Court. That is only one example of the consequences of the treaty and the Single European Act which have caused a substantial erosion of our sovereignty. I do not think that the Government have much to be proud of.

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford): Would my hon. Friend bear in mind that there are procedures, if what he says is correct, for ensuring that if there are doubts about matters of European law, these can be resolved by what is effectively an action for a declaration in the European Court?

**Mr. Taylor:** I accept that point and I am grateful to my hon. Friend, who probably knows more about European law than anyone else in the Chamber. However, as my hon. Friend knows, the Government consulted their lawyers and barristers and were told that they did not have a hope of winning the case. There was no point in them taking the matter to the court. The Government have had to bring in a law against their judgment, and against the wishes and the interests of the British nation, which is wholly contrary to the Consumer Protection Bill for which my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash) and I voted.

**Mr. Dykes:** Is my hon. Friend not misleading the House —and I ask this because I might be incorrect—because he is referring to a Commission letter which reflects a decision of the European Court? I believe that it was a court decision and not a Commission decision.

**Mr. Taylor:** That is not the information that I received in a written answer. Perhaps we can discuss this later. I can assure my hon. Friend that I received that information from a Minister. I was told that a letter was sent. I am glad to see my hon. Friend the Minister of State nodding in agreement, showing that she believes that my hon. Friend is wrong. A letter was sent according to the written answer.

The essential point is that the Government do not want to repeal the Trade Descriptions Act 1968. The Government believe that it would be damaging to abandon the Trade Descriptions Act. However, they must do that because of an instruction from the Commission or the decision from the European Court. It certainly has nothing to do with this country. This is another example of a loss of sovereignty and there are much such examples.

Within the next six months, we shall receive the decision of the European Court as to whether we should levy VAT on new house building in Britain. Here again, the decision is not taken by the 650 Members of Parliament in this House. Even if we all thought that it would be catastrophic for the building industry to impose VAT on new house building, even if we thought that that would be a scandalous undermining of the living standards of young couples trying to buy their own houses, there is nothing that we can do about it if the European Court takes the decision. The same applies to VAT on gas, electricity, protective clothing and protective footwear. As the White Paper sadly does not mention, this loss of sovereignty has been happening and the people of Britain are just beginning to wake up to the facts after the passing of the Single European Act.

For many of us the crucial factor, and the most dangerous issue at the moment in the European Community, is the apparent abandoning of the drive to control the European Community budget. When my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes) and I first took an interest in European affairs, we were comforted—perhaps he was not comforted to the same extent as I—by the fact that there was a legal limit on Common Market spending. There was an amount beyond which the Community could not spend or budget for and that was clearly and precisely laid down. This was different from the position with countries which could spend as much as they wanted. That was a safeguard and we were told that there was a limit on what could be spent. However, we know that the legal budget is dead. We all know that this year the Common Market will spend at least £3 billion more than it is legally entitled to spend. I am worried that during the six months that we are discussing, for a number of reasons that I will elucidate, we have virtually abandoned the battle for budgetary restraint.

At the moment, the Belgians have the presidency. As a result of the chronic crisis in the Community budget, we understood that there was to be an emergency meeting of the Council in March. However, we now learn that there will be informal discussions, with the possibility of a meeting in June. Britain has traditionally been the one country—because we still have a veto—to stand for firm budgetary control. Sadly, however, the way that events have progressed makes me doubt whether Britain still has a financial interest in budgetary control.

I want to illustrate that point by considering the issue about which the Minister of State has kindly written to me and referred to today. When we agreed at Fontainebleau to an increase in the VAT contribution to 1·4 per cent., most of us thought that we did not need to worry about a future rebate. We thought that that would not be a weapon to be used against Britain because that could be deducted at source. In other words, that was no longer an issue. However, like all Common Market agreements, we find that it was not quite so simple as it seemed at the time. We make a partial direct deduction of our rebate and then have to get the other part direct from Brussels, not as a direct deduction but paid as a sum. Sadly, in respect of the year 1986, there has been only a partial payment of our rebate of 1,633 mecu to date. In a letter to me on 26 January, the Minister of State said that that is:

"already acknowledged to be a substantial underestimate of our true entitlement."

In other words, the sum that we have deducted is a substantial underestimate. A lot more money should be paid in 1987 in respect of our 1986 abatement.

The problem is that the Common Market has no money. Not only has it no money, it will spend a lot more than is legally available to it. It will not be possible for us to receive the partial rebate in 1987 unless the EEC spends a lot more money. The Minister has said today that we may receive the money in the 1988 budget, although the 1987 budget has not yet been agreed.

Sadly, our previous insistence on and interest in budgetary restraint is not in our national interest. Once again, the Community can hold us to ransom and state that we will not get the corrected rebate unless the Community receives more cash. There is another reason why that is not in our national interest, especially as we are approaching the election. If we were to insist that the Common Market adhered to its legal budget, it would not be able to pay for the costs of intervention and the various sums paid to agriculture. That would not be particularly popular at the moment. I believe that budgetary discipline is important with regard to public spending. Every Conservative believes that passionately and we believe at home that budgetary control is important. It is more important because the budgetary limit has always been Britain's lever to achieve reform.

We have always said that, if the Community thinks that it will go bust, it had better do something about the common agricultural policy. I have gained the unfortunate impression, however, that we no longer have a national interest in budgetary restraint and that nobody in the Community or the Council is adopting anything other than an attitude of dull resignation, believing that there is nothing that can stop legal budget limits being greatly exceeded.

**Mr. Dorrell:** Does my hon. Friend understand that there is an inconsistency in his case? A few moments ago he criticised the Single European Act and several of the decisions that have been handed down by the European Court of Justice on the grounds that they were supranational decisions and that an immediate national priority was being submerged in a common European interest. He is now describing the budgetary chaos, which we all recognise exists. Is he aware that it is precisely because of the weakness of the supranational agency, which he criticises, that it is impossible to put some order into the Community's budget?

**Mr. Taylor:** I am saying the very opposite. I believe that not one member state is prepared to argue that the budgetary limits that have been agreed for 1987 should be kept. Each one will stand idly by while we exceed it by at least £3 billion.

**Mr. Brooke:** Contrary to what my hon. Friend said a moment ago, our entitlement to abatement remains absolute, although I agree that there are some considerations about when it arrives. Assuming that the abatement is incorporated in the main budget for 1988, as I said earlier this afternoon, it will be deducted at source just as it is now. I have now participated in five Budget Councils in connection with the 1987 European budget and there has consistently been a qualified majority in favour of maintaining budget discipline.

**Mr. Taylor:** I hope that my hon. Friend is not trying to mislead himself. Nobody is suggesting that the Common Market is doing anything other than passing a legal budget. We all know, however, that irrespective of the fact that it will have a legal budget which is restricted by the 1·4 per cent. VAT ceiling, it will spend at least £3 billion more. Does my hon. Friend believe that the Common Market will spend a legal budget in 1987? He must know that it will not. It will greatly exceed it. There is not much point in his sitting around saying that the budget for this year will be 20, 30 or 40 mecu, as he knows that it will be greatly exceeded.

As for the corrective rebate, the Minister has said that the 1,633 mecu included in successive drafts of the 1987 budget is already acknowledged to be a substantial underestimate. I hope that he accepts that, under Fontainebleau, we are entitled to receive that rebate in 1987—but we will not get it. He is now saying that we might get it, or that he expects us to get it in 1988.

**Mr. Brooke:** I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way again. At the moment, we do not have a European Community budget for 1987. We are working on provisional twelfths, as the Commission is not entitled to spend on behalf of the Community more than is allowed under the provisional twelfths regime. The same will apply after we have a Community budget for 1987. The Commission cannot spend money that it has not been authorised to spend.

**Mr. Deakins:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of State has given us two lengthy but much-needed interventions, would it not help the House if he replied to the debate on behalf of the Government?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is not a matter for me.

**Mr. Taylor:** The Minister has been extremely helpful and explained a great deal. He has said that the Common Market cannot spend more than its budget entitlement. May I suggest that the Government have connived in the exceeding of those limits in several ways? We all know one example of that.

Hon. Members will recall that, just before Christmas, we heard a statement from my right hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in which he proclaimed the merits of the agreement on milk quotas. He said that it was wonderful that, for the first time since we had joined the Common Market, we had reduced CAP expenditure. In a letter that was sent to all Conservative Members, which we were all glad to get, he said:

> "The package as a whole involved saving in the Community Budget in 1987 of nearly 1 billion ecu (£750 million), and makes a valuable contribution in the major task facing the Community of containing 1987 expenditure . . . The package represents by far the most significant reform of the CAP since our accession in 1973."

We expect Agriculture Ministers to say things like that because it is a competitive industry, but I was astonished to hear the Minister of State use virtually those words this afternoon because he, if anybody, knows what the score is.

The real score was set out in a written answer which we have had to dig out. It showed how the £750 million saving was made. I hope that the Minister will say something about it. We have all seen it in the banner headlines and received letters saying that £750 million has been saved. How? By transferring £800 million to national expenditure for butter dumping. In other words, it is a cheat. There is technically a saving in CAP expenditure, but we are saving

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by switching responsibility for butter dumping to member states. I am sure that the Minister of State, Treasury will say, "Do not worry. They still have responsibility for paying and they will give us an IOU which is repayable in 1989 or thereafter." He and the Government know that we are simply kidding ourselves. We have adopted a device to pretend that agriculture spending has been cut when in fact it has been increased by transferring spending from the Community to member states. My right hon. Friend the Minister gave that written answer on 12 January.

This is not the only device that we have used to find a means of increasing Common Market spending by not increasing the budget. The Minister of State knows that a court decision went against us in December. As a result, the Community can now have a direct debit facility on the United Kingdom Treasury for advance payments that it asks for, and it is not necessary to come to the House for approval. That was a case which the Government fought and lost. The contributions are to come from our Consolidated Fund.

We had a decision last year to transfer 25 per cent. of the storage costs, which are substantial, from the Community to member states. We had the co-responsibility levy, which meant that £400 million which was formerly carried in the budget is now the responsibility of cereal farmers. A series of devices have been used to increase total expenditure by what I can only describe as accountancy stretching which would make Derek Hatton blush.

We know that the budget will be overspent or that the Community will be bust. Almost every month, various devices are used to transfer spending from the Community to member states. Looking on the brighter side, I suggest that the Government are kidding themselves. We know that the 1·4 per cent. VAT ceiling, which was meant to last several years, has now been used up. We know, too, that world food prices are collapsing. We know that dumping is on a larger scale than ever before and that production is soaring.

I suggest that we have to accept that we shall not reform the CAP. It is not possible for member states to find a reform because the only way in which to reform it effectively is to put a heck of a lot of farmers out of business. The only way to resolve too much production leading to huge surpluses, and to match production with needs would be bankrupt many farmers and put them out of business—unless, of course, they are to be paid for doing nothing. The Community will never make such a decision because one country will always be having an election, and there is no way in which such a package will not discriminate against one member.

We should realise the responsibility and potential of our farmers. For the sake of our agriculture and the Community, and in the interests of the farmers, why do the Government not aim to repatriate agriculture from the Community to member states? Some people may say that that would wreck the Common Market, but it would do nothing of the sort. It would take away from the Common Market the nightmare that knocks its finances for six and gives it a bad name.

Member states would be far more effective in resolving the problem of surplus than is the Community, even when it works together. In considering the great triumph—as it has been called—of the epic agreement on milk quotas, we should realise that, like last time, we are paying a heck of a lot of money to farmers to agree not to produce milk, although the total production will still be in excess of our needs. Those farmers could quite readily transfer their land to the production of other foodstuffs which are already in structural surplus. Like other agreements, it will not solve the problems, but will simply cost more money and transfer the problem from one side to another.

The Common Market needs two things. First, it needs a country that has the guts to say that it will not grant any more resources until the problems are resolved. As this is one of the few subjects on which we still have unanimity, I hope that it will be us. I hope that when the supplementary budget allocation comes, as sadly it will, the British Government will have the guts to say no, because that is the only way to achieve reform. Secondly, we should concentrate on ensuring that, in the interests of British farming and the Common Market, our policy takes agriculture away from the Community and allows it to concentrate on the other matters which could, and would, be more helpful.

We should not try to kid ourselves that there is progress where it does not exist. The Government should stop saying that silly agreements are solving problems when they are not. We should be realistic and accept that, although there is a crisis, there is a way out. For the sake of Europe, we need the courage not to allocate any more resources.

6.22 pm

**Mr. Jack Thompson** (Wansbeck): I shall concentrate on those EC matters in the report that are relevant to the northern region, which is my part of the country. Like several hon. Members who have already spoken, I note that the document covers the period from January to June 1986. It was printed and presented in October 1986, but it is now being debated in January 1987. Like others, I believe that there should have been an opportunity to discuss those issues long before now.

Northerners are not noted for their sympathy towards many aspects of the European Community. When the United Kingdom decided to join the EC, there was considerable concern in the north about the costs and benefits which could result from our membership. That concern has been proved well founded as regards regional aid. However, total responsibility for the limited evidence of response to regional needs does not rest entirely with the EC.

On 8 December 1986 the Prime Minister, in her statement to the House at the end of the United Kingdom's presidency of the European Council, said:

> "It has been a priority of the British presidency to make the Community work better for the benefit of individual citizens. This was a practical and successful Council, relevant to jobs, to our future prosperity within the Community and to the future safety of our citizens."—[*Official Report*, 8 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 22.]

Those of us from the northern region, who reflect upon the problems besetting us, regard that comment with some cynicism. That is because there is evidence in the document, although it is six or seven months out of date, to suggest that the committed budget for the regional development fund in 1986 was £1,879 million. Of that, £1,823 million was in the main allocation and £56 million was for the non-quota measures. It is incredible that less than one third of the main allocation has been taken up in the half year. I assume that it has now been taken up, but we cannot be certain. However, £593 million was taken up, of which the north received £21 million. I am taking these figures from the document because it is the only evidence that we have. That represented 3·54 per cent. In the non-quota section, we should receive £7·5 million over a five-year period to compensate for, among other things, the decline in the steel industry. That is a miserly average of £1·5 million per year. If that is the situation that the United Kingdom faces, what about the northern region?

The north of England has the highest level of unemployment in the United Kingdom, apart from Northern Ireland. More than 83,000 young people under the age of 25 are genuinely out of work, of whom one third have been out of work for more than a year. Although the Paymaster General announced new measures yesterday, I am concerned because young people do not see those measures as real jobs, no matter how well-intentioned the measures may be.

The regional average for unemployment in the north is nearly 17 per cent. In south Tyneside it is 27·5 per cent., in Hartlepool 23·3 per cent., in Middlesbrough 21·8 per cent., and in Sunderland it is 20·8 per cent. The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) said that the average in his constituency was 22 per cent. In my constituency, which covers Warton and Ashington, it is 18·3 per cent. Unemployment is the nub of the problem, yet, to help alleviate it, we received a derisory 7·6 per cent. of the total United Kingdom allocation.

A year or two ago, as a member of my local authority, I was a member of a delegation from the Association of County Councils from the north of England that made a representation to the Government on behalf of the region. We were advised by the then Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, now the Minister of State, Department of Trade and Industry, who has been mentioned earlier today, to go back to the north because there would be no new initiatives to combat our problems. He said that we should pull ourselves up by our boot straps. That Victorian expression is as out of date as the Government's policies for the regions. The fact that the delegation represented the entire region was completely ignored.

Since then there has been a further development in the formation of the Northern Regional Councils Association and the Northern Development Company. That represents important progress towards a regional dimension. It is vital that the Government recognise that progress and show some evidence of support for those new initiatives.

Although efforts have been made to attract EC support by direct approaches to Brussels — I have been a member of one of those delegations—the Department of the Environment seems to have a policy of blocking applications. For example, my region made an application under article 15 in respect of many areas that are hard hit by job losses. There are several such areas. Blyth, for example, has suffered the closure of Bates' colliery, and significant help is needed to overcome that problem alone. Along with many other projects, there has not been any response, except for some moneys that have gone to Sheldon. Only this afternoon I have found that there is still no response from the Department of the Environment on those applications. This year, sympathy has been shown in Brussels towards the regions, but sympathy has not been shown by the Department of the Environment.

**Mr. Eric Forth (Mid-Worcestershire):** Does the hon. Gentleman agree that since the entry of Spain and Portugal to the Community—which he and the Labour party supported wholeheartedly—it has been inevitable that there should be a movement of Community regional support away from his part of the country—the United Kingdom is one of the wealthier countries in the Community—and towards the less prosperous parts of the Community, especially Spain and Portugal, the Mezzogiorno in Italy, and Greece. Does the hon. Gentleman, in his Socialist heart, agree that we should ensure that Community resources are allocated to the poorer members of the Community and that, therefore, his own region, however hard hit, should give way, in the greater scheme of things which the Labour party has supported, both in terms of regional policy and of the enlarged Community?

**Mr. Thompson:** I assure the hon. Gentleman that I have a Socialist heart, and it reflects many of the things that he has said. We have to identify the position within the European Community as a whole, including countries which are as wealthy and substantial as we are, and within the United Kingdom.

Since 1979, more than 170,000 jobs have been lost in the northern region, mainly in mining-associated industries, heavy engineering, construction, distribution, hotels and catering. There is a question mark over further jobs in those sectors. N.E.I. Parsons is facing the prospect of reducing its manpower by another 800, and possibly losing all the skills that it has unless we get some orders for power stations. The northern region is putting pressure on the Government to make a decision about a couple of coal-fired power stations, but not with a great deal of success.

The northern region has a large, highly skilled work force, many of whose members are out of work. They have the talents, but their time is being wasted. They are standing in dole queues. There is a keen interest in learning new skills. I have just noticed in my local regional newspaper a typical example of the northern attitude to life. At the age of 82, Mr. George Bow, from Durham, has just achieved a Bachelor of Arts degree through the Open university. That is an astonishing example of the characteristics of the people in that region. He is not the only one of that age who has made such an achievement.

The Open university recently told me that it is keen to put on courses for people who have particular skills that are no longer required in shipbuilding, heavy engineering and mining, so that they can retrain and move further in the education system. However, the finances are not there, and the funding of the Open university has been cut.

I remind the House that, historically, the region has contributed considerably to the wealth of this country—for example, in the development of the electricity generation industry. Since the establishment of power stations, they have principally been fuelled by coal. They were designed and built by many of the electrical, mechanical and civil engineers from the north, and they provided the base for the massive expansion of employment opportunities in other parts of the country, in particular the south-east. That expansion depends on energy, as it has done for many years and will continue to do. We have made a great contribution to the economy.

There is a significant difference between the attitude of the EEC and that of the Government towards regional policies. Although I have claimed that not sufficient EC

*[Mr. Thompson]*

funding has been channelled into the north, I accept one thing—that at least the EC has some form of regional policy which, with all its limitations, identifies regions within the Community which, because of the changing pattern of national economies, warrant preferential treatment. There is no doubt about the sincerity of the EC towards the peripheral regions. What is in doubt is the Government's commitment to the regions.

6.33 pm

**Mr. Roger King** (Birmingham, Northfield): I was relieved to hear, at the beginning of the speech of the Minister, that an agreement has been reached between the EEC and America over the trading difficulties that have occurred over the past few months. There is always the danger that, once one commences on the slippery slope of a trade war in any shape or form, there is no knowing when one can get off that slope. We in the west midlands were concerned lest the development of a trade war included aspects of the car industry, on which many of our hopes and aspirations are concentrated, with products that are due to enter, or are already selling well in, the United States market.

It is funny that so many European countries and organisations, and not a few in our country, tend to pour out anti-American sentiments but the moment that there is the whiff of a trade war, hands go up in horror, and it is the end of civilisation as we know it. We should put on record our grateful thanks to the United States for maintaining as much as it can an open policy for European exports into her market place, bearing in mind that she is very much the engine of the western industrial world.

**Mr. John Mark Taylor** (Solihull): Is there not a justified appreciation in this country for the defensive shield that the Americans provide in Europe?

**Mr. King:** Yes, Europe owes the United States a great deal and I am grateful, as I am sure that all of us are, that we have arrived at an agreement, which we hope will stand the test of time, and that we can continue to trade with the United States on as fair and equitable a basis as possible.

My criticism of the six-monthly report tends to centre, as it so often does, on the problems of the food mountain and the agriculture policy. I am not one who can go into great detail over various economic aspects of it, but my constituents are at a loss to understand why we constantly generate vast surplus stocks of butter, beef, wine and so on. They are always astounded to learn that we sell large quantities of these surpluses to the Russians. I believe that, as we speak, a deal is going through to sell large quantities of butter, on which some people have put the price to the Community at £250 million. That is a £250 million gift to the Russians, which obviously they will be able to spend in other ways that are probably not at all beneficial to the western Alliance.

Latterly, some steps have been made in tackling this problem. It has not occurred during the first six months of the report, but in the last few weeks, steps have been taken to try to distribute some of these surplus stocks to the various member nations. These concessions will be available through various relief agencies. We all look forward to that happening. However, surely it is not inconceivable that we can arrive at a more permanent answer as to how to tackle the growing problem of surpluses. Is it not possible to develop a system whereby these cut-price European gifts are available to certain members of our community who are not normally able to purchase butter, beef and wine?

In my constituency, many pensioners and those on low incomes have not had the benefit of a joint of beef for many years. Could we not create supermarket Euro-zones where such produce is available at reduced prices for those who qualify for it? After all, those on supplementary benefit or who are unemployed, and have a family, are entitled to milk tokens. It would not be out of the realms of reality to have a system of beef tokens, butter tokens and even wine tokens, which would be a step in the right direction.

**Mr. Forth:** I am interested in the line that my hon. Friend is pursuing. Is he aware that, ever since the CAP was set up, those who support it have argued against what he is suggesting, because they say that the policy of having a minimum price, which is the basis of the CAP, cannot allow a policy of lower prices or give-away goods because it would create a second market with the possibility of black markets, which would destroy the concept of the CAP? Therefore, does my hon. Friend share my puzzlement at the Government's acceptance of a recent scheme that appears to introduce the very element that he is suggesting and might, in the medium to long run, destroy the basis of the CAP?

**Mr. King:** I prefer to think that the Government have seen the light, because the section of our community that is likely to be able to purchase these products at reduced prices is made up of those people who have not purchased butter, beef and wine in the past. I see no difficulty in offering those people the opportunity of buying that sort of food and drink at reduced prices, because it would not necessarily affect the ordinary market which the vast majority of the population uses to buy those products. It is a reasonable way of having a two-tier price system, and I do not think that it would affect the overall market for the products sold at normal retail prices if these goods were sold at a discount in so-called supermarket Euro-zones. We should look closely at the experiment that will take place and find out how successful or otherwise it is.

I am disappointed in the world of aviation, because little progress has been made to reduce air fares throughout Europe and to open up the skies of Europe. The report suggests that by 1992—a dim and distant date in the future—some progress will have had to be made and some policies introduced. I wonder whether the report gives a date in the distant future as a way of shelving the problem in the face of great difficulties being put forward by some member nations. I am grateful to note from my hon. Friend's opening speech that the number of states that are prepared to introduce an open-skies, competitive aviation policy is growing year by year. One looks forward to that growing ever further.

One of the obstacles to progress is the concept of a national state airline, which so many countries throughout the world consider to be a macho point. A country must have its own national airline. That is probably a stumbling block, especially where the national airlines are subsidised by member states in various ways. If we had free and true competition by privatised airlines and those state airlines that are competitive, other national airlines might be in difficulty and end up going out of business. Europe looks closely at what has happened to the United States' open-skies policy. Some member states can be forgiven for thinking that that is not a solution that they would like for Europe.

If the European Community is to mean anything at all it should be an open community, market and business area. We should work to reduce and eliminate national organisations such as airlines, which are sheltered from the full blast of competition.

I notice that there are problems with various aspects of the trade that we enjoy with member states, but looking closely at the chart at the back of the report, there are grounds for optimism, certainly with regard to our manufacturing industry. It is fashionable for many hon. Members to suggest that our manufacturing industry is on the way out, but the figures show something different. Between January and June 1985 and January and June 1986, taking those two dates for comparison, there has been growth in our exports—small and modest though it may be—from £10·9 billion to £11·3 billion. That is not as big a growth as we would like, but the reasons for that will have to be looked at. The reduction in the price of oil — which has shown a downturn in the corresponding period—has affected our balance of trade with Europe. Imports have gone up correspondingly.

However, there are grounds for optimism, because as the months have passed and our currency has become competitive—compared with Germany and one or two other member states — the market for our goods has grown. There has been substantial growth for the car industry in the European market. In Germany, exports of Austin Rover cars have increased 90 per cent. in the past 12 months. In Spain — despite the problems of the import tariff restrictions — the number of cars entering on the full tariff is about 4,000 to 5,000 above the normal, acceptable levels that we are allowed at the reduced rate.

Given the present trend, there is no reason why growth in Germany should not be another 90 per cent. this year. We shall then begin to experience the real volumes of car sales that we need in Europe.

The picture is not confined to our own indigenous car manufacturer. Ford, Vauxall and Peugeot-Talbot are exporting finished cars back into the European market because of the competitiveness of the product. Component manufacturers also have an unparalleled opportunity to supply to companies that produce cars in Britain, and, indeed, to supply to the continental assembly plants the thousand and one components that are used to make a motor vehicle. That shows the substantial opportunities that we have over the next six months or so to make inroads into our balance of payment deficit with the European Community. One would expect to see the manufacturing figures rise substantially.

European Road Safety Year started in 1986, and the report touches on the first six months. Having had the benefit of 12 months of European road safety, I am not sure how many suggestions or how much road safety legislation have been put forward—not a great deal, I suspect.

I hoped that some coach safety legislation would be drawn up—for example, a European standard of coach construction as a response to the many accidents that have occurred throughout the European highway system, where coaches have been involved in accidents and have been badly affected structurally. We have waited in vain, and presumably negotiations are continuing to arrive at the right sort of legislation, which is acceptable to all and offers improved safety for the user of those vehicles.

All in all, the situation is — as one might say in a school report — "fairly satisfactory, but must keep trying". There are grounds for optimism for the country's manufacturing industry as a result of our currency competitiveness, and many manufacturing concerns realising that at long last their products are extremely competitive in the European market. It has taken longer than we would like, but if one is making the right product at the right quality and right price, and can deliver on time, and if one is prepared to go and sell that product in Europe, the European Community can give the results that our manufacturing industry has been asking for all these years.

6.48 pm

**Mr. Jack Dormand** (Easington): There can be little doubt that the most important issues in this debate were those raised by the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), who made a powerful speech. I am tempted to follow him in his arguments. However, I shall make a short contribution and concentrate on drawing attention to that part of the report dealing with EEC regional policy. My hon. Friend the Member for Wansbeck (Mr. Thompson) has spoken for the northern region, but perhaps I can go a little wider than that. However, I shall certainly refer to my area.

Many people's expectations of EEC help for their region have simply not been realised. That does not surprise those of us who still feel that our membership of the Community has little to offer the United Kingdom. However, we are a member and we do what we can to improve it.

The EEC requires its member countries to submit reports on their regional policies. I remind the House that it was fortuitous that we learned about the British Government's submissions. It was the assiduity of my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) which revealed the content of no fewer than 17 volumes of the Government's report entitled "UK Regional Development Programme 1986-90". In particular, my hon. Friend drew attention to its frightening annex called "UK Regional Job Deficiency Projections". Among other things, those projections show that in 1990 3·2 million people will be unemployed in the United Kingdom. That contrasts vividly with the Prime Minister's statement yesterday about getting rid of unemployment within two or three years.

The Government's guilt with regard to that report was demonstrated by the Prime Minister who, when questioned about that unpublished report — my hon. Friends will remember this—tried to give the House the impression that the Government's only role was to collate the information for which the Government had asked regional bodies, local authorities, business and trade associations and others, and that the Government had simply put it together for the EEC. That was very misleading. The report is the most devastating commentary yet on the failure of the Government's regional policy. It is little wonder that they tried to conceal it.

Therefore, in a debate of this nature, we are entitled to ask what the EEC and the British Government are doing about such a sorry state of affairs. That report and the

*[Mr. Jack Dormand]*

recently published, much publicised, and, incidentally, long-delayed, 1984 census of employment are the most savage indictment of the Government's incompetence and uncaring attitude towards the worst hit areas of Britain.

Those reports have given rise to the phrase which now dominates the media — the north-south divide. That division has led the Government to try a new tactic in an attempt to fudge the issue. "Ah," they say, "it is not really like that. There are prosperous areas in the north and depressed areas in the south." Are the Government really saying that pockets of so-called prosperity or pockets of depression are the criteria by which to judge large areas of the country? That is what they appear to be saying. Is the Prime Minister saying that my area, the northern region, which has consistently had the highest rate of unemployment outside Northern Ireland, is to be compared with the southern region?

Is that what is to be said when the census to which I have just referred shows that 94 per cent. of total jobs lost since the Government took office in 1979 have been in the north, in Scotland, Wales and the midlands, and when the southern triangle, which, incidentally, has 42 per cent. of Britain's population, has had job losses of only 6 per cent.?

Although the blame for that must lie with the Government, we must ask, in a debate such as this, how EEC rules, regulations and policies can mitigate the worst effects of the Government's incompetence and lack of understanding and compassion. The present position is that the EEC regional moneys have no noticeable effect on the hard hit areas of Britain. The report gives the following figures. The European regional development fund commitment budget for 1986 was £1,879 million. As hon. Members will know, that fund has two sections. Of that, £1,823 million is for allocation to member states in accordance with the quota ranges in the main regulation and £56 million for the specific Community—non-quota —measures.

That sounds an awful lot of money, but by the end of the six-month period that is under debate this evening, the United Kingdom had received £21 million. In my county of Durham alone, which is suffering from the devastation of pit, steelworks and other closures, shipbuilding contraction and bankruptcies, we could use double that amount. I hope—I am glad that we have not seen it so far—that there will not be any cheering or euphoria about the effectiveness of the EEC's regional policy.

**Mr. Forth:** I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman for giving way. Given that regional policy has existed in the United Kingdom for some 50 years and has been pursued by Governments of all parties in an effort to reduce regional disparities, and since we have arrived here in the 1980s, having gone through all that process but still experiencing what he has just described, how can he persuade the House that regional policy, applied throughout that period by all Governments, has failed so miserably?

**Mr. Dormand:** That is the third rather lengthy intervention that the hon. Gentleman has made. I do not deny that the hon. Gentleman has made salient points, but it might be better for him to make his own speech. My specific answer is that we do not yet have a perfect regional affairs policy. However, as my hon. Friend the Member for Wansbeck said, the regional policies of Labour Governments were a darned sight better than anything that has been produced since 1979. If I had more time I could deal with the deplorable consequences of the Government's regional policies since 1979, and I intend to do so in future debates.

What power does the EEC have over the decisions of member countries which are manifestly detrimental to our depressed regions? I hope that the Minister will give me specific answers when she replies. I give two current examples. The Government announced last week that regional development grants will be cut by half next year. That aid will be reduced from £396 million in 1986-87 to £197 million in 1987-88. The north's share of £67 million will be halved at a time when unemployment in the region continues to rise. Many firms depend on regional development grants and have based their investment programmes on the assumption that they will get the allocation promised to them. The Government and Conservative Members are continually calling, and with complete justification, for stability in financial and economic matters, but they are not practising that.

The position is exacerbated by my second example— the Government's decision to delay the payment of regional development grants. The Minister need not accept my view of the problems arising from such erratic policies — she probably would not, anyway. However, this month the CBI said:

> "We know just how disruptive these moratoria can be for firms in the regions. Companies budget for an expansion project having received grant approval, only to find a two-month delay on payments slapped on at the last moment. Cash flows suffer."

What the CBI then says causes me even more concern:

> "More worrying is that businesses might start to turn away from RDGs because they just do not think that the time and effort involved are worth the grant."

Those are the words of the CBI. It is a chilling statement, particularly for areas such as the northern region, where so much employment is literally dependent upon those grants. Of course, there is no guarantee that any shortfall in United Kingdom grants is made up by assistance from the EEC. Indeed, that is not the way the system works.

Another problem of regional policy that disappointingly receives no mention in the report—I must admit, in deference to the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth), that neither Conservative nor Labour Governments have solved the problem—concerns what is usually called the branch plant economy. Those are units of either national or multinational firms placed in the regions. Unfortunately, they have not stood up to the economic recession.

In the 1960s and the 1970s those factories were welcomed and hailed as a success story, but not many of them have survived. My region, more than any other, has suffered from this problem. I believe that such units could be made viable but the financial, industrial and economic structure on which they should be based can only be brought about by a fundamental change of policy. I suggest to the Minister that the problem is worthy of a joint study and investigation by the British Government and the EEC. I hope that the Minister will give serious consideration to that suggestion.

We are forced to conclude from this report that EEC regional policy is largely ineffective. I do not lay the blame for that state of affairs entirely at the door of the Community because it works under considerable constraint with regard to that policy. If we have to be members of the EEC. I hope that the Community will strengthen its regional policies, if only to mitigate the disastrous results of Tory Government's policies, national and regional.

Between 1979 and 1986, job losses in the United Kingdom totalled 1,632,000—representing 7 per cent. of the total work force. In the northern region that loss has been 171,000, representing 14 per cent. of its work force. Those are figures that we have to live with, and they get worse every day.

The Government's deliberate reduction of regional aid in the eight years since they came to power is one of the worst features of their deplorable record. The Government's recent decisions, some of which I have mentioned — indeed, the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) gave another excellent example — show that the Government have no intention of changing course.

There is less than one page on regional policy in the report before us today and that is yet further proof of the fact that we cannot rely on the EEC to bring some hope to our deprived areas. It is a bleak picture and one which will be changed only by the return of a Labour Government at the next general election.

7.3 pm

**Mr. Hugh Dykes** (Harrow, East): I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the debate, but I shall be brief, as I am aware that other hon. Members wish to speak.

Part of tonight's debate has been the usual run-around on some familiar tracks and themes.

**Mr. Eric Forth** (Mid-Worcestershire): This will be no different.

**Mr. Dykes:** I paused for that intervention, and I hope my hon. Friend appreciates that. I am grateful to him for reminding me that we should try to say something different on these occasions. It is rather difficult, because the existentialist question about our membership of the Community arises, and that diverts us from dealing with the practical points of that membership. I believe that the worries about our membership are declining and I get the impression — I again run the risk of amusing my hon. Friends — that Europe is on the move and that the United Kingdom's attitude is more positive.

If politicians give the public the opportunity, they are interested in what is going on in Europe and they have a true interest in developing one of the leitmotivs of the Government — the development of the internal market. That market is not only a mercantile, commercial, industrial and infrastructural body, but it is concerned with politics.

We are witnessing the development — in terms of industry and commerce—of a unitary state. The United Kingdom and other countries will come together because of economic harmonisation and unity and slowly — perhaps too slowly for certain Members of this House and other good Europeans elsewhere — that will have a political effect.

I look forward to the day when someone quite naturally, without any feelings of strangeness or inhibition — indeed, someone who is used to the habits of foreigners — goes to whichever financial institution, in whichever country, offers the best mortgage. It may be for a house or flat in Britain or within the Community. There are myriad examples in the future tapestry. The development of the internal market is the fulcrum of future developments. The Government are enthusiastic about it, but there are other areas where the Government have to enhance their enthusiasm. I refer to the membership of the European monetary system, which has already been mentioned in the debate.

I believe that our amendment is constructive and detailed, and the last line quite rightly refers to Sir Henry Plumb's accession to the presidency of the European Parliament. In a remarkable way, Sir Henry Plumb combines the very Englishness to which my hon. Friend the Member for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer) referred with a striking enthusiasm for Europe. In chemical terms, that must be reassuring to the small and dwindling number of people who may still be uneasy about working, living and operating with foreigners. However, more and more people have become excited about developing and encouraging different aspects of European co-operation, and a number of items have been referred to in the debate.

I believe that air fares are a pressing matter. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister and her colleagues will pull out all the stops—if that is the appropriate phrase—to reach a European system of justifiable, low air fares. One can give a homespun example by comparing the United States air fares with our system of air fares. Indeed, the example was quoted on a recent radio programme on Europe in which I participated. In the United States there is a service distinguished by the colloquial name "the red-eye special". It is a late night flight from New York to Los Angeles. The cost of the fare is cheaper than the fare between London and Nice. That is a disgrace by any objective measurement. I hope that we shall achieve significantly lower air fares when all the elements in that complicated tapestry come together.

The future of the EC depends on many things, but I believe that its progress is inexorable. Many people are now aware of the Community's advantages, be they practical, political or to some extent ideological. I do not believe that that ideological advantage is in any sense similar to the polarised ideological descriptions that are used in Britain.

The Single European Act is brand new, and as such no examples of its work are available, but I believe that it represents the basis for constructive, serious majority voting within the European Community. I am sure that that majority voting will operate more often in the interests of Britain than against. As good democrats, we should accept the notion of majority voting, as it has taken Europe a significant step forward. We should also accept any decisions when we represent the minority, because that is what it is all about. I also hope that the use of the national veto will almost disappear.

One of the items mentioned in the description of the presidency and also in a White Paper refers to the development of European television. There have been complaints from a number of quarters that the proposals would mean an unfair and bureaucratic quota system which would demand a minimum percentage of European programmes being shown on the developing Europewide television nexus. As a good Conservative I abhor any extension of bureaucratic structures, but I believe that some such system will be essential at least in the initial, rather shaky development of European television.

*[Mr. Dykes]*

First, there is the pre-eminence of the English language in the European scenario. That is very attractive for us, so why should we complain about it? It will, however, militate against programmes in other languages having more than a very limited market unless they receive some special assistance in the launching period. Secondly, world television will be swamped not just by world satellite development, including pop channels, but by United States programmes, which are marketed on a much wider basis and often dubbed in the United States. There is thus, sadly, a danger of being consigned an excessive weight of "Dynasty", "Dallas" and other admittedly popular rubbish from the United States and being deprived of the opportunity to see better programmes from Europe. *[Interruption.]* There are, of course, exceptions. There are some very poor quality programmes in Italy, for instance. Nevertheless, the intellectual development of European television with the sharing of knowledge and culture among member states will initially require some special arrangements, although I hope that they will wither away as time goes on.

There are also technical considerations, such as the need to avoid duplication of system, and I hope that when high definition television comes in 1992 or 1993 the essential agreement with the Japanese will be achieved.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** As a democrat as well as a Conservative, does my hon. Friend not appreciate the enormous danger to the freedom and independence of broadcasting organisations if they have to show programmes simply because there is an EEC quota, rather than use their artistic and intellectual judgment? That is why the BBC, the IBA and, happily, the Government utterly oppose such a system. In a democracy the decision should be left to the broadcaster, not to the bureaucrats in Brussels.

**Mr. Dykes:** I can see the attraction of that argument, but not in the initial stages, because expert producers in this country are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about the high quality of programmes being made in other European countries. So long as the quotas remain minority percentages, as they are in the proposed scheme——

**Mr. Taylor:** Sixty per cent.

**Mr. Dykes:** That is the highest percentage that has been enunciated, but lower percentages are proposed in other areas. So long as the quotas remain minority percentages, there will not be total dominance, but programme makers in all countries will be assured of a fair crack of the whip. There will also be programmes made by British, Italian and German programme makers together. Those programmes will have a reasonable chance in the initial stages which they would otherwise not have. I do not think that that modest statement counteracts the democratic impulses that I share with my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor).

With regard to the budget, it is sad that some hon. Members — again, the number is dwindling and I am sure that it will continue to diminish—are still prone to hysteria. I am saddened when they misunderstand these matters. Yet they ignore the vast expenditure, despite monetary discipline of individual member Governments, including the British Government. Those Members are very rarely present when millions, if not billions, of pounds of expenditure go through on the nod, but if the European Community tries to get by with £200 million or £300 million there is a great outcry. They continue to see all manner of sinfulness in the European budgetary system, yet they participate in national budgetary decisions in countries with substantial deficits, such as our own. Italy probably has the largest, although Germany has a large deficit when one includes the Lander. The deficits of member states total about £100 billion compared with the very modest amounts required for the European budget.

Payments and receipts are supposed to be equal in the European system, although the system is out of line at the moment. I believe that the problems can be fairly easily resolved by correct procedures in the Budget Council and throughout the Community, but not by the hysterical view that they represent some terrible catastrophe. I wish to see budgetary discipline in the European Community and curbs on excessive agricultural spending. It should be noted, however, that last year aggregate farm support in the United States was just above that in the EEC, although it involved less than half the number of farmers in an approximately equivalent population.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** That is wholly misleading.

**Mr. Dykes:** My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East frequently, though probably accidentally, misleads the House on these matters. For example, he claimed earlier that the European Commission had issued a diktat that marks of origin had to be abandoned. In fact, the Commission sent out a letter following the decision of the European Court — rightly, in my view — saying that compulsory marking as it existed in some member states was in restraint of community trade and therefore could not be compulsory. It did not stop manufacturers putting marks of origin on their products if they wished.

**Mr. Taylor:** Will my hon. Friend give way?

**Mr. Dykes:** No, my hon. Friend made a long speech and he has constantly interrupted from a sedentary position. We listened to him in relative silence.

**Mr. Taylor:** It is in *Hansard* of 1 December 1986, at columns *434-35*.

**Mr. Dykes:** It was a decision of the Court, not the Commission, as my hon. Friend the Minister confirmed earlier.

It is interesting, attractive and worth while to see the Community developing a common foreign policy. I hope that it will have major views on the middle east, given the paralysis of decision-making on these matters in the United States. As the United States does not usually handle foreign policy matters with any great skill—I say this with regret as we are all friends of America, but the evidence in recent years has been monumental — the European Community, with its greater skills in this area, has a great deal to offer in reaching towards solutions in very difficult areas of policy and crisis such as the middle east.

An area of great concern to us all which has already been mentioned in the debate is South Africa. Paragraph 10.6 of the White Paper begins:

> "On 27 June the Heads of State and Government expressed their grave concern about the worsening situation in South Africa".

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Minister on her forthright statement on the severe and agonising crisis in South Africa and on what she and her colleagues have tried to do.

Since that paragraph was written — it is now a historical document, issued in October 1986 — the situation has become far worse. There is total press censorship and the ominous new development of censorship of the speeches of Members of Parliament. At present they are censored only in the press, but the way things are going the time will no doubt come when they are censored in the Pretoria Parliament itself. That has disadvantages even for the Pretoria regime as rumours increase and abound in South Africa and outside about what is going on. The latest suggestion is that some 30,000 people, including children, have been detained and that between 2,000 and 3,000 people, again including children, have been killed.

Sadly, the regime in Pretoria shows no sign of making any concessions. The visit by my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary during the British presidency was a wonderful opportunity for Pretoria to show sincerity in seeking reform and modernisation in that unhappy world, but there was no response to that opportunity. The alliance foreign affairs spokesman referred to my right hon. and learned Friend's visit but did not mention the earlier visit by the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group when the beginnings of a negotiating possibility were, I believe, deliberately sabotaged by elements in the South African Government who saw it as a chance for a breakthrough by one or two slightly more moderate figures in that very depressing Government.

Here, too, there is not only the important role of the United Kingdom Government in saying and doing whatever they can to try to get Pretoria to see sense at last, and outside interference and suggestions are entirely legitimate. There is also the European Community itself, as a much more important force, representing the moral and political authority of the 12 member states acting together, with the will to insist that Pretoria now begins to put its house in order.

I hope that during the current presidency and later in 1987 massive efforts will be made to do those things that I have described in broad terms and also to consider the possibility of equating more closely to the United States' position on limited sanctions. I am not an enthusiast for sanctions, but unless Pretoria itself shows signs of responding to the increasing rage and anger of not only its black population but many sensible whites, and to outside pressures such as those of the European Community, only misery, total revolution and chaos can ensue.

I concur with my hon. Friend the Minister in congratulating Willy de Clercq on the recent negotiations with the United States. He is turning out to be one of the more brilliant in a collection of very distinguished Commissioners and has done very good work there. It shows that, as the United Kingdom gets used to working with the various organs and channels of the European Community, including the European Parliament, we get more self-confident. I should like to think that it will be as one of the economically strong of the four main states in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development listing, the four main members of the Community. That will come later, because at the moment Italy seems to perform better than we do, although it is supposed to be the weakest of the four. Nevertheless, it will come, together with the political self-confidence which will mean that, once and for all, these arid, sterile and old-fashioned arguments about whether we should have joined in 1973 will be totally otiose and out of date.

7.21 pm

**Mr. Eric Deakins** (Walthamstow): I always seem to have the pleasure or privilege of following the hon. Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes). Our views on this matter are as diametrically opposed as those of any two hon. Members can possibly be. He is, of course, a federalist. There is an increasing number of them, though still a small minority, mostly on the Government Benches and in the alliance parties. I sometimes wonder about the hon. Gentleman. When I hear the speeches that he makes on this issue, I wonder whether he is in the right party. I do not think that the Prime Minister—I cannot speak for any future Conservative leader—shares his views at all about the future, whereas the alliance parties are the only two major parties in British politics completely committed to a federalist solution. I do not agree with that solution, but the hon. Gentleman knows me well enough to appreciate that I will not spend time rehearsing arguments with which we are both familiar. We have been through this many times before in the House since 1971 and even longer than that outside the House.

I wish to begin by looking at the document which the Minister, as my hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) said, disposed of in a few minutes before going on to talk about the glories of the subsequent six months of the European Economic Community. In paragraph 1.4 reference is made to a single European market

"to realise more fully the benefits of our membership of the European Community."

That phrase, if it means anything at all, implies that there have already been considerable benefits to the British people and economy. I take just one example to undermine that particular claim of the Government, a point to which the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) referred —the balance of manufacturing trade.

In 1972, the last year before Britain entered the Community of Six — there were only six members originally—we had a small deficit of £257 million in our manufacturing trade with the six original members of the Community. In 1985, the last full year for which figures are available, the deficit had increased to £9,706 million, a net worsening of our trade balance during the first 13 years of our membership of £9·35 billion. With benefits like that, who needs disadvantages? The damage is already being done by membership and it happens to coincide with our period of membership. The figures also give the lie to the arguments used originally to justify our entry into Europe—arguments which succeeded in misleading the majority of the British people that it would be for the trading benefit and economic advantage of this country to remain in the Community in 1975.

Those figures are unanswerable. To do them justice, the Government always seek to avoid this issue and merely talk about the percentage of our exports which go to the EEC. There is nothing wrong with an increasing proportion of our exports going to the EEC, but what really matters in the end is the actual volume of trade in both directions and the net advantage and disadvantage. As we go further into the single European market, the

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Government's hopes will no more be fulfilled than were those of the British people, such as the hon. Member for Harrow, East who advocated entry in the early 1970s.

It may be that the Government would argue, as they have sought to do in paragraph 1.15 about the EUREKA initiative, that there are advantages in technical co-operation. Every hon. Member in his right mind will be in favour of technical co-operation between Governments, companies, and so on, in order to spread the cost of research and development and to take advantage of specialisation in different countries. What do we find? The most successful civil project of technical co-operation in the last decade, certainly since we entered the Common Market, has been the Airbus project, but that project had nothing whatever to do with our membership of the EEC. It was a project negotiated between the Governments of four countries—and rightly so. It appears to be a very successful project, and one that will have every success in future, but as an argument for our being in or out of the Common Market, it is quite irrelevant.

The same goes for the EUREKA project, which the Government have the gall to mention in connection with this six-monthly review in paragraph 1.15. The EUREKA project is for 19 European states, plus the Commission. I cannot think why that is; it is not as though it is a state yet. Those 19 states are much wider than the Community: they embrace the whole of western and northern Europe. So there is no need for Britain to be a member of the EEC to have the benefit of such technical co-operation. That again gives the lie to some of the arguments by the Confederation of British Industry in the early 1970s and again in 1975 to justify our membership.

Paragraph 2.16 of the document refers to liberalisation of capital movements—something that I am sure will be widely welcomed and accepted on the Government Benches. What worries me a little is that we, Opposition Members, do not seem, officially at least, to have woken up to the implications of this for Labour party policy when Labour forms the next Government—that liberalisation of capital movements and the single European market will undermine many of the major policies that Labour will be putting to the British people at the next general election.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), who will make an excellent replacement for the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, has gone on record as saying that while we are not against further liberalisation, we want to repatriate capital that has gone abroad, and he has put forward a very ingenious scheme for doing so. There is nothing wrong with that, except that those who know about the Common Market and the way in which it operates will realise that this goes right against the liberalisation of capital movements——

**Mr. Dykes** *rose*——

**Mr. Deakins:** I will give way in a moment—and the whole purpose of the single European market, which is to allow capitalists in any country absolute freedom to invest where they like. There can be no restrictions. What is more, there can be no inducements or penalties, as my right hon. Friend has suggested. I am sure that my right hon. Friend is taking this point on board, but it will be a rather tricky issue for us to handle unless we come out now and say that we are not in favour of further liberalisation of capital movements as implied in the single European market.

**Mr. Dykes:** I have great respect for the hon. Member's candour and his knowledge of European law. Has he not admitted something which is central to the economic policy of his colleagues on the other side of the House? They know that because these things are governed by directives they cannot undermine or unpick them and therefore the policies on which their economic strategy is based are in tatters before they start.

**Mr. Deakins:** I would not go all the way with the hon. Gentleman on that, but I remind him and the House that my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) and I were co-authors of a pamphlet, published towards the end of last year by the Labour Common Market Safeguards Campaign, which I recommend as good reading. My hon. Friend dealt with the economic aspects and I dealt with the political aspects of our membership. We proved conclusively that there is incompatibility between some of Labour's economic policies and the existing rules and regulations of the EEC and its whole spirit.

**Mr. Dykes:** Good.

**Mr. Deakins:** Federalists will say good, but this conflict has to be resolved. I hope that when we are in Government after the next election we will be determined not to kowtow to EEC rules and regulations. We shall ensure that the Labour Government will be able to carry out the policy on which they will be elected, without regard to Common Market rules and regulations.

There are two major issues in this debate. With respect to the Minister—I am sorry she has left the Chamber and that she will be replying to the debate—in this debate we are commenting on budget procedures and financial control measures. It would have been helpful if the Minister of State had replied, because he does know his subject. He has made a couple of interventions, but he is rather restricted. This report says that the 1986 budget was disputed. The 1987 budget is also disputed. There is increasing — I hesitate to use the word "chaos" — financial uncertainty about the future economic and financial development of the Community. My hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) made the very good point that no one knows what will happen next year on the budget and on financing of Community expenditure.

One of the problems in the disputed budget last year and this year is the attitude taken by the European Assembly. The Assembly is spendthrift because Members of the Assembly, no matter how distinguished they may be, like the new President, have no responsibility for raising money. In my opinion—I hope it will eventually become the opinion of my party—they should have no responsibility for spending money. They have power at the moment to influence expenditure, without any responsibility whatsoever to answer to taxpayers in individual countries for the raising of that money. It is for national Parliaments to control EEC expenditure. It is representative Members of national Parliaments who are responsible for the raising of the money and answerable to the electorate, not members of the European Assembly.

In paragraph 2·15 we are told that in future the budget is to take account of the cost of the past. Is that not a defeat for a point of view that used to be put forward by Her Majesty's Government—that they did not recognise that the cost of the past ought to be a factor in budget considerations from year to year, and that there ought to be some other way of dealing with it?

Even worse, we are entering a period of deficit financing for the EEC, although that is illegal under the treaty of Rome. On 24 November the Minister of State said:

> "There is no question of expenditure in the draft 1987 budget exceeding that allowed under the 1·4 per cent. VAT ceiling. If the funds are not available, they cannot be spent and expenditure over the VAT ceiling would have to be cancelled or deferred." —[*Official Report*, 24 November 1986; Vol. 106, c. *107*.]

Can anyone in their right mind believe that spending towards the end of next year will be cancelled, and how can spending on the common agricultural policy possibly be deferred? There must be some other solutions.

Her Majesty's Government, before Christmas, were casting around for expedients, as the hon. Member for Southend, East said in his excellent speech, to try to square the circle, to prove that with less income than budgeted expenditure one can overcome that deficiency. The same problem faces a number of Labour councils, especially in London. It is surprising that the Government should be lambasting those Labour councils for doing something that they are encouraging the European Community to do, of which they are a principal member. There is a great deal of optimism on the Government Benches about the 1·4 per cent. VAT limit. That paragraph, and it is rather mealy-mouthed, says:

> "it was generally recognised that these, and other, pressures would have to be contained within the 1·4 per cent. VAT ceiling."

Why are those words "generally recognised" used? Are they not a euphemism for the fact that it is not generally agreed? If it was generally agreed, the Government would surely have use the word "agreed" in that sentence in that paragraph. The Government's attitude towards the budget next year and the programmes it will bring with it represent once more, as in 1986, a triumph of hope over experience.

In 1987 will we have a supplementary budget or an intergovernmental agreement? The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office suggested that the financial crisis might be resolved in one of these two ways. I remind the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Minister and the Government that the Prime Minister has set her foot firmly against the idea of intergovernmental agreements. The Prime Minister, in the statement on the European Council in London, said:

> "If one goes in for more intergovernmental arrangements, one fundamentally undermines the discipline." —[*Official Report*, 8 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 27.]

I hope that those responsible in Britain for tackling these budgetary crises will bear in mind the very wise words of the Prime Minister on that occasion. Unquestionably intergovernmental agreements have undermined budgetary discipline and led to the postponement of the real issues of the future financing of the Community.

That is not all. In the debate on 24 November, which was a rather more technical debate—I have no intention of going over the points I made then, to which the Minister of State, Treasury was kind enough to try to reply—I said that there are a lot of things wrong with the budgetary and financial procedures in the EEC.

I want to draw attention to one aspect which bridges the gap between what happens on the budget and what happens on the common agricultural policy. In paragraph 3.15 of this report there is reference to the representative rates under the common agricultural policy. These have been devalued by most member states of the Community. In that paragraph there is no estimate whatsoever of the cost of devaluing the representative rates, yet there is unquestionably a cost to the Community which could have been estimated and was not. Our Government should have insisted that cost estimates were presented to the Council by the Commission before a decision was made by the Agriculture Ministers, no doubt subsequently approved by Finance Ministers, to approve the devaluation of representative rates. This is another means whereby the impact of the CAP is partly disguised. There is a hidden cost there and we do not yet know what it will be.

Finally, I turn to paragraph 2.19, where there is a reference to changes in the relationships of currencies to each other in the existing exchange system of the European monetary system. The hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), who spoke on behalf of the Liberal party and possibly the alliance, did not understand the system because he talked about Britain not being a member of the European monetary system. He should know by this time that Britain is a member of the European monetary system, but not of the exchange rate mechanism of that system.

The European monetary system is in chaos because the system cannot cope without constant realignments, having set rates of relationships between different currencies. There is some flexibility, but every year or every two years it will be necessary to change the balance completely. My objection is not to that—that might be inevitable under any system—but changing alignments of rates distorts the whole financial control over what goes on in the EEC. Every time the rates are changed, as they were last autumn between France and Germany, and also between the states in West Germany, with a devaluation of one currency and a revaluation of another, that increases the cost of operating the Common Market by raising the costs of the common agricultural policy. I shall come back to that in a moment.

**Mr. Dorrell:** The hon. Gentleman isolates a problem which arises because of fluctuations of currency and then criticises the machinery which damps down those fluctuations. Surely, without the machinery the fluctuations and the probems that he identifies would be worse.

**Mr. Deakins:** If there is a fixed mechanism, it must be comprehensive; otherwise it should not exist at all. It is like going back to fixed exchange rates with a little floating within certain bands. I am not an economist so I may be shot down by those who know more about these matters, but I would have thought that that was a disadvantage. With the world moving over to floating exchange rates, I would have thought that that was a much greater advantage to traders and merchants than the European monetary system.

The common agricultural policy has dominated the debate. I do not need to go into details because it is widely accepted that the costs of the common agricultural policy are increasing. The costs to Britain are increasing, but they are partly shielded by the system of abatement which was agreed at the Fontainebleau summit. One thing that the

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hon. Member for Southend, East did not mention in an otherwise excellent speech was that the abatement system agreed at Fontainebleau is tied clearly and definitely to the 1·4 per cent. maximum VAT rate.

If it should become necessary—as it will towards the end of 1987—to consider going up to a 1·6 per cent. VAT rate from 1 January 1988, the whole system of abatement will come under challenge again and there will need to be another summit to reassess whether there should be an abatement for Britain. We shall go through the mill once more. Incidentally, I assure the Government that they will have much more trouble in the House over a 1·6 per cent. VAT rate than they had over the 1·4 per cent. rate. We had hoped after Fontainebleau that the issue had been resolved for ever. Now we shall have it back with us, as some of us forecast at the time, no more than three years after that much-trumpeted agreement. The agreement will have to be renegotiated if we are so daft as to go up to a 1·6 per cent. VAT rate.

On the CAP, paragraph 1.10 of the White Paper mentions savings that were made in 1986. My remarks are directly for the benefit of the hon. Member for Harrow, East, who may or may not have been getting at me when he said that some Members were emotional about these things and did not understand finance. I think I know more about it than he does. I am a member of the Public Accounts Committee, and no one on that Committee has taken a greater interest in financial management and control than I have. I only wish that the Labour party would take more interest in these matters. It is because of that experience and that interest that, although I am not an expert, I hope I can speak at least as someone who knows what he is talking about.

In paragraph 1.10 we are told that the savings on the CAP for 1986 were against the original proposal of the Community. Contrasting savings with proposals is no way to exercise financial control. The proper way is to contrast the saving with the estimated outturn. The Community does not yet work to estimated outturn figures. It is about time it did.

In regard to the December agreement on dairy and beef products, here again the Government have misled the House. In the Minister of State's statement to the House on 17 December there was virtually no reference to information which was given to the House two days later in a written answer, after the time for questioning the Minister had passed. The Minister did not tell us what was in the written answer, namely, that there was

> "a Commission paper outlining plans for a two-year stock disposal programme covering 1 million tonnes of butter. The Commission proposes to finance this"—

here are the important words—

> "by deferring the reimbursement of member states of any losses on these sales for two years and then making four equal annual payments borne by the Community budget in the normal way. For the period of deferral interest will be paid to member states on the amount outstanding."—*[Official Report*, 19 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. *832.*]

The answer went on to point out that no detailed arrangements had been made. If the Minister had told that to the House on 17 December, his much-trumpeted dairy agreement would have had a different reception, even from his own Back Benchers who thought that it was a good agreement. We should be grateful to the hon. Member for Southend, East and to other hon. Members who asked written questions which elicited the information from the Government after the event.

I do not wish to echo the arguments of the hon. Member for Southend, East, because that would be superfluous. We are told that there is to be a £1·3 billion saving over the next three years because of that agreement. As the hon. Gentleman pointed out, most of that will be because the costs of the common agricultural policy are being switched to national budgets. What is this, in effect, but a loan by member Governments in advance to the EEC to finance current expenditure, a loan which will be paid back hopefully from future annual budgets? That is what the Minister's answer meant. It is one expedient after another.

In her introductory remarks, the Minister of State made an interesting statement when she said that the costs of surpluses should not be for the EEC alone. I think that I have quoted almost her exact words. That is a major change in one of the basic principles which have dominated the EEC since its foundation in 1957, and which we had to accept when we become a member on 1 January 1973.

One of the three basic principles is that there shall be common financing of common problems. We are now departing from that principle. I do not object to the departure, but I point out to the House that the principle is being breached by those who trumpet most about the principles when those of us who object to the CAP say that it should be swept away root and branch and a different system substituted. The EEC is undermining by stealth the system to which it is so dedicated.

The devaluation of representative rates leads to extra costs, but it has another consequence for agriculture and for the costs of the CAP. Again, it is one to which very few hon. Members have paid attention. However, it is important. Every time representative rates are devalued, prices to farmers in national currencies go up. When that happens, that is all that matters to the farmers. They are not interested in the national rates negotiated in the annual price review in Brussels or wherever, although there is much trumpeting about them by the Government because they reduce the cost of the CAP. What the Community takes with one hand—by price freezes or sometimes by price reductions — is given away with the other by changes in representative rates. The Government have actually boasted about that.

The Minister told us — and the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has said on other occasions since the agreement in December—that there have been cuts in the price for beef in the EEC. Technically, that is correct; there were cuts in the beef price last April for the marketing year 1986-87, but what the Government are also telling us in written answers, though not in public statements on the Floor of the House, is that British beef producers will be better off because of the devaluation of representative rates. So the Community, by its financial manipulation of the common agricultural policy, is sabotaging financial discipline and increasing the cost of the CAP in practice.

The hon. Member for Harrow, East likes to tell us that we should consider practice, not theory. When we consider the practice, we see that the Community speaks with two voices, a forked tongue, or whatever the appropriate analogy is. It is doing one thing on the one hand, and completely the opposite on the other. There has not been a cut in beef prices; instead, there has been an increase for most farmers in many member states. I am not arguing whether that is right or wrong; that is a different matter. What I am saying is that the Community should get its house in order. There is no sign that it will ever do that.

My last two points are references to the ways in which the common agricultural policy is spreading out its tentacles into other areas. Two are mentioned in paragraphs 3.32 and 3.33. *[Interruption.]* I am sorry that perhaps the expression "tentacles" is not a happy one, but the hon. Member for Harrow, East will understand my use of it when I mention the particular paragraphs.

Paragraph 3.32 refers to the Community, for the first time, agreeing production refunds for certain manufactured sugar products. The Community price for sugar is way above the world price. Manufacturers who use sugar in certain products, if they export to the rest of the world, naturally are penalised because their imports are much higher. There will be production refunds for manufacturers. That will be a cost of the common agricultural policy. There is no estimate in paragraph 3.32 — I challenge the Minister to let me know whether there is such an estimate — of the cost of production refunds. In addition to the known costs of the CAP, there is a hidden cost. There is another hidden cost in paragraph 3.33. For the first time, there will be a refund on starch used in manufactured products. I have no objection in principle to these refunds, but the consequences to the Community budget and to the common agricultural policy will be serious. There has been no estimate of costs.

I challenge the Minister of State on a future occasion — he is not able to reply on this occasion — to say whether it is the policy of Her Majesty's Government, when future proposals on agriculture or on any other aspect of Community expenditure and activities arise, to insist that, first, the Commission should provide estimates of the cost involved before Ministers reach agreement. If they do not, they will reach agreement in the dark.

The common agricultural policy is completely out of control. There is financial chaos and indiscipline. Who speaks about the principles of budget discipline? Ministers pay lip service to the principles — that is all. It is a regrettable situation and it will not be resolved except by the Government, later in the year, coming back to the House with an intergovernmental agreement, against which the Prime Minister will set her face, or with a supplementary budget or some other cock-eyed idea for somehow deferring expenditure so that, eventually, income and expenditure will match. If we keep pushing a balanced budget further into the future, eventually, with costs continuing to go up, in deference to the hon. Member for Harrow, East, there will be a real financial crisis in the Community. The Community is behaving in the way in which the Government are accusing some Labour councils of behaving. Frankly, I support Labour councils because they have particular problems.

This is what value for money is all about. It is not about querying the objectives of policy, but determining whether management and so on are sufficient to ensure that objectives are achieved. That is not happening in the EEC, which is what the debate is all about. It is about time that the Government did something about it.

7.52 pm

**Mr. Stephen Dorrell** (Loughborough): It may be because of the limited number of Labour Members of Parliament that I seem quite often to find myself speaking in the same debates as the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Deakins). Sometimes I am able to say that I agree with the general gist of what the hon. Gentleman has to say. But if the first 10 minutes of his speech today accurately reflect his basic approach — and I think that they do — to our membership of the European Community, I totally reject his basic analysis of the subject. Some aspects of the detailed points to which he referred later in his speech require proper answers either today or later.

One of the matters on which I disagree with my hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East (Mr. Dykes), with whose general approach to the subject I am in sympathy, is the statement that this is only a few hundred million pounds and, therefore, we do not need to worry about it. The House, quite properly, should ask, "What is the purpose of public expenditure, and is it being used for the best possible purpose?" It is too simple and too glib simply to gloss over the matter and to say that it is very small in the context of the whole.

**Mr. Dykes:** If I said that, I used my words wrongly. I did not mean to convey that impression. Millions of pounds are often voted through our Parliament, and other national Parliaments, without Members paying the slightest attention. There has been a searchlight on every single item in the European budget in a way that appears to be illogical and out of balance. That is what I said.

**Mr. Dorrell:** If my hon. Friend sought simply to draw a distinction between the different approaches to relatively large and small sums, he had a point. It is right that the House should ask whether public expenditure is effective for the purpose for which it is voted.

I congratulate the Government on the basic approach that they adopted during their six-month presidency of the Community. Some useful work was done. They were quite right to concentrate attention on developments towards a completion of the internal market, the removal of unnecessary restrictions to the flow of goods around the Community and, perhaps more importantly and more fundamentally, to seek to remove some of the long-standing restrictions to the provision of services between countries in the Community. My hon. Friend the Member for Harrow, East made that point, and I agree. There were well-reported fights to try to liberalise the provision of air transport.

Those achievements are the result of the priority that the Government gave to the completion of the internal market — a priority that I believe was right. Our six months' presidency of the Community has brought about some practical achievements, and that is to the Government's credit. My right hon. and hon. Friends on the Government Front Bench have every reason to be proud. The initiatives that the Government took to try to co-ordinate the activities of Community countries against the threat of terrorism was an important initiative and one on which they should be congratulated.

The hon. Member for Walthamstow and my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) devoted most of their speeches to drawing attention to imperfections in the Community. Of course the Community has imperfections. Few human institutions do not have imperfections. The imperfections of the common agricultural policy, I freely concede, are pre-eminent

*[Mr. Dorrell]*

among the imperfections of the Community. As I said to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East by way of an intervention, the main shortcomings of the common agricultural policy are the result of the weakness of the main budgetary authorities within the Community. The weakness of those authorities follows directly, and is the necessary consequence of reluctance on the part of the House and other Parliaments around the Community to delegate the power necessary to achieve proper budgetary discipline in the centre of the Community. The weakness of Community institutions produces the problems within the common agricultural policy to which my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East and the hon. Member for Walthamstow drew attention.

**Mr. Deakins:** I fully agree with the point that the hon. Gentleman made. Does he accept that there are real weaknesses in the budgetary procedures in the Community? It is not a case of Britain giving more power to the centre — there is plenty of power in balance between the two — but of the procedures? If the Community—if it is to last for much longer—were to adopt the sort of financial procedures that Ministers of any party must adopt, it might be on a better wicket.

**Mr. Dorrell:** The hon. Gentleman used the word "procedures", and I used the word "institutions". I am not sure that I wish to argue the semantic difference. I take the point that the hon. Gentleman made. It is because nobody in Brussels has the responsibility or authority to hold the purse strings and to determine spending priorities. That leads to the nonsense that make such easy prey for anti-marketeers.

Although I congratulate my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Government Front Bench on their useful if sometimes rather modest progress during our presidency of the Community, the time has come to seek to give the Community a new impetus to achieve identified and clear goals. I shall suggest some outlines as to the direction in which the Community should move in the foreseeable future. Once again, I distance myself from some of the points that have been made by my hon. Friends the Members for Harrow, East and for Clwyd, North-West (Sir A. Meyer). One of the problems encountered by supporters of our membership of the Community is that they tend to get carried away by their enthusiasm and imagine that the Community can deal with defence, our relationships with the middle east and the whole panoply of the responsibilities of the state.

The fundamental insight that led to the success of the Community in its early years was the perception on the part of its founders that a successful basis for European union had to concentrate on a relatively narrow sphere of responsibility. We do well to remind ourselves that in its early days, the Community that led to the foundation of the Common Market was concerned solely with coal and steel. It was narrowly defined. The leaders of the Community would be well advised to try to achieve a similar form of concentration. We could do worse than return to the old name of the Community — the European Economic Community — and seek to concentrate its efforts back to the area of economics.

**Mr. Deakins:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Dorrell:** The hon. Member for Walthamstow nods vigorously because he believes that that will allow the Community to withdraw from the political sphere and from greater political shared purpose. He is wrong. I advocate that approach because it would produce a more soundly based Community, which would achieve much faster the purposes of European integration that my hon. Friends the Members for Harrow, East, for Clwyd, North-West and I all have in common.

**Mr. John Mark Taylor:** My hon. Friend is developing very cogently his point about the origin in coal and steel in the Community and his wish for a concentration on economic matters. However, surely he would concede to me and the House that the original objective of the Community was the political one of reconciliation after war. As long as the objective is wider and political, he cannot keep it entirely within an economic frame.

**Mr. Dorrell:** That was the point I was seeking to make in response to the sedentary intervention made by the hon. Member for Walthamstow. If the Community concentrated on economics it would be able to make more progress and it would be seen that the Community was achieving results. Therefore, it would develop a momentum that would give it a stronger political presence than it has at present while it is trying to advance on all fronts and facing the danger of running into the sands. We would be well advised to make the sphere of responsibility slightly less ambitious and concentrate on economics.

To develop that point, I shall mention the concern of my right hon. and hon. Friends on the Front Bench to complete the internal market. That sits four square with our belief in the market system and it is a belief that I strongly share. If we look at the total impact of Europe in the world's economy, we see that by far the most important single cause of Europe's collective weakness is its fragmentation. The completion of the internal market is an attempt by the leaders of Europe to resolve that problem and try to exploit the fact that in Europe we have the world's largest developed market.

As part of the new impetus towards European integration, I would like to see a much clearer political commitment to breaking down the differences in product specifications that lead to fragmentation. More importantly, I would like to see a clear commitment on the part of our Government to membership of the exchange mechanism of the European monetary system. If one looks at barriers to trade between different European countries, it is hard to argue with the proposition that the greatest non-tariff barrier to trade are the floating exchange rates within what is supposed to be a market that is coming together. The fact that a British manufacturer cannot know today how many pounds he will get for a product sold in Germany tomorrow because the exchange rate may change overnight, sometimes by 1 or 2 per cent. within 24 hours, is a major barrier to trade.

**Mr. Cash:** I am interested in my hon. Friend's speech and he is making some interesting points. However, will he tell me whether, in his words, integration equals economic, and political equals federalism? Does he distinguish between them, or does he think that they are convergent?

**Mr. Dorrell:** I am suspicious of labels of any sort. I am saying that the countries of Europe should exploit the major opportunity which is there for them but which is not being taken. The opportunity will be taken only if they achieve the same unity as our competitors in the United States and, in a strange way, Japan. We should be seeking to fix our exchange rate against the exchange rates of other member states.

We cannot stop there. Mr. Sam Brittan wrote an interesting article in today's *Financial Times* drawing our attention to the fact that it is no good simply saying that the pound will be at a fixed rate against the deutschmark if one is not prepared to follow up that commitment with the necessary domestic policy consequences of creating and maintaining currency stability within one's chosen area. Therefore, I believe that we have no choice—I would not seek to create a choice—but to join the EMS instead of pulling back from it as we have tended to do in the past few years. We could then develop it further and return to the commitment that the Community has had in form but not in reality for over [illegible]0 years; to move towards real monetary union so that there is a binding and fixed currency relationship between the different states of the Community. That would greatly ease the trade in goods and services between different member states. It would ensure that manufacturers and providers of services could exploit their larger domestic market in a way that the Americans and Japanese can but European companies cannot. Although it is not the main subject of the debate, it would also make our monetary policy much simpler and easier to understand and, because of that, more likely to be successful.

As the hon. Member for Walthamstow and his hon. Friends would be quick to point out, it is not enough simply to create a unified market if it benefits the Germans, the French or, more likely, the Japanese. We should not simply create the market place to allow European companies to exploit their strengths. We have to make certain that European companies and, in terms of the House, British companies, are strong competitors within that united market place.

Another aspect of the impetus towards the economic angle of the Community, which I urge on my right hon. and hon. Friends, is that we should attempt to ensure that there is more discipline and more Community expenditure on research and product development so that the research base of European industry matches its competitors elsewhere in the world.

It makes nonsense of our commitment to complete the internal market if we maintain a system of national control over monopoly legislation which ensures that the division of Europe into national markets remains the main criterion by which competition policy is determined. If we are really committed to a comprehensive internal market in Europe, surely that should be taken into account by our monopoly and merger regulators, as well as by the people concerned with product specification. When we are deciding whether a particular company has a monopoly or whether a merger should be disallowed on monopoly grounds, we should not look simply at our own narrow national market, but see whether the company that would emerge has a monopoly share of a wider European market. Only by applying this yardstick can we expect to see in Europe the emergence of some world-beater companies that are large enough to take on the technological giants of Japan and the United States on equal terms.

The people who argue that all problems should be dealt with on a national basis fail to face up to the fact that, although there is a vibrant small business sector—I warmly welcome that—the weakness in the economy of Britain and Europe when compared with the economies of the United States and Japan is our failure in the past few years to see emerging the centrepieces—big companies—that provide the technological basis for advanced manufactured products. That is the weakness of Europe's economy, and until we allow the internal market and the monopolies legislation to develop to ensure that such companies emerge, Europe will continue to be the poor performer in the world's economy.

I emphasise that, taken as a whole, Europe is the laggard of the world's economy and has been for 15 years. That problem is not exclusive to Britain, because Europe has been out-performed by the United States and Japan and by several newly industrialised countries. In 1939 it was taken for granted that Europe was one of the economic giants, if not the economic giant, of the world. That can no longer be taken for granted, because Europe's economic performance has easily been surpassed by that of our competitors.

I shall now return to the point that I made earlier about Community institutions. The great weakness of the existing institutions or procedures—I shall not argue about which word we should use—is that they are irresponsible. There is no clear budgetary authority. There is nobody whose job it is to hold the purse strings and determine spending priorities. The 17th century political arguments, about which hon. Members should at least be vaguely aware, established beyond peradventure that political power is held by those who have power over the purse strings. The problem with the Community is that the institutions as they exist at present do not provide for convincing power over the purse strings to rest anywhere. The result is that the Community does not have a clear sense of purpose or clear opportunities for leadership.

The Community needs a clear sense of purpose that will lead to some clearly defined economic aims. We do not need to be president of the Community to give that sense of purpose because we can do it at any time we choose. The need is there and it is clear and urgent. I mean no disrespect to the Greeks when I say that if we fail, the whole of Europe will become the Balkans of the world's economy and will be weaker as a result.

8.12 pm

**Mr. Robert N. Wareing** (Liverpool, West Derby): I am always interested in hearing the hon. Lady, the Minister of State, leading for the Government. We have one thing in common in that we both represent Merseyside constituencies. She must surely have been as concerned as I was to read in the seclusion of the House of Commons Library, because it has never been made public, the "UK Regional Development Programme 1986-90". That was the Government's submission to the European Community on regional policy. The forecasts in that programme contrast starkly with the sparkling future that we hear from the mouth of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and which we are about to have under a Tory Government.

In the north-west and north of England and especially in Merseyside it is a far from rosy future which the Government themselves foretell between now and 1990. According to this submission, 430,000 people will be unemployed in the north-west of England in 1990. That figure is larger even than today's unemployment figure, yet

*[Mr. Robert N. Wareing]*

the Prime Minister tells us that unemployment will come down. According to that submission, the position in Merseyside "has continued to deteriorate" since 1981. It says:

> "Prospects for reducing unemployment are frighteningly bleak — there are only approximately 4,100 unfilled vacancies in Merseyside".

That has to be taken in the context of the fact that in January 1986 some 196,634 people were registered as unemployed in the area. That is 20·4 per cent.—even on the basis of the Government's massaging of the unemployment figures. The report says that greater Merseyside

> "has problems with many outmoded transport facilities unsuited to modern demands, with decay and obsolescence in much of the basic infrastructure . . . prospects do not appear to be optimistic. Of particular concern is the growing disparity between the availability of jobs and the numbers seeking jobs".

The important thing about this debate is that it allows hon. Members to put on record that which the public has been denied sight of, because they will read *Hansard* tomorrow and will see what was contained in the Government's submission. That is the truth of the matter and not the made-up stories, the fairy tales, that we hear in the House from the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Although investment is expected in Merseyside in industries such as chemicals, paper and glass and in services such as banking, the report says:

> "investment in these sectors may not necessarily be paralleled by employment growth and indeed in many instances may lead to further job losses."

What a prospect for people like those in my constituency where the unemployment rate is well above 30 per cent. Indeed, in some wards in my constituency male unemployment is over 40 per cent.

The report talks about the aging rail rolling stock in my area. It says that there is an inadequate road network inappropriate to the needs of modern goods vehicles. It goes on:

> "As far as public transport services are concerned, the main problem is how to maintain such services".

This report was prepared before the devastation wrought in Merseyside and in other areas by bus deregulation. That affects many people, not only those who are old and have difficulty in getting about but also those who are employed. Managers in firms like the General Electric Company in Liverpool, West Derby, made representations to the public transport authorities and, I understand, to central Government.

Regional aid has always been insufficient. The hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) made an important point, but the situation in Merseyside would be much more difficult without a regional policy, inadequate though that policy has been under successive Governments. We would not have a motor-car factory at Halewood or many of the other benefits that regional aid has provided. Under this Government, that aid has been cut and the special development area status of Merseyside has been abolished.

The Government's regional policy has aided mostly the high capital and low employment industries on the periphery of the region. Since 1979, only 2 per cent. of regional assistance to Merseyside has gone into Liverpool itself. The rest has gone to the green belt areas on the perimeter of the region. Conservative members who do not believe that there is a north-south divide, spoken about by my hon. Friend the Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand), should look at the report published last year by the Institute of Directors. It lists 280 towns in order of prosperity and Liverpool's position is 273. The Minister will be interested to know that Birkenhead and Wallasey, part of which is in her constituency, was 271st out of the 280 towns in that rather dishonourable league table.

**Mr. Cash:** On that point, did the hon. Gentleman hear an interview with Professor Halsey on the wireless this morning? Professor Halsey referred to the social trends report that has just been published. He said, with particular reference to the hon. Gentleman's constituency, that there is not really a north-south divide. He said that there are areas and pockets north, south, east and west and that the Wirral is more prosperous, whereas Liverpool, West Derby has difficulties. We acknowledge that.

**Mr. Wareing:** Indeed there are pockets of prosperity even within the devastated north of the country. Nevertheless, if the hon. Gentleman referred to the league table produced by the Institute of Directors, he would discover that Winchester is top of the league table. He would also find that the first 100 towns are in the south of the country. I would not argue for a moment that there are not pockets of unemployment and misery in the south. There are. I want to see their problems tackled also. Nevertheless, there is a fundamental division between north and south.

Many people in Merseyside believe that the proposal of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1981 that the Government should aim for a managed decline of Merseyside has occurred. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet in 1981, following the riots in Toxteth, rejected the advice of the then Secretary of State for the Environment, the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine). The right hon. Member for Henley produced a report which, again, was never published. The right hon. Gentleman's report "It Took a Riot" prepared after the Toxteth riots called for the problems of Merseyside to be tackled with urgency and resources.

The Government's response to the need to regenerate Merseyside and its economy has been negative. Of course the Government can quote certain instances of assistance. However, on the whole, they have been unhelpful. Local authority resources have been cut drastically. Merseyside county council, which very often served as a chrysalis for the development of schemes and initiatives and which drew Europea regional development funds into the area, has been abolished. In the first five years of this Tory Government, 106,000 jobs have been lost on Merseyside and there was a 22 per cent. drop in employment in Liverpool.

Recently, Mr. Ken Stewart, the MEP for Merseyside, West, received a communication from Jacques Delors, the President of the Commission, who, far from supporting the idea of a managed decline on Merseyside, referred to a report financed and encouraged by the Commission entitled "Merseyside Integrated Development Operation". That report resulted from a study carried out by Roger Tym and Partners and submitted to the Commission in January 1985. The report envisaged a total package of measures covering the years 1985-1990 of £388·85 million. The EEC contribution would be £155 million. Jacques Delors has claimed that little progress has been made. We do not have to look far to see why. The additionality aspect is a major factor preventing the implementation of that form of regional package.

The Government are apt to blame local authorities, as the Prime Minister did in a letter to me in October. She blamed that terrible local council in Liverpool with its municipal Socialism. That is the Government's view. Local authorities that want to play a full role and attract funds to develop schemes are not allowed to do so. They are prevented from doing that because they are inhibited by cuts in rate support grant, by rate capping and by the regime of financial stringency that has been one of the Government's major policies. I suggest to the Minister that, if she means to do well for Britain in the Common Market and for her constituency, she should get together with her right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment and have a word with him about why Merseyside and other regions are being denied EEC funding.

Schemes approved by the Commission for areas of multiple deprivation requiring a local authority contribution should be disregarded for GRE assessment purposes. If borrowing is required, there should be automatic ministerial sanction. European Community aid should not be withheld simply because the Government refuse to provide the necessary resources to enable local authorities to promote schemes using ERDF or ESF financial assistance. In so far as local authorities are so inhibited, the Government are reneging on their responsibilities.

The hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire made an important point when he referred to the inadequacy of regional planning under successive Governments. Probably the most worthwhile instrument of regional planning and location since 1945 was the industrial development certificate system developed as a result of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947.

Hon. Members will recall that the IDC system allowed the Government to tell a firm that it could not invest resources entirely in the prosperous south-east, but they would encourage the firm, with an IDC, to go to the north-east, the north-west or other areas of high unemployment. However, with entry into the Common Market—I never use the word "Europe" in relation to the Common Market because the Common Market is not Europe and I sometimes wonder nowadays whether there is a Community—the IDC policy was destroyed. A firm that was refused the right to invest in the south-east could say, after our entry into the Common Market, that it refused to invest in the north-west or the north-east. It would prefer to invest in the rich triangle in the Common Market where 40 per cent. of the Community's gross domestic product lies, in the triangle between Paris, Milan and the Ruhr. Such economic regional planning under the IDC system, which is vital to areas such as mine, was totally destroyed.

We have long argued that the common agricultural policy takes up too much of the Community's resources. It accounts for some 76 per cent. of the budget and that figure has not changed very much since 1973 when we entered the Common Market. Very little is left for regional aid.

Even the modest amounts that are made available by the Community to areas such as mine are not able to reach us because of the Government's policy of denying the resources to local authorities in those regions which would enable them to use schemes to develop the infrastructure and so develop employment and create better opportunities for the people living in those areas.

8.28 pm

**Mr. John Mark Taylor** (Solihull): Although I follow a Member for Merseyside, the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing), I should like to refer to the stimulating speeches made by the hon. Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Deakins) and my hon. Friend the Member for Loughborough (Mr. Dorrell).

The hon. Member for Walthamstow spoke about locked exchanges and free floating currencies, and implied that anything in between would be unsatisfactory to international traders. He developed his arguments strongly, but I suggest that if an international trader was given a choice between damped oscillations and unrestrained oscillations, he would probably settle for damped oscillations as the less difficult to work with in his costing and contracting.

I think that I agree with all the eloquent speech made by my hon. Friend the Member for Loughborough. He spoke of the absence of a mechanism to control and watch expenditure by the European institutions, and his concern about that. The hon. Member for Walthamstow spoke similarly about watchdogging expenditure in the Public Accounts Committee.

I think that the solution that would satisfy my hon. Friend the Member for Loughborough and me is if the Budget Commissioner could form a permanent and effective alliance with the Budget Control Committee of the European Parliament. That would be the basis of an instrument in the European institutions for control of expenditure to ensure that it was effective.

I believe in the value of the European Community, but I am not starry-eyed or blind to its shortcomings. I think that the British presidency worked hard at the areas that needed improvement. It did well and made measurable progress. The important areas are referred to in the report. They are budgetary discipline, agricultural pricing, which is still a matter of such anxiety, the internal market, on which approving comments have already been made, and political co-operation, which is one of the success stories which carries almost no budgetary implications and is all the better for that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Loughborough mentioned the initiatives on drugs and on terrorism. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) made an excellent speech and mentioned the resolution today of the trade difficulties with the United States of America. That resolution is an excellent example of the achievement of greater maturity on political co-operation and growing experience in the Community.

The change in attitude towards the Community budget in the Council of Ministers since 1979 is almost entirely a British achievement. In 1979, our national contention about the unfairness of the distribution of the burden of the EEC budget between member states was isolated. That argument, which was once a British solo, has become the orthodoxy of the Council of Ministers on budgetary matters. That is a great achievement. It is the orthodox view in the Budget Council that the old arguments about juste retour, which were used against us, should no longer carry their original force. It is much more readily accepted that there should be some evenness of distribution.

*[Mr. John Mark Taylor]*

By consensus, the CAP is the most worrying feature of the Community. The central orthodoxy of the CAP is also its cardinal weakness. As long as it remains axiomatic that Europe should provide enough food to feed its consumers, we are accepting surpluses. Once we say that, even with a bad harvest, there will be enough to feed Europe's consumers, we are saying that in any year that is better than the worst there will be surpluses. It ceases to be an adult question to ask about surpluses. The adult question is what to do with them.

I should like to trespass into the speculation that, ultimately, the only reform of the surplus problem may be a partial abandonment of the axiom that in every year Europe will grow enough food for itself.

I hope that I have given the impression that I appreciate the Government's handling of the presidency. I include in that my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and her ministerial colleagues. The election to the presidency of the European Parliament of Sir Henry Plumb has been referred to. It comes at a propitious time and on the heels of our presidency to demonstrate the British commitment and a belief in British competence to a wide audience. The impressive work of Lord Cockfield in the Commission completes a picture of British participation across the Community institutions.

In the end, the perception of our role in the Community is of the greatest political importance. In the last analysis, it is not how we see ourselves that counts, but how others see us. I had the pleasure of lunching today with Japanese diplomats. It was interesting that their perception of the West was the United States, Europe and Japan. I took the opportunity to suggest to them that it was in their best interests to have the European trade mark office in London because the lion's share of their European activity is in Britain, as is the lion's share of their investment and presence in Europe. I hope that they will take that advice.

In a world of super-powers and major trading blocks, our participation in the EEC is important to us, but British leadership, such as our recent presidency of the Council, is important to the EEC as well.

8.35 pm

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): The hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) argued once again for the repatriation of agricultural policy. I have some sympathy for that view and would like the fisheries to be repatriated.

There is still a great deal of concern among Scottish fishermen about certain elements of the common fisheries policy. This is the first time today that the CFP has been mentioned. It is entirely right and proper to subject the EEC and its policies to tough and sustained criticism. Rigorous critical analysis should give rise to prescriptions that are aimed at changing some elements of those policies.

I shall confine my speech to those sections in the document which concern regional policy, research and development and transport. If I can catch the Minister's ear, I should like to outline some of the problems with which Strathclyde and the rest of Scotland is faced.

The economic and employment circumstances in Strathclyde grow bleaker by the day. Nobody can dispute the fact that unemployment in Scotland continues to rise remorselessly. I regret to say that that is especially true of my constituency, so I wish to discuss those problems. I shall suggest some proposals which, in the long run, might go some way to dealing with the problem of unemployment.

My proposals concern the implications of the Petroleum Bill for an expansion of employment in Scotland, and the concept that has been vigorously advocated by the Scottish CBI for a Euro-west port on the Clyde. The Government have published a report entitled "United Kingdom Regional Development Programme 1986-1990", which, in one of its 17 volumes, highlights the problems of Scotland. The authors of the Government document suggest that, in the year 1990, unemployment in Scotland will be at least 330,000, and that Scotland will be faced with further job losses in the steel, shipbuilding and coal industries.

In addition, the same report, which was sent to Brussels, suggests that the renewal of outworn infrastructure in Scotland is a priority in urban areas, and that much of it is in need of modernisation. That is the Government's analysis of the problem in Scotland.

I regret to say that in recent years, unemployment in my constituency has again grown at a much faster rate than elsewhere in Strathclyde, in Scotland and in Great Britain as a whole. Since 1981, male unemployment in Strathclyde has increased to 28 per cent., in Scotland as a whole it has increased to 33 per cent. and in Great Britain to 25 per cent. In the Greenock travel-to-work area, the figure is 44 per cent. The male unemployment rate in the Greenock travel-to-work area is now 26 per cent. When the redundancies that were announced by Scott Lithgow before Christmas take place — in fact they are taking place now because 200 men left this week — the male unemployment rate in the area will be nearly 38 per cent. making Inverclyde one of the bleakest areas for unemployment in the United Kingdom.

The problems have, of course, been compounded by the understandable refusal of the offshore oil and gas industries to invest in new structures and facilities, primarily because of the drastic decline in the price of oil. However, there is a chance to increase employment in the offshore oil and gas industries in this country, curiously enough, in maritime demolition. Although I appreciate that it is not his ministerial responsibility, I should like the Minister to convey to his colleagues in the Department of Trade and Industry and in the Scottish Office my belief that the Petroleum Bill, which has just finished its Committee stage and is due to come back to the House for Report and Third Reading in a couple of weeks, could lead to a massive increase in jobs. However, we need a comprehensive research and development programme, funded to some extent by the European Community's regional and social funds.

Why do I say that there is a chance to expand employment in this sector? In a nutshell and to oversimplify like mad, the Petroleum Bill concerns the removal or the partial removal of oil and gas platforms and pipelines. With the assistance of Government and the EEC, Scottish firms and individuals could become world leaders in the highly complex and highly skilled task of maritime demolition, just as the Dutch are recognised as the world leaders in maritime salvage. There is an opportunity for thousands of jobs, but the implications are for much more than jobs. We shall need various physical facilities and resources. This work is due to begin in the early 1990s when the first of the platforms will become redundant, and will require heavy lifting barges capable of lifting chunks of hardware weighing anything up to 10,000 tonnes.

These scarce resources and skills exist, although not in the United Kingdom. The Government could make a telling contribution in the form of research and development programmes and a training centre. Naturally, I believe that that would be best sited in Greenock or Port Glasgow, on some of the derelict waterfront sites in my constituency. Such a training centre could be set up with assistance from the European Community regional and social funds because there is massive unemployment. When the Petroleum Bill was deliberated in Committee, the Minister of State, Department of Energy at no time denied that those opportunities exist for United Kingdom nationals.

I do not wish to sound xenophobic, but when the work starts, I do not want to see it carried out by migrant engineers, divers and ancillary workers.That work could be carried out by people living in the United Kingdom. Therefore, I request that urgent consideration be given to the funding of research and development programmes for this highly skilled and deeply complicated task of maritime demolition.

The only other people in the world who have any experience of such work are the Americans. However, they have removed structures only from shallow and sheltered waters. We shall have to remove structures and pipelines from relatively deep and dangerous waters. I am speaking as someone who knows a little about the North sea from the deck of a fishing vessel. We have some highly skilled divers—those trained by the Royal Navy are the best in the world, but they are few in number.

The Government, with the EEC, could play an important role by locating the research and development programmes, and the training centre in Scotland, so that those skills may be developed and the work carried out by British, or rather Scottish firms. Hon. Members must excuse my ethnocentrism.

Oil companies have estimated that it will cost about £150 million for the total removal of some of the biggest structures. We are talking about a massive industry and an important element of the offshore oil industry. It would be tragic if the opportunity were ignored or handed over to those corporations and organisations in other countries that have the physical resources and some of the skill that are needed. For example, the Dutch and the Americans have heavy barges.

I am not talking just about demolition but about construction. Scott Lithgow in my constituency could easily, with the aid of Ferguson's and Kincaid, build any number of heavy lift barges. In the next two years, two or three of these vessels wil be needed for such work. I am making an appeal to the Government on behalf of people who are suffering from dreadful joblessness, young highly skilled people who may turn to their traditional Scottish solution to unemployment and migrate to the south of England—God forbid—or further points. I know that the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) has migrated, but that was some years ago.

**Mr. Foulkes:** Thank goodness.

**Dr. Godman:** I will reserve judgment on that.

There is no point in analysing problems if one cannot come up with descriptions to tackle them. I have outlined one. I genuinely believe that upwards of 20,000 jobs could be created in the task of removing these structures, although the Government talk about partial removal. If it was in the national interest to anchor these structures to the United Kingdom's continental shelf, it is in the national interest to accept that we should remove them completely so that future generations of fishermen can fish these commercially viable waters.

The concept of the Euro-west port depends upon the plans for the Channel tunnel. I have mixed views about that as a civil engineering problem. Looking from North America, Europe has become a more integrated single economy market, and its centre of gravity has shifted eastward across the North sea. The golden triangle is now something like London, Dusseldorf and Paris. It is perhaps questionable whether London is included, except as a financial services centre.

Britain is becoming an offshore adjunct to industrial Europe where maritime transport—the shifting of cargo around the world—is concerned. The combination of these factors has severely affected the ports of Liverpool and Greenock in particular, but also Grangemouth and Southampton to some extent.

The idea of the Euro-west port is that the Clyde is the closest main collection of European ports to North America. There is about one to one and a half days less sailing time between North America and the British ports than between North America and other ports, if the ships go into the Clyde. There are deep water berth facilities at Hunterston and Greenock and there are terminals for bulk and container cargoes. Both of them would need to be expanded. It is possible, by way of the Channel tunnel, to funnel all European travel, with great economies of scale, on to the landward side.

There are other advantages. If we were to have electrified rail links to the continent, it would become extremely advantageous for container firms to send their ships, which are expensive pieces of machinery, to the Clyde rather than have them sail into ports in Europe such as Rotterdam or Antwerp. There are other facilities. There is, or could be, a financially viable and well-managed port administration and there is land available for development.

**Sir Anthony Meyer:** I am pleased to hear the hon. Gentleman make that point. If properly and intelligently used, the Channel tunnel could be the salvation of west coast ports generally.

**Dr. Godman:** The hon. Gentleman is right. I am asking the Minister for financial aid in terms of a feasibility study of the Euro-west port concept. It could prove to be an attractive object for shipping companies. Again, I have a constituency interest. The Greenock container terminal is a first-class physical facility with an excellent work force—this is readily acknowledged by most directors of container shipping companies—and excellent industrial relations. Regrettably, the Greenock container terminal has only one shipping line using it, and that is the Hapag-Lloyd line. Unfortunately, it has entered into an agreement with Atlantic Container Line to use the Seaforth container terminal in Liverpool. That means that the Greenock container terminal is under severe threat. All this takes place against a bleak, dark picture of unemployment in the area.

The hon. Member for Renfrew, West and Inverclyde (Mrs. McCurley) had a meeting with the Prime Minister

*[Dr. Godman]*

just before Christmas to press upon the right hon. Lady the very severe problems that we are both facing in our adjoining constituencies. I propose that funding for a rigorous feasibility study into the Euro-west port concept be provided by the Government and the EEC.

There are problems in the area. The west of Scotland continues to experience a remorseless economic decline. But we must move beyond simply lamenting the problems and come up with proposals. In these two areas, any Government — even this English Government — should give careful consideration to the proposals that I have outlined tonight.

9 pm

**Mr. Edward Leigh** (Gainsborough and Horncastle): I hope that the hon. Gentleman for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman) will forgive me if I do not follow him in his remarks about the Clyde. We have had a long, interesting and wide-ranging debate. I have sat through it for four hours, but I want to make only a brief point. I want to deal with one narrow part of the document which relates to agricultural price fixing and cereal farmers.

Agriculture is not only our most important industry, it is our most successful industry. Listening to some hon. Members, one would think that farmers were living a life of prosperity and ease — I am glad to see that the hon. Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) does not take that view. As the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's statistics for 1987 make clear, average net farm income fell by 45 per cent. between 1984-85 and 1985-86, largely due to the wet summer that we suffered. I am glad that there has been a considerable improvement in farm incomes, and I hope that we can look for even greater improvement.

The annual review of agriculture for 1987 shows that the cereal harvest this year was a particularly good one, and that aggregate farming income is forecast to rise by 21 per cent. to £1,411 million in 1986. As one might expect with agriculture — which since the war has been one of our most efficient industries — labour productivity continues to rise, and is forecast to rise by 2 per cent.

We have a very mixed picture before us, and it is incumbent upon the House and Ministers to appreciate — as I know Ministers do — the severe problems that face farmers. In that context, farmers are aware of their responsibilities. They are aware of cereal surpluses, and as I meet my NFU regularly, this topic of conversation always arises. I do not think that we can deal with the problem of cereal surpluses — I know that Ministers share this point of view — by price fixing alone. If we dealt with the problem by price fixing, it would probably necessitate a price cut of at least 20 per cent. Otherwise farmers would increase production to meet a shortfall in prices. Therefore, we have to look at a whole raft of measures. I shall deal with what I consider to be wrong before I support what the Government are putting forward in this field.

It is not right to proceed by way of quotas, because they would be a bureaucratic nightmare. There are about 4 million cereal farmers in the Economic Community. We have no cereal marketing board in the sense that we have a Milk Marketing Board, and thus they would be impossible to administer. Quotas would discriminate against United Kingdom farmers, because they would discriminate against farmers who have good land and who are efficient and productive. Quotas must inevitably lead to compensatory price increases which would harm the livestock sector. If quotas were introduced there would be no stimulus to competition, and they would lead to severe structural development difficulties.

Many farmers look at quotas with a benign eye, because they feel that they would allow them to plan ahead. The experience of dairy farmers should not lead cereal farmers to want to follow that example.

I am often asked whether we could do more in the EEC to control the import of cereal substitutes. That is an attractive policy and I have looked at it in the past. It is not sensible to use controls that would, in large measure, increase costs. It is fair to say that the EEC import controls on such products as manioc from Thailand. I do not believe that controlling the import of cereal substitutes would solve the problem of cereal over-production.

If quotas are not appropriate for the country — if it is not right to deal with the problem by trying to control the importation of cereal substitutes — what does that leave us? It leaves us with set-aside polices. I have considered carefully the policy favoured by the National Farmers Union, which I understand is a kind of flexible compulsory set-aside policy. That would not be appropriate for Britain because it would discriminate against efficient farmers and farmers on fertile land. It would probably discriminate in favour of farmers on marginal land or small farmers. Taken in the round, the compulsory set-aside proposal would not be the best solution for our farmers.

That leaves the voluntary set-aside system, for which I know Ministers have been pressing in the Council of Ministers. That is the only way forward and I commend it to our farmers. But if we are to make the voluntary set-aside system work and release land from agricultural production, there must be a profit incentive to encourage farmers to enter the scheme. I may be accused of speaking up only for pockets of farmers, but it is not as simple as that. Farmers are business men, and why not? They must be given an economic incentive to join the scheme and I hope that Ministers are well aware of that.

I do not want to be completely negative. The set-aside proposals — we need to couple set-aside with price restraint, about which the White Paper talks — give us an opportunity to develop our forestry policies. That is one area of agricultural production in which we are deficient. We are less than 5 per cent. self-sufficient in forestry. The returns of forestry are slow. The returns on hardwood production can take as long as 100 years. Therefore, in pressing for a set-aside policy, Ministers must grasp what may be a historic opportunity to increase the amount of land given to forestry. I should like to see the position improved by the tax regime. That is, of course, a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor, but, in consultation with our EEC partners, it may be possible, by means of a system of grants and set-aside, and encouragement, perhaps, for short rotation cropping on former cereal land, to encourage an increase in forestry production.

Although the picture for cereal farmers has been mixed — not a good harvest last year but this year a much better harvest and much better prospects for exports this year with much less going into intervention — we have an opportunity to look ahead. Farmers can have confidence in the Government, who appreciate the severe difficulties that face farmers. The Government are determined to deal with cereals in such a way that farmers can plan ahead. I stress that: Agricultural production cannot be turned on and off as other forms of production can. Farmers must plan not in terms of months but years.

I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to look at the United States example where price fixing is often done five years in advance, and that gives farmers a chance to plan ahead. It is important, if we are to make a set-aside policy work, to give farmers that degree of certainty and confidence in the future which in the past they have often not had.

I am confident that the Government are aware of the problems and can press ahead. I know too that they realise that they cannot deal with the problem of surpluses simply through the price mechanism. The matter is far more complex. Ultimately, they will have to introduce voluntary set-aside procedure.

9.8 pm

**Mr. Allen McKay** (Barnsley, West and Penistone): In the time that is left, I want to put on record the voice of Yorkshire and Humberside.

I can agree with the hon. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) on the quota system, because I have seen many of my small dairy farmers going out of business, and because many dairy farmers are much poorer financially because of the quota system. Dairy farmers still seem to have severe problems with the system, and it looks as though they will continue. By and large there is no joy for them, although the problems will probably be overcome eventually.

I hope that the hon. Gentleman was not advocating coniferous forestry, which seems to be becoming predominant. I prefer broadleaf and mixed forestry. I certainly would not go all the way with him on what he said about afforestation. The environmental aspects must also be taken into account.

I want to deal with the way in which European and Government policies have affected Yorkshire and Humberside. I regret hearing the Prime Minister and other Ministers telling us that there is no north-south divide. There is a north-south divide, and I am worried by the Prime Minister's statement to the contrary. Her statement means either that she does not know that such a divide exists, which is dangerous, or that she knows that it does exist but does not want to do anything about it, which is even more dangerous. Or perhaps the Prime Minister does not want to talk about it. If the latter is true, we can overcome that problem. However, if the Government do not recognise the north-south divide, how will they solve the problem? If they do not recognise that problem, they will not recognise the measures that need to be taken.

Recent documents showing average household incomes make it clear that the south-east corner of Britain is by far the most prosperous region. The next prosperous regions are the south-west, the east midlands, East Anglia and Scotland. They are followed by the north-west, Wales and the west midlands. The poorest region by far is Yorkshire and Humberside. The Government should take that into consideration.

We consider that the answer may be regional government. Although there are doubts about such a policy, I would encourage such regional government because I should like to see more regional administration. It is clear that Scotland and Wales, which are represented by Ministers, are far better off than Yorkshire and Humberside. Therefore, one must ask whether it is because of such ministerial backing that those regions are better off. I should like to see the development of regional government and, if possible, a Minister responsible for Yorkshire and Humberside who could deal with the region's problems.

The region faces many problems and it is clear from unpublished Government documents that while the United Kingdom has lost 7 per cent. of its work force, Yorkshire and Humberside has lost 12 per cent. It has lost 35 per cent. of its manufacturing jobs, whereas the rest of the United Kingdom has lost 28 per cent. The region has lost electronics, electrical and instrument engineering jobs.

It is a historical fact that Yorkshire and Humberside was, for generations, the foundation of Britain's prosperity. Its glass, coal, steel, textiles and in some areas farming all contributed to that prosperity. The Government document, "United Kingdom Regional Development Programme 1986-90" has little encouragement for the region. The Government expect the region to lose 288,000 jobs by the 1990s. That is the Government's forecast of the increase in unemployment in that area. They state that the short-term prospects for the economic development of the area are "not good" and that

> "more diversification is needed to reduce dependence on traditional and declining industries".

The Government then say:

> "future employment prospects within the coal industry remain bleak,"

and they forecast that there will be further reductions in manning levels by a significant degree up to the 1990s. Such are the Government's estimates of what will happen. When one considers the future of Yorkshire and Humberside and, indeed, the whole of the north, one realises that the future is bleak.

Regional help from the EEC has been useful and I would like more. I recognise that Community aid has been helpful in my constituency, particularly with the Stocksbridge bypass. Such help has been welcome, but it deals with only a small part of the problem.

During the past four years there has been a significant decline in the steel industry as a result of a worldwide reduction in demand leading to over-capacity. This has aggravated the problem for the United Kingdom, as it is faced with low-price imports. We warned the Government time and again of the results of low-priced imports into the United Kingdom and Europe. As cheap steel flooded in from Taiwan and other far eastern countries, we asked the Government to take action, but the Government allowed one of the nation's basic industries to go into decline and there is no sign of that decline ending.

The cutlery industry in Sheffield has continued to experience problems because the Government refused to take action on cheap imports. Much discredit, too, must go to companies in the industry which encouraged the import of cheap blanks, finishing them in this country and stamping them "Made in Sheffield". Those companies have contributed to the decline of their own industry. The Government talk of a change to sunrise and non-manufacturing industries, but the banking and insurance jobs to which the Prime Minister refers will not come to Yorkshire and Humberside unless encouragement is given. The Government must recognise the north-south divide. Rationalisation of the mining industry has a domino effect on the industries depending upon it, producing an even greater impact.

*[Mr. Allen McKay]*

In Yorkshire and Humberside we have the will to succeed and to overcome the problems, and our work force is second to none. Industrial development land is available, north-south communications are good and we look forward to improved east-west communications. So why have the problems not been overcome? I quote from a report on infrastructure investment. It comes not from the Labour party or from a council in the area, but from the British Institute of Management, which represents management throughout the British Isles. It says:

> "Since 1980 infrastructure investment has been one of the most important concerns in the Institute . . . The two main arguments . . . are:—Modern infrastructure
>
> (*a*) a modern infrastructure has cost-reducing benefits for industry which enhance economic performance and competitiveness;
>
> (*b*) a policy of delaying . . . renewal of the infrastructure is not cost-effective".

The Government's failure to invest in the infrastructure has helped the decline of the northern regions and of Yorkshire and Humberside in particular.

The British Institute of Management advocates the very policies that we have put forward. It asks for more roads, including a second Pennine road. The Minister knows all about that, as she had responsibilities at the Department of Transport for some time. The institute also asks the Government to consider the structure of the area. It refers to the need for investment in hospitals, roads, schools, housing, water and sewerage systems, all of which could produce genuine permanent jobs. We need a diversification of finance from the prosperous regions of Europe and of this country to Yorkshre and Humberside.

I wish to put two suggestions to the Government. The first relates to the coal industry, which has gone through a traumatic period. It is time that the Government and British Coal stopped pussyfooting about. They keep saying that no one is forced to leave the industry, but what would they have done if the 400,000 men who took redundancy had not done so because it was not compulsory? The financial inducement to leave led people to take up the redundancy offer if they wanted. This has meant that EEC money that should be available for restructuring in the area is not coming in because the Community will not give its money to areas where there are voluntary redundancies. British Coal should now stop this charade and begin restructuring the industry, thereby making the area eligible for further grants from the Community to build the industries which must take British Coal's place.

The grants that are available from the Government are actually working against my own local authority. I would like to put on record my request that the Government look at the way that the grants are given to the northern regions, because it works against them. The northern regions have the men, the will and the desire. All they want is encouragement from the Government and from the EEC. In that way, we could succeed.

9.20 pm

**Mr. Gordon Brown** (Dunfermline, East): The debate has been both wide-ranging and very detailed in its study of Community policies and of United Kingdom policies. It has focused on the problems posed by the internal market and the problems that have also recently arisen from trade difficulties between Europe and the United States; it has focused on the large sums spent by the agricultural fund and the small amounts made available for the regional fund.

We have had speeches from my hon. Friends the Members for Wansbeck (Mr. Thompson), for Easington (Mr. Dormand), who focused on the problems of the northern area, for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing), who pinpointed the problems faced by the north-west, for Greenock and Port Glasgow (Dr. Godman), who made a number of very positive suggestions about how Government regional aid could be increased and spent, and for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) who also made suggestions about the coal industry and spending on infrastructure. All these speeches have demonstrated concern about unemployment both in Europe as a whole and in this country, where it is felt particularly acutely. They have also expressed our concern that things should be done by both the European Community and this Government.

I make no apology for concentrating the bulk of my remarks on one of the major submissions made by the Government to the European Commission in the past year —our submission to the European regional development fund. It showed that the gap between the rich and poor regions of this country is widening, that the shires and suburbs and the inner cities and industrial towns have even less in common after seven years of this Government, that the gap between rich and poor is not temporary but threatens to become ineradicable as a result of the Government's policies. I want to suggest how, by their failure to secure proper funding from the European regional development fund, their failure to secure proper guarantees about the movement towards an internal market, but most of all by their failure to secure a proper regional policy in the United Kingdom, the Government are exacerbating the division between the rich and poor areas of the country.

We have heard from the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) who made a charge against the Government, that money apparently gained in December by reducing the agricultural budget is money bought at the price of having to increase the contribution of member states. Before the end of the debate, the House deserves an answer from the Minister of State. We need to know whether the Government or the Commission have been guilty of the sort of creative accounting over the agricultural surpluses that might make even their friends in the City blush.

We have also heard an interesting set of proposals about the future of the agricultural fund. We heard from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King), who spent a large part of his time dwelling on the Government's success story in relation to British Leyland, just on the day when British Leyland appears to have announced another 1,000 redundancies in the midlands and elsewhere.

The hon. Member put forward a proposal for supermarket Euro-zones and asked about the distribution of agricultural surpluses to pensioners and others. We deserve from the Minister an explanation of how this distribution of stocks will take place throughout the country. Without a clear explanation of who gets what, how it is to be distributed and how many people are to receive it, I fear that there will be no distribution system at all.

By relying on unfunded charities, we will return to the queues of the soup kitchen society that many fear the Government are to impose anyway on this country by social security policies. Given the spending on agricultural policy that British taxpayers have to bear and the fact that food prices are higher in Britain as a result, it is not Europe that is subsidising the poor families of this country, it is the poor families of this country who, for years, have been subsidising Europe and the agricultural policy.

As a newcomer to these debates I was drawn to a series of Community publications, and indeed publications by the British Government, in the hope that I would secure some enlightenment about some of the more detailed policies being pursued by the Government in Europe and by the European Community. I rather wish now that I had left aside some of the publications that I bothered to consult. One publication that the House of Commons Library put in front of me and that I started to read with interest was entitled "The United Kingdom Presidency July to December 1986". It started by saying:

> "The attached note lists achievements in the Community during the United Kingdom presidency".

Our presidency saw the biggest budget crisis ever, the biggest budget deficit in the Community's history and, despite the recent agreements that the Minister of State heralded to the House, the biggest agricultural surpluses ever, a European economic report to the effect that unemployment will not fall this year, next year or in the foreseeable future in any substantial way, and a community regional report stating that regional disparities were about the widest ever.

These are events which, we are to believe from the Government's report to the House of Commons, are achievements of the United Kingdom presidency. To talk of these so-called successes and achievements when they range from the negative to the negligible is bad enough, but to hear the Minister speak of further successes over the next few months is another example of the triumph of hope over experience. I read with interest the claim about United Kingdom achievements over the six months of its presidency in a newspaper report of a speech made by the Prime Minister to the European Parliament, or the European Assembly, as some people would call it. That speech was at pains to emphasise the achievements of the United Kingdom presidency.

The report said that the Prime Minister stated:

> "I do not believe we should under-estimate the achievements of the last six months."

The Prime Minister then proceeded to talk about achievements in terms of helping the unemployed at a time when European unemployment is still more than 16 million. Then she said that Britain would continue to lead the pack in facing the real problems. The newspaper report finished by saying:

> "Mrs. Thatcher's address made little impact on a sceptical House".

This was in a House where the Conservatives have a majority, we are led to believe.

With European unemployment above 16 million, with 6 million under the age of 25 unemployed throughout the European Community, with the recognition that unemployment is not getting better but will remain at this all-time high, and with the economic report, one would think that the United Kingdom's problems will not get better.

We have heard the Prime Minister promise that we will return to full employment. Therefore, one might think that the initiatives on unemployment taken during the United Kingdom presidency were substantial — perhaps a European new deal, a European renewal project, a European war against unemployment, a European war against poverty by creating jobs and improving the infrastructure of this country. But we have not got any of these things. There is no great new initiative, no new programmes of public spending on infrastructure investment and no programmes to improve manufacturing investment. What we have from the United Kingdom, in association with Italy and Ireland, is not a policy to reduce unemployment but a substitute for a policy. In December, the *Financial Times* called it an apology for a policy on unemployment.

The Government's presidency and their actions in Europe have done little to create jobs or to reduce unemployment. That could not be emphasised better than by referring to the shipbuilding industry, which was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow. During the United Kingdom presidency, the Government started negotiations, chaired by Trade and Industry Ministers, for a new European directive on shipbuilding. They commissioned an independent report that said that unless the cost subsidy was 36 per cent. we could not bridge the gap between the highly subsidised far eastern shipyards and European yards.

That report was accepted as both independent and excellent. There was evidence from European shipbuilders that subsidies had to be above 30 per cent. The Government were told by British Shipbuilders that unless they secured 33 per cent., the future of the only two remaining big yards, at Govan and in the north-east, would be at risk and the work force might fall from 6,000 to 800. The Government had all that evidence before them when they were chairing the negotiations; yet, after hard negotiation in Europe, they ended up with an agreement for only 28 per cent. subvention. That is a betrayal of British shipbuilding and puts at risk many hundreds of jobs and communities in the north of England and Scotland.

It is amazing that we, the biggest island trading nation in Europe, with most to gain from a strong shipbuilding policy in Europe, should have agreed to such a level of subsidy. That is the record of the United Kingdom presidency in protecting and creating jobs and in reducing unemployment.

The submission made by the Government to the European regional development fund has been commented upon by my hon. Friends because of its implications for each region. That submission states not as an assumption but as a projection that unemployment will be above 3 million not just next year but in 1990. For the Government to say that the prospects for Scotland, the west midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside, the north-west and the north are bleak, frighteningly bleak or gloomy, and that it is impossible to reduce unemployment until fundamental problems have been resolved, is an admission of the depths to which they have brought the economy; it is an admission also of the measures that need to be taken to put the economy in order.

What is as bad is that the Government have admitted what is needed, but are unprepared to do it. Throughout the regional reports that are in the House of Commons Library and available to hon. Members but not to the public, there is a recognition of the infrastructure problems that require money to be spent upon them. They

*[Mr. Gordon Brown]*

also contain a recognition of the problems faced by manufacturing industry that require extraordinary measures if they are to be resolved and, most important of all, a recognition of the importance of public spending, which the Government have denigrated for the past seven years. The Government have failed to provide solutions to these problems.

I shall quote from some of the most important conclusions of the regional reports so that Conservative Members can see what their Government have been telling Europe about the problems that have been created during the past seven years. On Greater Manchester, the report states that replacement work on roads, sewers, water supply, railways and building stock

> "has not kept pace with the rate of decay resulting in a serious situation in which some aspects of the infrastructure are in a state of collapse. These deficiencies result in a great deal of inefficiency in the functioning of the urban system".

The report goes on to state:

> "real dangers exist from sewer collapse and pollution."

On the west midlands, the report states:

> "The cumulative effect of under-investment in apprenticeships and in modern plant and machinery will affect the ability of the region to take advantage of any increase in demand."

**Mr. Cash:** The hon. Gentleman is wrong.

**Mr. Brown:** If the hon. Gentleman says that this quote is inaccurate, I shall be happy to give way. I am quoting from the report that the Government placed in the Library. It makes it absolutely clear that the failure of the Government to secure manufacturing investment is putting jobs at risk and is a cause of the catastrophic unemployment that we face.

**Mr. Cash** *rose*——

**Mr. Brown:** I shall not give way because the passage that I quoted is accurate.

What is the state of manufacturing investment in the regions? Manufacturing investment is vital to secure the future of our regions and jobs for the future. According to the latest figures, investment in the north of England is 41 per cent. down on what it was in 1979. In Yorkshire and Humberside, about which my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone spoke eloquently, it is down by 33 per cent. In the west midlands it is down by more than 29 per cent., and in the north-west it is down by more than 31 per cent. That is the appalling state of investment that the Government have failed to improve and which they are making worse by their cuts in regional aid. Cuts have even been announced in the past few days.

The other point made in the report is one that the Government would do well to take to heart. The report, on the Greater Manchester area this time, states:

> "Due to difficulties in securing private investment . . . the vast infrastructure . . . has to be provided by the public sector agencies . . . It therefore follows that considerable importance attaches to the level of financial resources available to the public sector."

That is a clear sign of what the Government need to do. In their submission to the European regional development fund, the Government recognised not only what the problem is and what the prospects are, but that the solutions required are those that, for ideological reasons, they have spent the past seven years rejecting.

It makes absolutely no sense to cut regional aid, to delay an improvement in the funds available from the European regional development fund or to proceed with the internal market when there are no proper guarantees for the regions and no proper safeguards against the implementation of internal market measures that may ruin further prospects for the regions.

Labour Members talked about the problems that face the regions of this country. We did so deliberately. The Government have it within their power, through the submissions to the European regional fund, negotiations in Europe and, most of all, through spending on regional aid, to do a great deal about the problems that face the regions.

In case the Government do not believe that there is a north-south divide and that divisions in Britain are getting worse, I shall quote the Bishop of Liverpool who issued a statement a few days ago which said:

> "Let us be quite clear that the divide is true, it is felt and it is very damaging."

Of course there are divisions in parts of the country. There are divisions between the inner cities and the suburbs and the shires, and there are major problems in London. However, the Government cannot deny that they share a great part of the responsibility for the widening gap between the prosperous shires and the inner cities and traditional industrial regions of the country.

The Government's response to regional divisions over the past seven years has been to allow them to widen. They have created an industrial wasteland in many parts of Britain. They have called it recovery and even hailed it as a triumph of monetarism and hoped that no one would notice. Labour Members are aware of the problems. We know what ought to be done. I tell the House that over the next few months we will push the Government back to their last stockbroker belt, their last suburb and their last shire. Very soon they will find that there are not enough millionaires without a conscience to keep them in power.

9.41 pm

**Mrs. Chalker:** This has been an interesting debate in parts. I welcome the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) to the debate. I understand that he was winding up last week's debate on which many hon. Members wished to speak. He made a far better job of the industrial debate that he had decided upon than his hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton (Mr. Robertson) made in the debate on the European Community.

The hon. Member for Hamilton may be a reluctant and a grudging convert to the case for the Community. However, I was surprised at his speech because he showed unmistakeable evidence that he has now accepted the arguments that the Government have been making for some time. I shall explain. He accepted the arguments and looks forward to the adoption of still more internal market measures. A few months ago he was denying that the internal market was of any benefit to this country. He spoke warmly about the Single European Act. Perhaps the arguments put forward against the Act by his hon. Friend the Member for Walthamstow (Mr. Deakins) have done the trick. The hon. Gentleman was against the Act then, but every right-thinking person must be in favour of the Act now.

The hon. Gentleman went on to decry the absence of a budget for 1987. I hope that he does not agree that the maximum rate of increase in the budget and the agricultural guideline should be thrown away. Surely he takes the view that they should be respected. He seemed to be implying that we should ignore budget discipline. I was surprised at that. I cannot agree with him on that as I cannot agree on many of the other things he said.

So great was the hon. Gentleman's enthusiasm that he described some of the achievements of the presidency as trivial. I hope that he will circulate his views on the achievements to those constituencies where jobs have been created, and are being created and safeguarded thanks to the internal market measures that we have negotiated. I hope that he will circulate those remarks to Socialist Governments and the ETUC which agree that our employment strategy is a real basis for creating new jobs. I hope that he will draw his remarks to the attention of his hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), who rightly regards the steps being taken to fight cancer as a major health initiative, one which we fully support.

I hope that the hon. Gentleman will defend all that he said in the future. For those whose task it is to protect us from terrorism and for those who welcome the new intensity of co-operation between police forces across the Community, introduced by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, those have been nothing but positive achievements.

**Mr. George Robertson:** Will the hon. Lady give way?

**Mrs. Chalker:** I will not give way. Time is short, as the hon. Gentleman knows.

The Opposition's basic line has been that we have not solved all the problems, so they will pretend that we have not solved any problems. That is simply not true. They are recalling their own experience in office many years ago when they claimed to have solved all the problems of the Community, whereas they knew full well that they had solved none of them.

I refuse to share the alarmism of the hon. Gentleman about the Community and the negative approach that is adopted to every challenge that arises. The problems are serious and that is exactly why I drew attention to them in my opening remarks. However, they are not so serious as to defy solution. Throughout this debate we have heard the twin themes of the vital need to control spending on agriculture and firm budgetary control. Those twin themes are completely shared by the Government, as is the importance of the structural funds. That is why I want to speak about the budget.

We have never hidden the fact that the Community faces a serious budget deficit. However, the agricultural measures agreed in December will alone save £1·3 billion over the next two years. More reforms must be undertaken to save still more money, but the commitment to reform started in April and achieved in December was a major step towards the agricultural reform that is so necessary.

I agree with my hon. Friends that we need a better system of budgetary control in the Community. The existing budgetary control mechanism has led to two readings of the budget in which the Council has agreed to constrain expenditure within the agricultural guideline. Hon. Members should not forget that last year the Council of Ministers won an important case in the European Court of Justice. It constrained the European Parliament from unilaterally adopting a budget which exceeds the maximum rate of growth in expenditure.

Hon. Members bemoan the fact that the lack of a budget in 1987 may constrain expenditure on the structural funds. The lack of a budget reflects the determination of the Council of Ministers to bring discipline into Community expenditure and, above all, into CAP spending. Even without a budget and with the provisional twelfths régime which is now operating, spending on the structural funds will continue at the levels of last year.

The year 1986 was within budget and we know that past commitments have built up, but payments made are no more than the amounts budgeted. That is control on spending. Spending is constrained by the VAT ceiling. That was the case last year, and that will continue. We are on the one twelfth basis because the Council of Ministers has refused to exceed the maximum rate of permitted expenditure. We cannot have it both ways and we will achieve budgetary control of spending.

Of course there is pressure for more spending in the Community. We heard that pressure in the debate and it is a serious problem. That is why the Government negotiated the Fontainebleau agreement, and we must not forget what it entails. By the end of this year Britain will have got back from the Community £3,000 million in rebates on our budget contribution. That is why, even with expenditure in the Community as a whole running up to the 1·4 per cent. ceiling, our own VAT contribution remains well below the old 1 per cent. ceiling. The VAT rate for other member states in 1986 was 1·4 per cent.

Thanks to the Fontainebleau agreement, the effective VAT rate in 1986 for the United Kingdom was 0·67 per cent. That means that with the Fontainebleau rebate and even with the 1·4 per cent. maximum VAT rate, we actually pay less than we did under the old 1 per cent. VAT rate without the Fontainebleau agreement. That must be beneficial for Britain. As I have said, we know that there is pressure in the Community to raise that 1·4 per cent. ceiling. That step would require the unanimous consent of all national Governments and all Parliaments in the Community.

We know that the President of the Commission is visiting capitals and will come here to present his ideas on the future financing of the Community, the reform of the CAP and the reorganisation of the structural funds. I have made it clear in this and in other debates that through our receipts and the Fontainebleau abatement we now get back five sixths of what we contribute to the Community. I agree that we are still net contributors. Germany contributes most and France contributes a bit less than we do. For us, like France and Germany if extra money was spent in the Community, that would mean less money available to be spent in this country. That is why the Community policies have to give an added value. We should judge the Commission's proposals for financial reform against that yardstick.

We are not considering the issue of when there should be an increase in the own-resources ceiling or what size that should be. We will be considering how excess expenditure on agriculture can be restrained and how control of public expenditure in the Community can be assured.

The entire focus of this year's negotiations — this point was repeated in many of the remarks tonight — must be to deal with the underlying problems of the Community, with CAP expenditure at the top of the agenda. That is not to say that I disregard the remarks about structural funds. I will consider those in a moment.

I remind the House that, during the British presidency, my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture,

*[Mrs. Chalker]*

Fisheries and Food succeeded in getting the largest measure of CAP reform—a 9·5 per cent. reduction in milk production over the next 15 months and a 13 per cent. reduction in the price of beef. That is only the beginning. It will not be easy for our dairy producers, but it is absolutely essential if the Community is to control its agricultural surpluses. We shall use the discussions to push through further essential measures of reform on cereals and Mediterranean products.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) argued, as he has argued for many years, for the repatriation of the common agricultural policy. That is not a realistic choice for this country—not for the reasons that he gave but because the budgetary costs of a deficiency payments scheme would be higher for us than the costs of the existing CAP. Nor would a system in which Britain tried to compete alone against the collective strength of European and American producers be one in which our agriculture could flourish. Either there would be a free-for-all in which many of our farmers would go to the wall, or we would have to erect protectionist barriers which would push up costs.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** Does the Minister accept the view of the European Union of Consumers, which claims that if we adopted deficiency payments there would be a big saving in that the average family in Britain would have a reduction in household bills of £13 a week? The Minister has not included that in the calculations.

**Mrs. Chalker:** Indeed, we have taken that into the calculation. I know that my hon. Friend is as keen as I am to solve the problems of agriculture. These problems are not confined to Europe alone; they are technical and worldwide problems. We will not change the position by turning the clock back. We must solve the problems from within the Community and between the Community and the other producers. We have successfully begun to do that. In the Uruguay round of GATT, for the first time, we are including agricultural produce in an attempt to rectify the world problem that is not simply limited to Europe.

I must stress to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East that real savings will be made through the CAP reform measures because the decisions taken in December will produce real savings. It is not simply a matter of delaying payments, as my hon. Friend seems to believe. The savings arise from the lower levels of support and that will mean real cuts in surpluses in future. That is why, taking into account all aspects of the package, including the costs of the butter stock disposal scheme, at the end of the day the Community will save about 1 billion ecu a year—£745 million—from 1990 onwards. Until then, the total net savings are estimated to be about £1·3 billion.

Delaying repayments to member states from the disposing of butter stocks simply means that the cost does not fall all at once but is phased over a number of years. That is the position and it is more manageable for the Community and individual states' budgets. I have said all along with regard to agriculture that it is all very well to empty the tank in that way, but that can make sense only if the tap has been turned off. In December, we agreed to turn the taps off and to run down the level of the water.

I assure my hon. Friend that the reforms which were negotiated last December involve production cuts which will affect everybody elses producers as well as ours. As my hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) said, those production cuts must be managed rationally. I am sure that my hon. Friend would not advocate steps that would go against the interests of our farmers.

The hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) spoke of the distribution of food surpluses to the needy. It makes sense to give excess produce to the needy, and that is being done, as my right hon. Friend the Minister has said, through various organisations with whom he has had discussions and explained the methods to be used. The meetings show the willingness of organisations to give out food to the most needy. I understand that, since last week, butter and beef stocks have been distributed and that further stocks will go out during the next few months. If the hon. Gentleman wants further details, the Ministry will supply them.

The scheme is not a long-term answer to CAP surpluses but a response in extreme weather conditions, and it has been welcomed by all involved.

I said earlier that, this morning, we achieved agreement ad referendum between the European Commission and the United States about the trade effects of enlargement. The agreement has yet to be confirmed formally, but I hope that it soon will be. My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East suggested that the cost of the deal between the EC and the United States was $400 million. That is not correct. He has confused the budgetary costs with the trade volumes which were under negotiation.

The United States claims that it would lose $400 million-worth of grain exports to Spain as a result of the latter's accession, which involves adopting a system of variable levies on all agricultural imports, including those from the United States. There was never any question of the EC paying $400 million.

I can estimate immediately the direct cost to the United Kingdom which would have occurred in the event of a trade war. It would have been a loss of $80 million in gin exports.

In the agreement there is no cash transfer. The deal provides United States grain exporters with reduced-levy—not levy-free—access for the bulk of a quota of 2 million tonnes of corn, 300,000 tonnes of sorghum and increased access to the Portuguese market. That will mean a slight reduction in levy income to EC budgets, but no figure can be given at the moment because the amounts must be set out when the individual tenders are opened in the light of market circumstances. The lesser tariff concessions will also cause a slight reduction in customs duties income, but my hon. Friend will receive the figures when they are known.

I understand why a large part of the debate has concerned the structural funds and I understand what hon. Members have said. I should like to put the House right on one matter concerning shipbuilding, a subject in which I also get involved. Contrary to what the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East said about the sixth directive on aids to shipbuilding, it is a considerable improvement on previous arrangements. The ceiling refers to 28 per cent. of the cost, which is equivalent to 39 per cent. of the contract price. That compares favourably with limits in the fifth directive of 22·5 per cent. of contract price or 18·5 per cent. of costs.

**Mr. Gordon Brown** *rose*——

**Mrs. Chalker:** I am sorry, but I have only two minutes. The structural funds benefit us. We have received £2·25 billion from the social fund, which is more than any other member state except Italy. We have sought to maximise our receipts from the fund. We have also received £2·25 billion from the European regional develoment fund since 1975, and the north of England has received more assistance than any other area.

We have achieved a great deal of what we set out to do in the last six months of last year. It is hard to put a price on peace and democracy in western Europe, but the Community helps to maintain it. We are a net contributor, but we shall ensure that we continue to pay no more than our fair share into the Community.

I commend the motion to the House, because the European Community could help to maximise our benefits and our influence, and protect our trade interests. I hope that the House will unite behind the achievements that have been made.

*Question put and agreed to*

*Resolved,*

That this House takes note of the White Paper on Developments in the European Community, January to June 1986 (Cmnd. 9911); and supports the emphasis which the Government placed during the United Kingdom Presidency on developing Community policies of practical benefit to industry, business and the consumer.

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101(5) (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.,*

That the Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (No. 10) Order 1986 (S.I., 1986, No. 2248), dated 17th December 1986, a copy of which was laid before this House on 18th December be approved.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

*Question agreed to.*

## Cwrt-y-Gollen Camp, Crickhowell

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

10.1 pm

**Mr. Richard Livsey** (Brecon and Radnor): I am glad Mr. Speaker, that you have given me the opportunity of raising the subject of the future of the Cwrt-y-Gollen camp, Crickhowell, in this Adjournment debate. I tried to raise the subject earlier this month when the House debated the Army, but on that occasion I was not lucky enough to catch your eye. I welcome the presence of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces to answer the points that I raise.

I am anxious to raise the subject because of the severe decline that has occurred in the fortunes of the camp over the past 10 years or so. The camp was purpose-built about 25 years ago to house a depot for some of the Welsh regiments of the British Army, notably what was then the South Wales Borderers and the Welsh Regiment. The site of the camp is one of the finest in the whole of Britain. Through a series of amalgamations of the regiments that I have mentioned, the Royal Regiment of Wales emerged. Although that regiment is young, it has inherited an excellent tradition, backed by the splendid qualities of Welsh soldiers.

The South Wales Borderers held more VCs than any other regiment in the British Army. One of the regiment's greatest exploits was shown in the film "Zulu", when it bravely defended Rorke's Drift and won no fewer than six VCs on that occasion. Indeed, in days past, this area of Wales produced the finest archers in the land, who brought victory for Henry V on the field of Agincourt. Such traditions must not be cast aside lightly in the interests of parsimonious economy and Government policy. The Army has stood by bemused and has been forced to accede to a plethora of policy changes.

**Sir John Stradling Thomas** (Monmouth): I know that the hon. Gentleman would not like to mislead the House. He has heard of the Monmouth camp, and I advise him that the archers of Agincourt came from my constituency.

**Mr. Livsey:** I agree that the archers came from our part of Wales—that covers both constituencies. I think that I pay due respect to the hon. Member for Monmouth (Sir J. Stradling Thomas) on that point.

During the Brecon and Radnor byelection campaign of 1985 the then Secretary of State for Defence acted when there were persistent rumours that the camp was to close. In June 1985 he announced that Cwrt-y-Gollen camp would remain open, but that troops would no longer be stationed there permanently, and in the future Territorial Army units would train there. In the space of 25 years the camp has gone from being the proud depot for the Royal Regiment of Wales to a training camp for junior regiments, and finally to a staging post for intermittent TA training. Cwrt-y-Gollen now exists as a camp, but only just. However, over the years there has been substantial investment in it. There are excellent accommodation facilities, officers' and sergeants' messes, a cookhouse, parade grounds, a church and a large number of married quarters. I hope that the Minister will take the time to visit this excellent camp.

In spite of the promises made in June 1985 about local employment being maintained, civilian employment has

*[Mr. Livsey]*

declined from around 60 people in 1985 to 15 now. Most left in November 1986, when the junior regiment sadly departed from the camp. Lecturers have been transferred, catering has been privatised and even, surprisingly, the eight security men have been made redundant. As a result, the camp is extremely vulnerable and I regret to report that some equipment has already gone missing. I make the general point that in the camp in my constituency there is a great lack of confidence in the Government's policy of privatising the civilian services that support our troops. They often work late into the night a[illegible]n the early morning when they come off the ranges. A[illegible]hat remains at Cwrt-y-Gollen camp are 15 clerks to keep the administration going. In the name of what has there been all this decline? Is it some Treasury saving, or something else?

The other factor that weighs heavily is the loss of between 40 and 50 permanent Army staff. Add those to the 40-plus civilian places that have been lost, and that knocks a considerable hole in the local economy.

One of the most bizarre aspects of the recent reorganisation in the camp is that the junior regiment has been transferred to Shorncliffe, Folkestone, but for adventure training these young soldiers return weekly to Cwrt-y-Gollen, a round trip of 400 miles. Does the Minister feel that this is a more cost-effective exercise than the previous arrangements, when the soldiers lived at the camp?

At present, the three camps in my constituency, Cwrt-y-Gollen, Dering Lines in Brecon, and Sennybridge are all engaged in training the Territorial Army and soldiers from all over Britain and NATO. The Sennybridge training area completes over 800,000 man training days a year, but we have no troop numbers of any significance stationed permanently in the area. We have many of the disadvantages of being associated with the armed forces, but we have few of the advantages, in that we have few permanently settled among us.

The Brecon and Radnor unemployment rate is 2 per cent. above the national average. But only 1·3 per cent. of the British Army in the United Kingdom is stationed permanently in Wales, with about 1,100 soldiers. We must compare this with the 62 per cent. of troops stationed permanently in southern England. Many include well-known regiments and total 54,000 soldiers. The south has a significantly better rate of employment and a higher standard of living. The transfer of troops to Wales is one way in which the Government can painlessly switch resources to a less wealthy area.

Recruitment in Wales is better than in any part of England. We recruit 6·5 per cent. of the Army total, but we have 5 per cent. of the United Kingdom population. I am sure that when the Minister analyses this against the number of troops permanently stationed in Wales he will agree that Wales is not getting a fair deal.

Will the Minister consider the following points about the future of Cwrt-y-Gollen camp? The Royal Regiment of Wales has in the recent past been active in Germany and Northern Ireland, and has given a good account of itself in those places. However, when it returned to the United Kingdom it was stationed in Wiltshire. This is regrettable, because the Cwrt-y-Gollen camp is only 30 miles from the Severn bridge. It is not way out somewhere in the far away hills. Its good Welsh name does not mean that it is an obscure place. It is alongside the A40, which runs from London to Fishguard. It is extremely accessible.

It would have been far better if the Royal Regiment had come home to Wales, where many of the soldiers hae their families and where many of them originated. Many of them were raised in the valleys of the south of Wales, and in the west and north-west. The Scots regiments remain stationed in Scotland. Why cannot the Royal Regiment of Wales be stationed in Wales?

I remember that when I was working in Scotland the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were about to be disbanded. A tremendous fuss was made in the area where I was living at the time that the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders should continue to exist and be stationed at Stirling. I thought that that was very laudable. Mad Mitch, the famous major of Aden, campaigned extremely hard because he was an Argyll officer. That campaign was extremely successful, and I believe that in retrospect it has proved to be a very good decision.

I understand that it may not be possible to station the regiment in Wales all the time. I accept that regiments move around from time to time to do duties overseas. Will the Minister accept that a depot and headquarters could be established at Cwrt-y-Gollen, and perhaps the other battalions of the Prince of Wales Division could be stationed at the camp from time to time. If the Royal Regiment of Wales was stationed in Wales it would give a tremendous boost to the morale of the regiment. It would also give a tremendous boost to recruitment in the regiment throughout the length and breadth of Wales.

May I suggest, rather sadly, that the good record of recruitment in Wales is, unfortunately, a reflection of the high levels of unemployment that we have throughout our country. There is a human resource which is underutilised, and rather than idling its time away doing destructive things it could do many constructive things by joining the Army.

I do not speak about this subject idly, because I was a National Service officer. It is my strong belief that it is these local loyalties, brought about by raising regiments in areas of Britain, which give the British Army its fundamental strength. The local community in my constituency would welcome the increased employment opportunities that a permanent Army presence would provide. At the very least, the junior regiment and its bandsmen should return to Port Cwrt-y-Gollen.

The camp may require some investment to bring it up to standard — I do not underestimate that — but it is already in very good condition. It has the infrastructure, and investment there would be far more cost-effective than building a new camp elsewhere. Proposals have been discussed from time to time about building a new camp elsewhere in the British Isles. Other aspects of the defence budget may be preventing the development of camps such as Cwrt-y-Gollen. The investment being made in Trident at the present time may be having a kickback into Army expenditure. Therefore, I ask the Minister to give me an assurance that the camp will definitely remain open. I trust that it is not beig deliberately run down as a prelude to closure.

Will the Minister agree to more Welsh troops being based in Wales? It would be an effective policy for both the Army and the country. I promise that they will be made welcome. The future for Cwrt-y-Gollen camp and Crickhowell will then be assured.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. Roger Freeman):** I congratulate the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livsey) on bringing to the attention of the House this important subject. He has introduced the subject with great eloquence and in a comprehensive fashion; particularly so because he served as a National Service officer, and I listened with great care and interest to what he said.

By drawing our attention to the history of Cwrt-y-Gollen camp at Crickhowell and the questions which he has posed to me—which I will seek to answer in the time left for the debate—the hon. Gentleman has done a great service to the House. The long-standing, honourable and important contribution that Welsh soldiers have made to the British Army should be recognised, as indeed it always has been, and emphasised again tonight. We are rightly proud of our Welsh Regiments, the Welsh Guards, and, indeed, the larger number of Welsh recruits to all arms and corps who have served us so well over the years. I confirm the recruitment figures that the hon. Gentleman gave. The British army has a long history of successful recruitment in Wales.

The hon. Gentleman referred to the importance of the local connection for the regimental system and expressed his hope that the Cwrt-y-Gollen camp at Crickhowell might have its potential more fully exploited as the home base for a Welsh regiment.

The local connection is indeed the cornerstone of our regimental tradition which draws upon regional kinships and strengths and the Army encourages that in many ways from school liaison visits, regimental associations and the Territorial Army, to which the hon. Gentleman referred.

However, I must stress that Army regiments are not necessarily based in the geographic areas from which they are recruited. There is no necessary link. Operational considerations must come first, although we try to take integration with the local community into account as far as possible amongst the factors being considered when redeployment is looked at. The siting of Army units is a complex mix of historical associations, convenience to allied units, major centres, training areas and relationship with operational roles.

I am sure that the House will find it useful if I spend a moment explaining the Army's present use of Cwrt-y-Gollen camp. The Armed Forces are constantly examining the cost-effectiveness of their operations and accommodation to achieve the maximum value for money and the greatest operational impact. Hon. Members will be well aware of the numerous reviews and cost-saving initiatives that the services have launched in recent years.

Amongst those was a study into the army's training organisation by Major-General Groom in 1982-83. That study showed conclusively that the Army was spread over too many regional recruit training depots, a number of which were too small to be cost-effective or needed uneconomical amounts of building work and costly maintenance. Groom also proposed intensifying junior training which would significantly reduce bed space requirements.

Following the Groom study, there was and still is a reorganisation of the Army's individual training organisation. Its first impact was to reduce the number of recruit training depots to achieve economies of scale and better combined facilities. Inevitably, a number of smaller regimental depots could not be sustained economically.

Although Cwrt-y-Gollen was an efficient training depot, its throughput was limited, its overheads were unavoidably high and it was the most expensive of all the Army's recruit training depots to run per trainee. In addition, at the time of the review, major building, maintenance and development work in the order of £7 million was considered necessary to maintain the depot's viability. In 1984 it was decided, as the hon. Gentleman knows, that Cwrt-y-Gollen must be one of the smaller recruit training depots which should close in the interests of economy.

Hon. Members will doubtless recall that that decision was subject to the fullest debate in the House at that time. Adult recruits to Welsh infantry regiments now go to Bassingbourn for their initial training and, as the hon. Gentleman said, juniors go to Shorncliffe. The hon. Gentleman referred to the fact that some of the juniors at Shorncliffe go back to the depot and I think that he implied that that was a round trip of some 400 miles. He questioned the logic of that. I can tell him that some but not all of those undergoing junior training do go back to the depot, and indeed other depots in Wales, but I stress that it is not all of them. The costs of such travel were taken into account in the costings for the reorganisation of junior training, so that movement does not come as a surprise to us. It had been taken into account in the financial appraisal.

In 1985 a study was undertaken to consider the economics of retaining the Cwrt-y-Gollen camp for alternative military use. Full account was taken of local representations and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales took a personal keen interest. My right hon. Friend the Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) the former Secretary of State for Defence, was well aware of the local impact of the decision to withdraw junior training and its effect upon the area.

The study suggested that the camp had a viable military future primarily as a Territorial Army training base and to house a Territorial Army hospital. The then Secretary of State for Defence, my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley, approved its retention for this role. I can give the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor the assurance that he is seeking: the camp has a future.

The camp also houses the Royal Regiment of Wales and the Royal Welch Fusiliers information teams, the families' housing, its welfare service offices for Wales and a detachment of the junior infantry external leadership training wing as well as a number of Territorial Army and cadet units.

In addition, the camp has basic living accommodation for up to 512 all ranks and is capable of being used as a training base all year round. This revived military utilisation of the camp makes the most efficient use of the camp without the need for expensive building work. Although the camp has been operating in this capacity for only a few weeks, it is already heavily over subscribed and we are having to turn units away. Such is its popularity that we estimate that it will be used for 80,000 man training days in 1987. The reorganisation has necessitated the closing of the smaller troop training camp, the Vauxhall at Monmouth.

I recognise that the Army primarily uses Wales for its splendid training areas and that none of the Welsh regiments has a home base in Wales. The local association with regiments and their recruiting areas is very important and adhered to as much as possible throughout the United

*[Mr. Roger Freeman]*

Kingdom, without the necessity for regiments to be necessarily stationed in their home areas. Indeed, the deployment pattern involved with operational tours would make this practically impossible. In any case, even if it were operationally and economically viable for the Welsh regiments to have a home base in Wales, the Army's plot of operational and emergency tours, home and overseas, would make it very unlikely that a native regiment would often be in its home base.

**Sir John Stradling Thomas:** I do not go all the way with the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnor (Mr. Livesey) on a number of issues and especially the idea that unemployment has contributed to recruitment in Wales. I believe that the Welsh, Scottish, English and Irish soldiers are superb.

The closure of the training camp at Vauxhall worries me, as does the semi-closure of Cwrt-y-Gollen. That camp is right on the fringe of my constituency and we need an army presence in Wales and Monmouthshire. Will my hon. Friend ask the Ministry of Defence and the Property Services Agency to get on with it and decide what will happen to the Vauxhall camp? We have all paid lip service to the Territorial Army. One of the last militia regiments of the British Army is based in Monmouth. I referred earlier to the Monmouth archers. We throw away the Territorial Army—the old voluntary spirit—as well as the regular soldiers at our peril for the future defence of our country. If Major-General Groom had been working for me and I had been his commanding officer he would not have lasted five minutes.

**Mr. Freeman:** I can assure my hon. Friend that the camp at Cwrt-y-Gollen does have a viable use and we have every intention of using it to the full. I can also assure him that the recent reference by the Ministry of Defence to the PSA concerning the disposal of the land at Vauxhall camp will be prosecuted with all deliberate speed. I assure the hon. Gentleman that I shall write to the PSA and ask for a status report on the disposal of the land and I shall write to him with a progress report.

As I have said, the factors affecting operational deployment and accommodation are complex and constrained by existing dispositions of facilities. The Army has been reviewing its estate in an attempt to redeploy to more economical areas and to take account of growing social pressures. There are many vital calls on the defence budget and operatonal capability must take precedence over social redeployment or the interests of local economies. Cwrt-y-Gollen camp is unsuitable to take an infantry battalion and does not have the necessary barrack and married quarter infrastructure. It costs up to £25 million to rebuild a barracks to today's standards and up to £10 million for the necessary married quarters.

**Mr. Livsey:** Are there any plans to build a new camp for the Army elsewhere? If so, the Minister's deliberations should take account of the fact that there has already been considerable investment in Cwrt-y-Gollen and there is room for expansion, although I accept that it could be an expensive operation. We have troops in many countries, many of whom may be coming back more often than in the past and will need more accommodation. The Minister should consider Cwrt-y-Gollen as a possible expansion point.

**Mr. Freeman:** I can give the hon. Gentleman the assurance that as and when the Army needs new building or modernisation of existing buildings to house units that may be coming back permanently to the United Kingdom, whenever there is a requirement for new building, Wales and the northern parts of England and Scotland will be given serious consideration. I believe that my right hon. Friend the Member for Henley gave that assurance when he was Secretary of State, and I repeat it today. Much more detailed study on operational logistic, economic and social factors would be needed before moving any regimental base. At present, I can only repeat that the Army has no plans or funds for such a move to Cwrt-y-Gollen, but I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept the wider assurance that I have given.

I should point out to the hon. Gentleman that the armed forces have, none the less, retained a significant presence in south Wales. The Brecon training area, Castlemartin and Sennybridge ranges, are heavily used and the Army apprentice college is nearby at Chepstow. As a Minister responsible for all three services, I cannot confine this discussion simply to the Army. The Royal Air Force, of course, has very large units at St. Athan, Brawdy, and Sealand. The Army still employs 115 officers and more than 900 soldiers and 900 civilians in Wales. The Royal Air Force employs 4,850 military and 2,650 civilians and the Navy somewhat fewer. I appreciate that those numbers have fallen, in line with reducing numbers across the defence services and the Government's drive for greater efficiency in support services. None the less, the armed forces retain a considerable and proud presence in Wales and will continue to do so.

Although we have no immediate plans to move any major Army units into Wales, we would, of course, consider all locations—including locations in Wales—in any future redeployment of military units. I recognise and fully appreciate the close association between Wales and the Welsh people and the British Army. I am also mindful of the excellent training facilities that we enjoy in Wales.

In conclusion, I gladly take up the hon. Gentleman's suggestion of a visit to Wales. I have every intention of visiting not only Cwrt-y-Gollen but Sennybridge and Brecon itself.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-eight minutes past Ten o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Friday 30 January 1987*

*The House met at half-past Nine o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PETITION

### Juries (Peremptory Challenge)

9.34 am

**Mr. Clive Soley** (Hammersmith): I should like to present a petition given to me by Paul Newman and signed by some 500 pupils and students of the four Inns of Court — Middle Temple, Inner Temple, Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn. It asks the House to protect the right of peremptory challenge, which is being questioned in the Criminal Justice Act 1982 (Amendment) Bill.

*To lie upon the Table.*

# Orders of the Day

### Crossbows Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.*

9.35 am

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** (Leicester, East): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I am especially pleased to introduce my Bill, just as I was when I heard my name drawn in Committee Room 10 by the Chairman of Ways and Means on 20 November. I must take this opportunity to thank my right hon. and hon. Friends, my right hon. Friend the Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) and Opposition Members for sponsoring the Bill. It is a short and, I am sure the House agrees, non-controversial Bill which is designed to outlaw the sale of crossbows to people under the age of 17.

I am indebted to a treatise on the crossbow which was published in 1903, called "The Crossbow Medieval and Modern: Military and Sporting, its Construction History and Management." It was written by Sir Ralph Payne-Gallwey, Baronet. I know from that treatise that crossbows were first brought into England by the Normans in 1066. As far as I can gather, they were well received, although William II was accidently killed by one in 1100 when hunting deer in the New Forest. The bolt came from the crossbow of Sir Walter Tirel.

William II, Henry I, Stephen and Henry II all employed crossbowmen, who were chiefly foreign mercenaries, in their armies. Crossbowmen were much encouraged by Richard I, who to a considerable extent reintroduced the crossbow and caused it to be a common arm of warfare.

After the death of Richard I, John and Henry III used considerable numbers of crossbowmen in their armies, whether mounted or on foot. At the second battle of Lincoln in 1217, during the civil war, the relieving force consisted of 317 crossbowmen. It is clear that crossbows were a powerful and useful weapon in those days. They were successful and commonly used in warfare.

Crossbowmen were finally discarded in open warfare by all continental armies between 1522 and 1525. They were still used on foreign ships and in the defence or attack of a besieged town or castle. The Church also had problems with the crossbow. That seems to be true of many things. In 1621 the crossbow was the subject of a commission formed by 12 bishops who, at the request of James I, inquired into the death of Peter Hawkins, a park keeper at Bramshill in Hampshire, who was accidentally slain by Archbishop Abbot of Canterbury while the prelate was out hunting. He was aiming at a stag.

Crossbow laws are among the oldest in the country and were repealed not long ago. Crossbows were commonly used in the 15th century for shooting deer and bucks. Those in authority greatly feared that if people practised with them they would become easily manipulated weapons, whereas longbows required skill and guaranteed a far better use, especially in times of national danger. Therefore, at length it was enacted — with certain reservations, as in the case of nobles and persons of wealth —that the possession of a crossbow among the people of England, even for sporting purposes, should be forbidden by law. One can see in the Royal Gallery a copy of "An Act regulating shooting with crossbows" which

[*Mr. Peter Bruinvels*]

was published in 1512. That Act restricted the right to use a crossbow to lords and to owners of land of a yearly value of 300 marks, that is £200. Its object was, as I have said, to encourage others to use the longbow, which was still regarded as very important for the defence of the kingdom. Indeed, when crossbows were again allowed in 1536, they were still not allowed in the King's parks and in the forests.

There were many statutes dealing with the crossbow. The last one was passed by Parliament in 1542 and imposed a heavy fine. People were very concerned at that time about the need to suppress this weapon. It was stated that:

> "Divers murders had been perpetrated by means of crossbows, and that malicious and evil-minded people carried them ready bent and charged with bolts, to the great annoyance and risk of passengers on the highways."

Certainly, the introduction of statutes against crossbows and hand guns to prevent the yeomen and peasantry of England from practising with, or even handling, a weapon of any sort — other than the cherished longbow — suggested that it was feared that even a hand gun might cause people to put less trust in the longbow and that the longbow was considered the more sophisticated weapon.

Those are years gone by. Since then—I bring it right up to the present day — there have been many tragic incidents involving crossbows. I am grateful to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which has presented me with a useful list of statistics showing that, although animals have certainly suffered the most, even humans have been severely injured by crossbows.

In October 1986, there was a human casualty, resulting in a prosecution and conviction in Newcastle. In April 1986, a duck was severely injured with a bolt in Bristol. In March 1986 there were reports of calves and ducks shot in the Nottingham area. Also in 1986, calves were shot on a farm at Eton, Windsor. In January 1986, a duck was shot at Whitley Bay, Northumberland. In July 1985, a dog was killed. There was no prosecution, but the bow was destroyed. In February 1986, a cat was killed. There was no trace of the attacker. In January 1986, a duck was shot in Cumbria. Again, there was no trace of the attacker. In September 1984, sheep were killed in the Swansea area. There have been many other incidents. Indeed, since 1979, 161 animals have either been severely injured or tragically killed. The statistics go right across from swans to deer, to geese, to ducks, to cattle, to wild birds and to cats.

The cats lobby especially supports my Bill. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman), who has been at the forefront in representing the interests of the cat world. Dogs, sheep, horses and rabbits have been killed. It is a tragedy that so many of these innocent animals have been killed, purely because of the ease with which certain people can get hold of crossbows.

I have some awful pictures, which I cannot show to the House, of cats and swans which have literally gone away to die after being fatally injured with a bolt. There is a callousness in the inability of our young people to respect animals. The ease with which they can get a crossbow and then go out on to common land and shoot at a duck or at a calf seems inhumane. The punishment my Bill would bring in will, I hope, deter that sort of wanton destruction of humans and animals, both of which are defenceless.

I shall not go into the particular cases, but move on to the human injuries. One must appreciate that the statistics I have concern only the cases we have heard about. Many animals go away to die, and no one hears a word about them. However, there are many cases of misuse of crossbows as well. I have a report from the police which shows that, on the figures available to them, there have been five domestic incidents involving crossbows. One was a misuse of a crossbow, two were suicides and two were attempted suicides. The maniacs who tried to commit suicide with a crossbow must have been off their heads. That seems totally irresponsible. I am amazed that they did not die at the end of it. Ten people have been injured by crossbows. The police have on their files details of 25 animal deaths or injuries, 10 burglaries or thefts, and 54 incidents of criminal damage. There are three poaching and trespass cases and eight offensive weapons cases. That gives a total for 1986 of 115 specific cases.

The crossbow lobby is particularly worried. It fears that I might be having a big go at it. Crossbow supporters have said in a newspaper article, "We are not thugs."

I appreciate that, but there is no doubt in my mind that some of the Rambo exploits in Vietnam are being emulated by young people in Britain today. Certainly, Rambo's exploits in publicising the firing power of a crossbow have come over strongly and have been highlighted and glamourised. We are talking about a lethal weapon—a silent weapon of death that is tarnishing the sport's image. It is a sport, but photographs of animals and birds with crossbow bolts through their necks and reports of crossbows being used to commit the crimes that I have just mentioned have resulted in these weapons being seen as sinister. It is correct to say, as certain people of the Centaura Field Bowman Club feel, that, if one has a crossbow, one will immediately be tarnished as a thug. That is not true, of course, but nevertheless a ban for those under 17 is essential. The British Crossbow Association's secretary, Mr. Keith Reynolds, feels that the horror stories have been blown up out of proportion. The association welcomes my Bill. Its members feel that crossbows are far too easily obtainable by the wrong people, and that there is a need to restrict them. Mr. Reynolds has said,on behalf of the British Crossbow Association, that no one in the sport would argue with my Bill.

The aim of the sport is to fire at traditional circular-faced targets, and to take part in field shooting practices where the participants take to wooded areas and fire at drawings of wildlife. It is a sport which is growing in popularity, and one which many people believe will expand when it is given the added respectability that I hope that it will get with my Bill. Many people find it totally relaxing. It will need new members. We can talk in Committee, assuming my Bill gets a Second Reading, about the role of supervision of those under 17.

**Mr. Sydney Chapman** (Chipping Barnet): My hon. Friend made a reference to me. He will recall that exactly three years ago I presented a petition to the House which asked for stricter regulations for crossbows and other lethal weapons, not least air weapons. Will my hon. Friend say why he has picked the age of 17 as one of the provisions in his Bill? Is it because there are provisions relating to air weapons at the age of 17? Would he not agree that perhaps even a higher age, and certainly a minimum age of 18, might be more appropriate?

**Mr. Bruinvels:** The aim of my Bill, which I will develop, is to keep it in line with the legislation for air weapons. The incidents of crime at the moment occur with those under the age of 17. If we can get them at a young enough age, we will prevent them from becoming tomorrow's hoodlums. I am doing nothing that is different from the airgun legislation.

There has been a growing increase in cases of crossbows being taken to scenes of crime. On 4 December 1986 the *Daily Telegraph* reported that a manor house murderer had been gaoled for life. The article mentioned the young, armed, masked men breaking into the manor house. It stated

> "They were armed with crossbows to silence the woman's Great Dane, Prince, and her two boxer dogs. Clark carried a home-made ·22 rifle and shot the gardener after kicking open the back door."

They shot the great dane between the eyes when the dog tried to bar the way to his mistress's bedroom. That is the problem that we have today.

On 26 January 1987, *The Sun* reported that the owner of a doberman pincher dog is offering £50 to trace a crossbow thug who shot and nearly killed that dog in Dartford, Kent. The *Today* newspaper of 27 November revealed a lethal armoury that the law does not stop children from buying, including a Barnett Trident crossbow that is accurate up to 50 yards and costs only £48.

Another example of an attack by someone using a crossbow was a pigeon found in a shopping centre with a six-inch steel tipped crossbow bolt through its breast. We must ponder on how it lodged there, bearing in mind the size of the average pigeon. *The Times* carried an article on 12 March 1985 about a girl who was injured by a crossbow. The article sated:

> "A girl aged 18 was taken off the critical list in North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary yesterday after being shot in the stomach with a crossbow, in . . . Stoke on Trent, on Sunday."

It is currently so easy to buy a crossbow. For example, the Fire Dragon catalogue lists some exotic and glamorous titles that have been given to crossbows, including the Panzer II, which costs £92, the Wildcat II and two Thunderbolts, one of which costs £265. The catalogue also lists a Trident that is accurate up to 50 yards. Other models include the Devastator and the Fox Fire. The cheapest one of all is called the Bandit Bow, which apparently is designed for "family fun". That one is described as being safe and is supplied with rubber sucker tipped bolts that can be used to fire at targets that are also supplied. The advertisement reads:

> "Shoot at your favourite political 'friend' on TV."

It is described as being "remarkably accurate". The Bill is not directed to toy crossbows, but it seems incredible that at one end of the market there is the Thunderbolt, which costs £265, and at the other the Bandit fun bow.

I had intended to bring a Thunderbolt crossbow into the Chamber, and I do not break any confidence by saying that I raised the matter with the Serjeant at Arms. I wanted to show right hon. and hon. Members what one looked like. I received a letter from the Serjeant at Arms telling me that it has always been the position that Members may not enter the Chamber with weapons and that he felt that this practice could not be varied. May I say that I agree with that decision?

There are some crossbows that carry up to six bolts. They are lined up on the bow ready for use. If the user misses his target the first time he can use further bolts until he hits it. It is frightening. We are talking about bolts that are tungsten-tipped that can kill at 25 yards. The bolts cost about £2 each and they will inflict the most terrible damage on any target living or dead. I am horrified that it is so easy to obtain bolts such as I have in my hand.

The campaign has been building up to a crescendo since early-day motion 638 was tabled last year, which was supported by 162 Members. It called for an unrestricted ban on the sale of crossbows. It is the fact that crossbows in good condition and set up properly would enable any competent rifleman rapidly to acquire the skill to fire on target. I appreciate that there is a difference between a rifle and a crossbow, but the primary difference is that of missile speed, as target-hitting reliability is virtually the same. Both types of missile, however, can travel at 250 ft per second. That shows that we are talking about lethal weapons.

I wish to pay tribute to the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon), who introduced the Crossbows (Restrictions) Bill during the previous Session. The hon. Gentleman's Bill had all-party support, and it was his early-day motion, which had the support of my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes), which led to the Government's decision to move on this issue. The hon. Gentleman sought to restrict and control the sale of crossbows and to make their sale to minors a punishable offence. The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), the current leader of the Social Democratic party, made a major speech on the crossbow's contribution to violence and the ease with which young people can buy and carry weapons which was well reported in the *Daily Mail* on Wednesday 26 November. The right hon. Gentleman made it clear that there was a need to end Britain's slide into brutality. The crossbow is one of the weapons which features in the slide and it needs to be done away with as a matter of urgency.

I do not deny that there are other significant and lethal weapons apart from the crossbow, but the crossbow is a weapon of death and of horror. It is a weapon that can be carried easily and taken to football matches, for example. There is a small crossbow on the market that I could have brought into the Chamber easily. I could have carried it on my person and no one would have noticed my possession of it. It is a weapon that is effective up to 50 yards. This type of crossbow is generally lethal at 25 yards, although its range extends beyond that distance. It has been reported that this type of crossbow has been taken to football grounds to be aimed and fired at so-called supporters.

We must stop that sort of use of the crossbow. We must protect our young from themselves. National newspapers have been supportive of the crossbow campaign, including the *Daily Mail, Today,* the *Daily Express* and *The Sun.* These newspapers have recognised that crossbows are highly accurate, powerful and deadly weapons. I believe that the crossbow bolt is more dangerous than the 9 mm bullet, yet crossbows are subject to even less legal control than airguns. As I have said, they can be bought freely over the counter at any sports shop.

The critics of the crossbow are urging the Government to introduce legislation to restrict sales. Surely that is right when one reflects on the various incidents to which I have referred. People have been injured and animals have been maimed or killed by crossbow bolts. I want to see a reduction of violence as a matter of urgency.

*[Mr. Bruinvels]*

In a parliamentary answer on 3 December 1986 my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced that in

"consultation with the police and other interested parties I have been considering whether any steps can usefully be taken to prevent the misuse of crossbows."

He stated that crossbows

"are . . . dangerous weapons in the wrong hands, and I do not consider that they are suitable to be in the possession of unsupervised young people."

He went further and said that he proposed

"to issue a guidance notice to traders urging them not to sell crossbows to persons under 17." — [*Official Report*, 3 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. *634*.]

I know that my right hon. Friend's answer was welcomed by hon. Members on both sides of the House. It was considered to be an announcement that would lead to a statutory prohibition on the sale of crossbows to those under 17 years and on their purchase and possession by unsupervised young people. In the absence of an early opportunity for the Government to introduce legislation, my right hon. Friend said that the Government would look favourably on a Bill that was introduced by a Back Bench Member to introduce restrictions on the sale and use of the crossbow. I am that Member.

I have introduced a short Bill. Clause 1 makes it clear that it will be an offence to sell a crossbow, or part of it, of the sort to which the Bill is directed, to a person under the age of 17 years. An offence will not be committed, however, if the seller believes the purchaser to be 17 years of age or older and has reasonable grounds for his belief. This is in line with the minimum age of 17 years that is a requirement of section 24(1) of the Firearms Act 1968. I know that that will satisfy my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet.

Clause 2 is directed to the sale of crossbows. It makes it an offence for a person under 17 years of age to purchase a crossbow or part of one of the sort to which the Bill is directed. Again, the age restriction is in line with section 22(1) of the 1968 Act.

Clause 3 is directed to the possession of crossbows by persons under the age of 17 years, unless supervised by a person aged 21 years or over. It will be an offence under paragraph *(a)* for a person under the age of 17 years to have with him a crossbow that is

"capable of discharging a missile".

The clause applies to the possession of a complete crossbow, one in kit form or one that has been dismantled. Most importantly, this offence can be committed in any place whether public or private.

Clause 4 sets out powers of search and seizure.

**Mr. Alan Williams** (Swansea, West): Does the Bill cover the use of a crossbow by someone under the age of 17 years who is unsupervised? The Bill covers purchase and possession, but a youngster may borrow someone else's crossbow and use it temporarily. If the use of crossbows is not envisaged in the Bill, does the hon. Gentleman intend in Committee to introduce a provision to prevent their use by persons under the age of 17 years? Clause 3 does not seem to cover the use of crossbows by young persons.

**Mr. Bruinvels:** Clause 3 covers that aspect. It does not matter whose crossbow it is. The Bill refers to the possession of crossbows. It creates an offence relating to the possession of crossbows by any person under the age of 17.

**Mr. Keith Best** (Ynys Mon): As my hon. Friend knows, I support his Bill. Am I right in thinking that no part of the Bill deals with the manufacture of crossbows by those under the age of 17? They could produce home-made crossbows.

**Mr. Bruinvels:** Yes. I confirm that no part of the Bill deals with the manufacture of crossbows by people under the age of 17. I imagine that the materials and expertise needed would require someone much older than 17 to make a crossbow. Bearing in mind that I shall speak about the draw power later, there is no possibility that a young person can manufacture such a crossbow.

**Sir John Biggs-Davison** (Epping Forest): If some young person under the age of 17 were to make a crossbow, and if he had it in his possession, he would commit an offence.

**Mr. Bruinvels:** That is correct. The penalties will be the greatest possible deterrent from making such a weapon.

Clause 4 refers to the powers of search and seizure. Obviously, it is essential to empower a constable to detain and search a person or vehicle in connection with a suspected offence relating to under— age possession of a crossbow or part of a crossbow. The clause goes on to refer to the power to seize and detain a crossbow or part of a crossbow found in a search. As hon. Members will notice, there is a power of entry for a constable to exercise the powers conferred on him by clause 4. Subsection (1) *(a)* enables a constable, if he suspects with reasonable cause that a person is committing or has committed an offence under clause 3 — that is the unsupervised possession of a crossbow or part of a crossbow — to search that person for the offending item.

Various other provisions under these subsections relate to detaining a person or a vehicle to undertake a search to enable a constable to

"seize and detain for the purpose of proceedings for an offence under this Act anything discovered by him in the course of a search under subsection (1) which appears to him to be a crossbow or part of a crossbow."

It is easy to purchase crossbows in kit form, and that is particularly important. Obviously, certain crossbow parts may be hidden around one's body. The police would have difficulties but certainly would be able to find them with a full search. Subsection (4) states:

"For the purpose of exercising the powers conferred by this section a constable may enter any land other than a dwelling-house."

My hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Mon (Mr. Best) mentioned crossbows being manufactured by people under the age of 17. Apart from it obviously being an offence to manufacture and possess a crossbow, there is also the draw weight. It would be difficult, without proper professional guidance and the proper materials, to manufacture a crossbow with a draw weight of 1·4 kg or more. The purpose of clause 5 is to exclude the toy crossbow to which I referred a few moments ago. The Bandit Bow for family fun crossbow has a rubber sucker. There is no possibility that that crossbow will do any damage, so it will still be allowed to be sold and used.

As the House knows, I have always been fond of supporting any kind of Home Office toughening-up of the law. We have become much the weaker and we suffer because our laws are not always totally respected and punishments are not always given out to fit the crime. The punishments that I propose in clause 6 will empower the courts to deal with crossbows involved in offences against these provisions. Subsection (1) provides a maximum penalty, on summary conviction of an offence under clause 1 of the Bill, of six months' imprisonment. Obviously, that refers to the sale of a crossbow to someone under the age of 17. A fine set at level five of the standard scale, which is currently £2,000, is available. I know that these penalties were last looked at in 1984, but I hope that they will be examined again. The bigger the punishment, the greater the deterrent wantonly to sell—if one can prove it, of course—a crossbow to someone under the age of 17. To reassure those hon. Members who wonder about the firearms legislation, I point out that these penalties are totally in line with those provided by the Firearms Act 1968 for someone who sells a firearm to somebody else under the age of 17.

The maximum penalty, on summary conviction of an offence against clauses 2 or 3, is up to level 3 on the standard scale, which is £400. That is a deterrent. Children should not purchase crossbows. They know that they will break the law if they do so, and to them that fine represents a lot of money.

Subsection (3) gives the courts the power, when a person is convicted of any offence under the Bill, to order the forfeiture or disposal of any crossbow or part of a crossbow which forms the basis of the offence. Naturally, that must be done.

Clause 7 relates to corresponding provisions for Northern Ireland. Riding in tandem with the Bill will be Order in Council provisions that will bring Northern Ireland in line with the rest of the United Kingdom at, I hope, exactly the same time. I know that hon. Members understand the short title of the Bill. That is the basic premise of the Bill as I see it.

We must continue to bring in any kind of legislation to protect animals. Animals have suffered the most. They are the cheap victims of crossbow vandalism. With various Acts already in situ to help to stamp out wanton attacks on animals, the opportunity exists to tighten up the law to protect them. Juveniles are the main offenders in the misuse of crossbows. They are tempted because crossbows are potentially lethal weapons. It is obvious that the purchase and possession of crossbows should be controlled as a matter of urgency.

At present, 200,000 crossbows are in circulation. The majority are used for sporting purposes. However, only about 3,000 crossbow users belong to clubs. Obviously, many people do not belong to any club. Crossbows are used to shoot at targets on private land, and some are kept at home as wall decorations. Crossbow shooting is developing at such a fast rate that it will not be long before it is an Olympic sport. Many crossbow shooters make their own bolts and bows. That worries me because some bolts are even more lethal than the one that I showed the House.

With 17,000 crossbows being sold each year, there must be some control to ensure that those who use them are capable of using them properly. People under the age of 17 will be able to use crossbows only when they are supervised by an adult. That adult will have a great responsibility. Under clause 3, no child under the age of 17 may use a crossbow unless he is under the supervision of a 21-year-old adult or someone older. It is important that we look after our young people and do not tempt them to buy crossbows.

Another worry is that there has been a growth in crossbow misuse in the past year. Crossbows were not misused so much in the 1970s, as far as we can tell from the offences known to the police. Recently there have been 54 cases of criminal damage and 25 cases of attacks on animals. Something has to be done to stop the horrific and brutal injuries which, unfortunately, are becoming regular occurrences.

Action to prevent young people from having these crossbows must be welcome, and we must ensure that they are no longer tempted to buy these weapons. I understand that guidance notices are already available and are acting as a warning to all traders. It is important that tradesmen and mail order companies keep an eye on the problem. If it can be shown that someone under the age of 17 has a crossbow, the trader is very much at fault. Therefore, I want the measure to be as strong as possible. I also want to ensure that the temptation to buy is removed. Unless there are controls over the sale of crossbows, persons and property are at risk. People have laughed and said that the crossbow is not a worry, but it is a lethal, vicious and dangerous weapon.

Sir Robin Day in "Question Time" seemed to feel that crossbows were an outsize bow and arrow of the Robin Hood days, but Robin Hood was responsible in the use of his bow. These weapons are not necessarily bows of bamboo cane and a length of string. Crossbows are a dangerous and powerful weapon. The draw weight of the crossbows shows the serious damage that they can do. It is easy to penetrate substantially into timber, brick and human and animal flesh. Therefore, I bring my Bill to the House in a serious attempt to solve this problem.

The RSPCA's statistics are a roll of shame of the abuse that has occurred. Police statistics tell part of the story. It is up to us to ensure that the misuse is calmed and quelled as quickly as possible. The crossbow offences show that this is not always a nice sport. I know that the National Field Crossbow Federation, and the British Crossbow Society, which has 50 clubs, will co-operate. I know that the match crossbow shooting and field crossbow shooting will continue. I am not trying to stop the sport, but I am trying to ensure that crossbows are properly used and looked after and that the countryside and our animals are protected.

We will no doubt have to discuss other Acts in Committee, and there will be necessary amendments and discussions on the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Prevention of Crime Act 1953. There will need to be general monitoring of the use of offensive weapons in public places. The Bill will enable people to show criminal intent, with resulting conviction. The short range of some of these crossbows must not be seen as an easy option. They are still lethal weapons and should be handled with care. They are barrelled weapons, and the speed with which some of them emit the bolt is a matter of great concern not just to hon. Members but to those outside the House.

I have received many letters of support from those who are concerned and I shall take the time of the House to highlight some of them. The National Farmers Union has said that farm livestock is vulnerable to crossbow misuse. It wants to see positive action to combat the growing menace of this silent but lethal weapon, and it welcomes the Bill. It acknowledges the lethal capacity of crossbows and points out that bolts have been known to pierce concrete walls. It gives a worrying statistic about crossbows. In 1965, 1,000 were sold, while in 1985 17,000 were sold. There are now 250,000 in circulation and something must be done.

*[Mr. Bruinvels]*

The RSPB also shares my concern. It welcomes the Bill and says that the damage that has been done to wildlife is shattering. The St. Andrews Animal Fund has been in touch with me and the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley). It says that it has great concern about the Bill.

Crossbows are here to stay, but they must remain under proper controls. My Bill is a small contribution to ensuring that crossbow misuse is curtailed. It will take a while to get the Bill through the House, but the fact that crossbows are so lethal and cause misery and injury to so many animals and humans shows that the time is running out for those who dare to misuse them. I hope that the Bill will have the support of the House because it will do something to protect defenceless animals and help humans. Crossbow shooting is a countryside sport. I am attacking not countryside sports but those who attack innocent animals and humans. I am pleased to commend the Bill to the House.

10.16 am

**Mr. Don Dixon** (Jarrow): I congratulate the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels), first, on his success in coming so high in the ballot for private Members Bills, and, secondly, on choosing the subject of crossbows for his Bill. Although the Bill does not go as far as I and many others would like, it goes a long way towards dealing with the incidents that have brought this subject so vividly to my attention. It deals with the restriction on the sale of crossbows to children.

In August 1985 a constituent of mine, Mr. Roger Docherty, brought into my office in Jarrow a crossbow that had been bought by his 15-year-old brother Adrian in a hobby shop in South Shields. On seeing his brother with the crossbow, Mr. Docherty took it from him. He took it into the garden to try it out, and from 15 yards the arrow penetrated a piece of wood to the depth of 1 in, enough to kill a person. This lethal weapon had been sold across the counter in a hobby shop to a 15-year-old boy, with no questions asked. Anybody who had seen him would have easily recognised his age.

The weapon was manufactured by Barnett International of Wolverhampton, and it claimed on the package to be the most powerful crossbow manufactured in the world. There was a foot adjustment with it to help those who were not strong enough to do whatever they call cocking a crossbow to fire. On 5 September 1985 I wrote to the Home Secretary drawing his attention to this alarming and dangerous practice. In that letter I pointed out that this crossbow had been sold across the counter to a young boy. At that time the American film "Rambo", referred to by the hon. Member for Leicester, East, was on release in all the cinemas and was being widely advertised. I had an idea that the sales campaign at Barnett International coincided with the showing of the film.

I received a reply from the Minister of State, Home Office, on 30 September 1985, in which he said:

> "The Prevention of Crime Act 1953, for example, makes it an offence to possess any offensive weapon, including a bow or crossbow without lawful authority or reasonable excuse. . . . Our view, which is one shared by the Association of Chief Police Officers, is that bows and crossbows do not present the same danger to the public safety as firearms and that, given the extensive restrictions there already are on their use, we would not be justified in imposing on the police the substantial extra workload that further controls . . . would entail."

My constituent was so concerned that he contacted the *Sunday Sun* newspaper, which has a circulation in the north. It is part of the Thomson Press, and at that time it was spearheading a campaign to get something done about the sale and misuse of crossbows. That campaign had been prompted by the many incidents that had taken place in the north.

After the article appeared in the *Sunday Sun* I received letters from all over the country, as Mr. Docherty had said in the article that he had contacted me and that I had written to the Home Secretary. The letters that I received described incidents that had occurred with the misuse of crossbows. One letter was from S. M. Wakelin of Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire. He described how two policemen had been attacked as they got out of their patrol car outside Bracknell police station. He said:

> "One of the two bolts they dodged was fired with such force that it penetrated the station's concrete wall."

The letter continued:

> "A bolt was fired at an airliner. It happened at Leeds airport when a two-engined Dan Air plane with 44 passengers was about 100 ft off the ground. The bolt penetrated a wing and ripped part of the fuselage."

I admit that there is no evidence to show that what that person said was true, but it is typical of the letters that I received after the article appeared in the *Sunday Sun*.

During Home Office Question Time on 20 February 1986 I raised the matter again with the Home Secretary, I asked:

> "Does the Secretary of State recall that I wrote to him last September about a 15-year-old constituent of mine who went into a shop and bought a lethal crossbow? His hon. Friend the Minister of State answered the letter saying that it was an important matter that they would keep under review. Has anything been done about that incident? Do the Government intend to introduce legislation to prohibit the sale of crossbows or at least to extend licensing, bearing in mind recent incidents?"

The Secretary of State replied:

> "We are considering the matter carefully and urgently to see whether anything sensible can be done." — [*Official Report*, 20 February 1986; Vol. 92, c. 467.]

In March 1986 early-day motion 638 was tabled by the hon. Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes), and that was signed by many right hon. and hon. Members. The hon. Member for Leicester, East also referred to that.

I consulted my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) and gave him copies of my correspondence and also the minutes of a committee meeting of the Northumbria police authority which had discussed the use and misuse of crossbows as a result of the many incidents that were occurring in the Northumbria police area. My right hon. Friend wrote to the Home Secretary, and on 16 April he received a reply which stated:

> "Particular concern has been expressed recently about the misuse of crossbows and I accept that we should look again to see if anything further can sensibly be done to try to prevent these weapons falling into the wrong hands. My officials will therefore be consulting the police, the crossbow manufacturers and the crossbow sporting interests to see how we can best go forward."

During April the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals wrote to the Home Office giving information on crossbow injuries and deaths to animals. It pointed out that in the past five years there had been 100 deaths and injuries to animals by the use of crossbows.

The hon. Member for Leicester, East mentioned various newspapers which took up a campaign on crossbows because of the serious incidents that were occurring all over the country. On 6 May 1986 the *Daily Mirror* had a full-page article on crossbows. It spoke of the menace of weekend Rambos and went on to describe the various kinds of crossbows that could easily be purchased by mail order or over the counter at hobby shops and so on. The article continued:

> "Already, crossbows are taking a terrible toll. They can kill a man at 100 yards and are being used by thugs to inflict shocking injury and death on people, domestic animals and wildlife . . . Police admit that under the present law they are powerless to curb private combat training and the spread of legally-held weapons."

**Mr. Best:** Does the hon. Gentleman accept that if a person takes a crossbow into a public place he is already covered by legislation on the possession of an offensive weapon? It is an offensive weapon per se and not one that has been adapted for the purpose.

**Mr. Dixon:** I accept the hon. Gentleman's point, and that has been drawn to my attention in Home Office correspondence.

The Bill will prohibit the sale of crossbows to youngsters under the age of 17. One of the dangers is that when youngsters buy these crossbows unbeknown to their parents, they will use them unbeknown to their parents, and thus they will not be subject to supervision or control. Although the Bill does not go as far as I should like, it is a step forward.

On 11 June 1986 I introduced a ten-minute Bill asking for the introduction of a licence and various other things for crossbows, and received a tremendous amount of support. I do not lay any blame on the Home Office for delay, as I understand that this is a difficult subject to approach and progress must be made step by step.

The first step taken by the hon. Member for Leicester, East will go some way towards solving those problems. I believe that during discussions certain amendments may be introduced. Indeed, that point was made by the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman), who asked why the prohibition on the sale of crossbows was restricted to those under 17, rather than to those under 18. This morning I received a briefing from the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, which made the same point:

> "The Association, therefore, welcomes the provisions of the Bill in principle, but believes that the age limit should be raised to eighteen years."

The hon. Member for Leicester, East gave the reason for the proposed age limit.

I support the Bill. I am pleased that the hon. Member for Leicester, East has chosen this subject and I hope that the House will give unanimous support to the Bill's Second Reading so that it can go to Committee. We would therefore be one step further towards dealing with a problem that affects every part of the country. I congratulate the hon. Member for Leicester, East on introducing the Bill.

10.28 pm

**Sir John Biggs-Davison** (Epping Forest): My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) is a fortunate hon. Member. He is fortunate in drawing lucky in the ballot, and fortunate for being parliamentary representative for Leicester, but Leicester is fortunate to have my hon. Friend as its Member of Parliament. In the time that he has been in the House my hon. Friend has shown himself to be a diligent and humane Member. The Bill is evidence of that, and I am proud to be one of its sponsors. My hon. Friend explained the Bill in a clear and agreeable manner and I hope that the House will respond by giving it a speedy passage to another place so that it can be brought on to the statute book as quickly as possible.

I am rather surprised that my hon. Friend should even have contemplated bringing a crossbow anywhere near the Chamber. Surely he knows that he can sling his arbalest from the red tape on his peg in the cloakroom. But, more seriously, as the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) has just illustrated, a crossbow is a weapon capable of the most deadly purpose.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East is a member of the National Synod of the Reformed Church of England and he quoted some ancient Anglican associations with venery and the crossbow. But the crossbow goes back centuries before the Reformation. The history of warfare and armament is the history of one fearful dominant weapon being answered and downed by another.

In the Crusades the arbalest proved superior to the bows used by the mounted Saracen archers. But in 1139, the second Lateran council, held under Pope Innocent II and attended by about 1,000 prelates, besides various suspensions and excommunications, passed canons on simony, incontinence and clerical attire, and another canon forbade breaking the peace of God and contests dangerous to life. I mention in passing that the peace of God was not so very peaceful. The idea was to have peace in Christendom for better war against Islam.

This universal council also considered and condemned the crossbow, which was then widely used, notably by the Genoese, Pisans and Venetians. In England, its use was forbidden by King Henry VII. The motive, as my hon. Friend has said, was not so much humanitarian as to encourage the craft of the longbow, which had given England her triumphs at Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt.

By the 17th century the crossbow was dying out. However, as today, in the calendar of my hon. Friend's communion, is the feast of King Charles the Martyr, perhaps I can mention that it was used in the Great Rebellion. Speaking of regicide, one of the kings whose names are much associated with the building of Westminster Hall was assassinated by means of a crossbow.

In later times the crossbow has been revived, partly for sport, but partly, alas, for vicious cruel crime. My hon. Friend is no spoilsport, nor are any of his supporters. The sportsmen who use the crossbow today are eager to put out of business, and, if appropriate, into gaol, the poachers and robbers and those who inflict death or injury by means of a crossbow upon birds and animals.

My hon. and learned Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department—no, he is not learned, but he will be one day—is on the Treasury Bench and he looks benign today, and I believe that the Home Office is benign towards the measure. I have been reminded by a column in the *Police Review* of 9 January that that was not always the case. In 1979 a Labour Home Secretary, in a written answer, told me that he had no evidence that legislation on crossbows would be justified. The Home Office is making a little progress under the Conservative stewardship. I hope that the presence of my hon. Friend means that we shall have full Government support for the speedy passage of this necessary Bill.

My last point relates to clause 7 and to Northern Ireland. It is not clear to me why the Bill could not simply

*[Sir John Biggs-Davison]*

have been applied to Northern Ireland. I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East will refer to that if he obtains the leave of the House to intervene again. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary will also refer to this point. It may be that the present state of the law in Northern Ireland requires the treatment proposed in clause 7. Otherwise, surely it would have been easy for us to provide that the Bill should apply to Northern Ireland. If we are to have a separate order, some hon. Members will be required to sit, probably late at night, in order to pass it. Is that necessary? It is simply part of the bureaucracy's general obsession with the separate statute book of Northern Ireland and its perverse opposition to the full integration of the Province into the United Kingdom.

But that said, I do not wish to end on a sour note. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East and I wish him all success — indeed, I wish the country all success—in the speedy passage of the Bill.

10.35 am

**Mr. Michael Hancock** (Portsmouth, South): I add my congratulations to those of other hon. Members to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvel) on bringing the Bill before the House and giving us the opportunity of taking what has been already described as that much needed first step forward.

I, like the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison), am proud to be a sponsor of the Bill. It will be an enormous benefit to Britain and will undoubtedly set the scene for further legislation in coming years to tighten even further the controls over what can only be described as a very dangerous weapon indeed.

I have been amazed, to say the least, at some of the bizarre documents that I have been sent urging me to rebut the Bill. The research project funded by the Crossbow Archery Development Association went into detail about what the crossbow can and cannot do. The hon. Member for Leicester, East dispelled many of the myths that it has tried to create in defence of something with which it is obviously extremely proud to be associated. But some of its suggestions about the abuse of crossbows and the effectiveness or otherwise of the weapon are dispelled in other reports, not least from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. To suggest, as the association does, that the weapon is not often used to abuse animals and is not a lethal weapon in the sense that it loses its strength quickly is a bizarre contradiction of what the association's members would use the weapon for and of what it would be seen to be used as.

**Mr. Dixon:** I think that every hon. Member will have received a copy of that research. Will the hon. Gentleman also point out that that research was funded by manufacturers of crossbows?

**Mr. Hancock:** Yes. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for bringing that point out. Those hon. Members who have received that research should look carefully at who financed it. It deserves to be put in the dustbin when compared with the real evidence that has been put forward by bodies that have been affected by the use of these weapons.

The hon. Member for Leicester, East mentioned the National Farmers Union. It has sent me a copy of the letter that it sent to him. Its examples of the use of the weapon on livestock are legion. The many examples should draw hon. Members' attention to the fact that something must be done.

I do not believe for one minute that all the incidents are caused by youngsters under the age of 17 with crossbows. Many, if not the vast majority, were caused by irresponsible, vicious, nasty people who find it funny or nice to injure, maim or kill an animal. The hideousness of that act needs to be exposed. It would be folly for any hon. Member to suggest that that was the province only of the young — far from it. It appeals to all cross-sections of the population and we should be wary of it.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Devonport, (Dr. Owen) has sent me a copy of a catalogue that he used in making a speech. After reading that catalogue, I got hold of another that described many weapons, including the close-killing commando battle knife, "which every home should have". I do not know why everybody should have a close-killing commando battle knife, but the suggestion is that we are not complete in our homeliness unless we have one. The catalogue went on to say that, at long last, we have the ultimate killing weapon and described the high-powered deadly crossbow, as if we had all been waiting with bated breath for that ultimate killing weapon to be on the market. Sadly, that weapon is readily available in high streets in virtually every city and town.

Sadly, many of the dealers who stock that long-awaited killing weapon are only to willing to sell it to youngsters, many of whom not only look young but are under the age of 17. The hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) described a serious incident in his constituency that involved youngsters. We should be wary of the hard-sell tactics of those who deal in such weapons, which are depicted in words that would encourage many people to believe that they should have one, because they possess some special power that would give them an ability to kill, maim or inflict injuries on animals. We should be wary of such publicity, and I hope that the Minister will advise us that his Department will seek to take action against the way in which those weapons are advertised, the descriptions that are given of them so as to make them appeal to a certain section of the community that seems to delight in such material.

The weapons are undoubtedly powerful and extremely dangerous. Many of them, with steel and tungsten tips, are capable of shattering a house brick at some considerable distance. There have been instances of crossbows that have embedded themselves in concrete walls and ripped through metal. As we have heard from the statistics, crossbows are used in crimes against people as well as against animals. In various statements that have been circulated to hon. Members, the police have expressed their concern about the way in which those weapons have been allowed to proliferate. About 250,000 such weapons are available at the moment and that warrants real control and ultimate licensing.

The hon. Member for Leicester, East made great play of the fact that there are clubs of responsible people who are interested in crossbows. That is true, but there are also many grossly irresponsible people who possess those weapons and who will not only use them for poaching and other activities, but will allow young people to use them. We must be ever vigilant in trying to safeguard against that mentality.

I welcome the proposals, but I hope that the House will regard them as only the first step. Other weapons are illustrated in gaily coloured books and catalogues depicting the martial arts, for example, the throwing stars that have become so popular at football matches. I know that from my experience when standing on the terraces at Fratton park at Portsmouth. I have seen those things being thrown around and the hideous injuries that can be caused by them. The mace, with its ball and chain, is also something that people are told they should own, if one reads those catalogues. The sub-aqua diver's high powered speargun is as lethal in many instances as a crossbow, but it is readily available across the counters of sporting shops up and down the country.

Therefore, the Bill must be welcomed, but it should be regarded as being only the first of many steps that we must take. The House should have the courage to say, "Enough is enough," and should have enough backbone to bring in the legislation and resist the glossy booklets and members of the sporting lobby, who tell us that those weapons are essential if they are continue to perform their activities. I do not believe that any weapon can reasonably be used against any animal. However, I accept, as do the hon. Member for Leicester, East and many of the other sponsors of the Bill, that many in the sporting fraternity see the crossbow as a legitimate field weapon. I do not share that belief.

I support the Bill and am proud to be a sponsor of it. I congratulate the hon. Member for Leicester, East on having the courage to present the Bill. I am sure that he was inundated with offers of help and support for bringing other Bills to the House. I believe that he chose the right Bill. He showed his personal courage in resisting the temptation to present a more glamorous Bill to the House. I welcome the opportunity to support his Bill, but I urge the House to remember that this is the first step and that we need to take many more before we shall be able to rid ourselves of the hideous results that such weapons can bring to society.

10.45 am

**Mr. David Evennett** (Erith and Crayford): I am delighted to be able to speak in support of the Bill that has been introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) and to follow the comments of the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock). I am especially pleased to be a sponsor of a Bill that has received all-party support, because that is something which, regrettably, is all too rare these days.

I share the concern of many of my constituents about the increasing violence in our society and the increasing incidence of avoidable accidents involving young people. I realise, as we all do, that the media give wide coverage to the more extreme or spectacular incidents, so it is all too easy to believe that death or injury lurks around every corner. As a parent of two young boys, I am obviously concerned about the increase of violence in our society and naturally want to see improvements that will protect our future citizens. We must keep things in perspective but, in some cases, death and injury do lurk around the corner. For that reason, some sections of the community are afraid to venture out because of their fear of the criminal element. I am not suggesting for one moment that the use of crossbows for criminal purposes is a major problem, because it is not, but any injury that is avoidable is regrettable and I believe that the House has a duty to legislate to minimise or eliminate the risk of injury wherever possible. Therefore, I welcome the Bill, which sets out to deal with a minor but real problem in a society that is complex and ever changing. There is undoubtedly a real gap in the law if it allows the unsupervised use of crossbows by young people.

I must admit to my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East that before the problem of the misuse of crossbows by young people was brought to my attention by constituents I had never thought of, fired or even held a crossbow. Indeed, I still have not held or fired one, but at least I am now better informed about the different types, sizes and styles of crossbows and their usage. I am also well aware of their power and of the fact that so many of those potential weapons are in circulation.

I supported the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South when he said that we have been bombarded with literature on this subject. When the matter was first raised with me, I, too, began to think in terms of our history and of the time when the longbow was the standard weapon of our armd forces and the crossbow was considered foreign and somewhat sinister. We all remember our childhood legends and our history—1066 and all that, the battle of Hastings and the Middle Ages of which we have already heard much today. In England, we have always been keener on Robin Hood than on William Tell. Those of us who grew up in the 1950s were addicted to the television series about Robin Hood which showed the longbow and which was very good. However, we are not here to discuss romantic tales of the longbow or the even more romantic tales of apples perched on heads, although I have visited Altdorf in Switzerland and the statue of William Tell and his son is most impressive. Today we are concernd with the abuse of powerful weapons which can inflict grievous injury, damage property, maim wildlife, kill livestock and injure human beings.

I have been especially concerned at the number of offences involving crossbows that have surfaced in the press, and I have raised the issue with the Home Office. Numerically, the offences are few and might not appear to be much of a problem, but not only were one quarter of them sadistic attacks on animals, causing the most sickening and brutal injuries, but it is felt that many offences could have been prevented if crossbows had been subject to the controls proposed in the Bill. Constituents who have raised the issue with me have expressed amazement at the availability of such weapons to young people and the fact that they are subject to no controls at present, and I must confess to sharing their amazement. We are talking not about toys but about silently operated and potentially lethal weapons.

As we have heard today, crossbows are available quite easily across shop counters and sometimes by mail order. No person in his right mind would suggest that firearms should be so freely available. The Firearms Act 1968 ensures that they are not by imposing stringent controls on their sale. Of course, firearms are generally more lethal and regrettably are used in more serious criminal acts, but crossbows — some of which must be as lethal as a handgun—are available without any restriction, even to minors. That cannot be right. I would not advocate the introduction of a licensing system of the type that applies to firearms at this stage as the present situation does not warrant such a complex method of controlling crossbows. This situation is quite different. I support a restriction on the sale of crossbows to young people and a restriction on

*[Mr. David Evennett]*

the purchase and possession of crossbows by young people. Those are controls that the Bill would provide admirably.

The Bill is both simple and straightforward. In an age in which so much of our legislation becomes more complex, it is refreshing to see a Bill that is easily comprehensible to ordinary people and to Members of the House who, like myself, are not lawyers. It makes a pleasant change to read a Bill and understand it the first time. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East is a lawyer, but I congratulate him on presenting a short and understandable Bill. It proves that lawyers can speak in intelligible English when they want, need or have to, and those of us who are not lawyers are grateful.

As I said, the criminal misuse of crossbows is not a major problem and in consequence this is not a major change in the law. The Bill would make it illegal for anyone to sell a crossbow to a person who is under 17. Similarly, it would be an offence for a person under 17 to buy a crossbow. In addition, any person under 17 who had a crossbow in his possession would be committing an offence unless he was supervised by a person over 21. I am confident and entirely convinced that the changes will have popular support and that the provisions will eliminate a great deal of potential danger and harm. In Committee, we might like to table one or two amendments, but I am sure that the Bill will find considerable favour in my constituency and in the constituencies of other hon. Members. The Bill comes not before time and the controls that it introduces are long overdue.

My only reservation about the Bill is one of which I believe that my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East is aware. It is that there is no provision for the imposition of custodial sentences for the purchase and possession offences that the Bill would create. As a non-lawyer, that appears to me to be an oversight——

**Mr. Best:** I hope that my hon. Friend will forgive an intervention by a lawyer. Youth custody is not available for anybody under 17 years of age in any event.

**Mr. Evennett:** I am grateful for my hon. Friend's comment. It seems that there is a weakness in the Bill if we have limited punishment for youngsters under 17 who purchase potentially lethal weapons and are convicted more than once. We might elaborate on that in Committee. As a non-lawyer, I shall take advice on the matter. It is regrettable that there is not a stronger punishment for constant offenders.

I do not wish to dwell too long on this small Bill as I know that other Members want to debate other measures today, but I warmly commend the Bill. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East on his good fortune in the ballot and on his good sense in introducing the measure, which is necessary and welcome. I hope very much that it will have an easy passage in Committee, but that some amendments will be made, which we can discuss. I hope that the Bill will reach the statute book later this year and achieve the aim that we wish.

10.55 am

**Mr. Sydney Chapman** (Chipping Barnet): I am glad to have the opportunity to follow the hon. Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) and to speak briefly in this Second Reading debate.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) on introducing the Bill, as well as the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) and the 10 others who supported him, which shows the depth of all-party support for the measure. I also pay tribute to many organisations that have brought the abuse of those weapons to our attention, and not least to the *Cats* magazine and Mr. Brian Doyle, its editor, for the campaign in which it has been engaged over the years.

I should like to make three specific points. First, there is a need to rationalise the age limits in relation to such legislation. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East reminded me, and thus was acting with impeccable parliamentary propriety, that he was linking the age limit of 17 to present legislation for other offences in this area. However, there are far too many age limits—there is legislation for under 14-year-olds, 14 to 17-year-olds, 17 to 21-year-olds and over 21-year-olds. The age limits should be simplifed. I share the view of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. This point was also mentioned by the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon). I should like the age limit to be 18 for the purchase and possession of crossbows.

My second point has been highlighted by other hon. Members. The problem of abuse is not confined to crossbows, but arises from many other lethal weapons. I understand that we cannot do it under this legislation, but in time we must tackle the increasing abuse and misuse of air weapons, air rifles, air guns and so on. I hope that the Government will give attention to that.

Perhaps my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary can comment on my third point. However stringent the regulations and laws are for these lethal weapons, they should be tightened and simplified. There is a continuing need also for a publicity campaign to remind parents and children of their responsibilities and duties. Whatever the legislation is, we must continually mount campaigns to raise awareness about misuse.

I warmly welcome the Bill and wish it a speedy passage on to the statute book. Again, I congratulate all the hon. Members who supported my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East in introducing the measure.

10.58 am

**Mr. Keith Best** (Ynys Mon): I join other hon. Members in warmly congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) on introducing this piece of legislation. He knows that I shall support it on Second Reading. He and I have known each other for a long time; we knew each other before we came to the House. We have not always agreed on everything, but this is something on which we can agree. I also reiterate the point made by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) about other matters that could properly be brought within such legislation and I am particularly thinking of martial arts to which the hon. Gentleman referred. I appreciate the constraints upon my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East. He wants to bring forward legislation which will reach the statute book and he can be assured that the Bill will reach the statute book. To extend the Bill too widely might jeopardise that. I appreciate that my hon. Friend has concentrated exclusively on crossbows for that reason.

The House will have to consider martial arts equipment in due course, not withstanding the attitude——

*It being Eleven o'clock,* MR. SPEAKER *interrupted proceedings pursuant to Standing Order No. 11 (Friday sittings).*

## Austin Rover (Redundancies)

**Mr. Terry Davis** (Birmingham, Hodge Hill) *(by private notice)* asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the redundancies announced today by Austin Rover.

**The Minister for Information Technology (Mr. Geoffrey Pattie):** The call for voluntary redundancies and early retirement beng conveyed to individual Austin Rover staff this morning is a matter for the company. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on that. Austin Rover must be free to determine employment levels in line with market conditions and the need to be competitive.

**Mr. Davis:** Will the Minister admit that this announcement confirms our fears that, contrary to the impression that the Secretary of State tried to give in answer to questions on Wednesday, Mr. Graham Day and the Government intend to settle for an Austin Rover share of only 15 or 16 per cent. of the British market and a total production of 450,000 cars a year, instead of trying to get sales back up to more than 20 per cent. of the market and production back to 650,000 a year?

Will the right hon. Gentleman also confirm that the redundancies mean that one in 10 of Austin Rover staff will lose their jobs as a direct result of this defeatist attitude towards sales adopted by Mr. Day and the Government? How many other redundancies have yet to be announced by Austin Rover or elsewhere in the Rover Group? Will the Minister now publish the corporate plan for the Rover Group, immediately and in full, and allow us to see the true scale of the butchery proposed by Mr. Day with the Government's blessing?

**Mr. Pattie:** The forecasts that the hon. Gentleman mentioned do not in any way follow from the comments that my right hon. Friend made in the House earlier this week. I deny that there is any defeatist attitude in my Department, in the Government generally or on the part of Mr. Graham Day. As the hon. Gentleman well knows, the corporate plan is being studied at the moment.

**Mr. A. J. Beith** (Berwick-upon-Tweed): It is clearly essential that Austin Rover is brought into profitable and successful production and increasses its share of the market. Is it not impossible to make a judgment about the redundancies until we know the content of the corporate plan, which is in the Minister's hands? Do the redundancies form part of the corporate plan? Have they been given explicit approval by the Government as part of the corporate plan, or are they independent of the proposals in the plan? When will we know the answer to that question?

**Mr. Pattie:** The answer to the hon. Gentleman's question will become apparent when the corporate plan is published.

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): Is the Minister seriously claiming that the Government have no views at all about the scale of these redundancies and that they have no responsibility for that or the corporate plan?

**Mr. Pattie:** I am merely saying what I said in my original answer. It is for the company to decide its manning levels in order to maintain its competitive position.

**Mr. Don Dixon** (Jarrow): Does the Minister accept that the sooner he sacks Mr. Graham Day the better that will

*[Mr. Don Dixon]*

be for the motor industry? Bearing in mind Mr. Day's track record with the shipbuilding industry, he will be disastrous for the motor industry.

**Mr. Pattie:** When the corporate plan is published and the hon. Gentleman reads it, I do not think he will believe that his comment was a fair one. Mr. Day's approach to these matters has been to try to get Austin Rover on to a fully competitive basis. That is very important.

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): Is it not clear that when Austin Rover begins to emulate the success of Jaguar it will start to take on more people, not fewer?

**Mr. Pattie:** My hon. and learned Friend has reminded the House that the manning levels of any commercial enterprise depend absolutely on its ability to be competitive and to sell its products.

**Mr. Gerald Bermingham** (St. Helens, South): Does the Minister not agree that the cuts in production levels at Austin Rover will have a spin-off effect on companies such as Triplex which make the glass for Rover cars? Does he agree that support for the component industry is equally important? Do the Government not have some responsibility in that matter also?

**Mr. Pattie:** The hon. Gentleman is right, in so far as the component industries' fortunes are inextricably linked with the fortunes of any motor car assembler. The fundamental point remains the ability of the motor car company to sell its products. The more competitive it is, the more it sells and the more the component industry will benefit.

**Mr. David Gilroy Bevan** (Birmingham, Yardley): I am alarmed by the announcement that has been made, but will my right hon. Friend confirm that the redundancies will probably come from early retirements and voluntary redundancies? Can he tell us whether any estimates have been made—this will affect some of my constituents—of how soon the increased sales in America of the Rover Sterling, and the 800 range in Europe and other models, will restore productivity to 650,000 cars a year? The redundancies were based on a lowering of that figure.

**Mr. Pattie:** With regard to voluntary redundancies, today's letter states:

> "It is hoped to achieve the staff reductions through early retirement and voluntary redundancy as far as possible."

The answer to my hon. Friend's second question is that the success of the Sterling motor car, which appears to be achieving encouraging penetration of the American market, will be a crucial element in the fortunes of Austin Rover.

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): Further to the question asked by the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith), and bearing in mind that the corporate plan is on the Minister's desk, can the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether the redundancies form part of the corporate plan, or has he not taken the trouble to read the plan yet?

**Mr. Pattie:** The corporate plan is being studied by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State. As my right hon. Friend has said on several occasions, a summary of the plan will be published in due course and a statement will doubtless be made then.

**Sir Dudley Smith** (Warwick and Leamington): Is my right hon. Friend aware that competition is the very essence of this matter and that the increased production and marketing of the company's excellent new model will ensure its future, lead to increased sales and perhaps even increased employment in due course? Is he also aware that those in the car component industry in my constituency and that of my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Yardley (Mr. Bevan) are very keen to see Austin Rover succeed so that they can expand their businesses?

**Mr. Pattie:** That must be right. As my hon. Friend has said, the fortunes of the component industry are inextricably bound up with the fortunes of the motor industry, and an increasingly successful and competitive Austin Rover will help the component industry.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Is it not a bit thick for the Government to send Ministers to the Dispatch Box to claim that unemployment has nothing to do with the Government? Another 1,000 people have been thrown on to the scrap heap as a result of the Government's policy. If there is some minuscule drop in the unemployment figures one Thursday morning, all the Ministers are trotted out on the BBC, bullied as they are, to tell the world that the Government have done a wonderful job. If the unemployment figures fall the Government get the praise, but if the figures rise the Government claim that it has nothing to do with them. The Government gave £200 million to Nissan two years ago to build cars in Britain. Does the Minister accept that that has something to do with what is happening at Austin Rover now?

**Mr. Pattie:** Should I deduce from the hon. Gentleman's remarks that he would not be in favour of Government subventions on payments to Austin Rover?

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): Is my hon. Friend aware that during my tour of Austin Rover a few months ago I was told that a special effort was to be made to boost the sales of the Austin Rover 800 series in America in February, perhaps with the assistance of a royal personage? Is that likely to happen? Are great things expected, as the company hopes?

**Mr. Pattie:** The company has high hopes for the Sterling range in the United States, and I gather that a major agreement has been signed with a leading chain of motor car concessionaires. That should help to ensure the success of the car.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): Do the Government seriously intend to wash their hands of the problems of the British motor car industry? Is the Minister not alarmed at the increasing penetration of motor vehicle imports? Is ne not equally alarmed at the fact that, before long, a country such as South Korea will be manufacturing more motor vehicles than will Britain? It is not as though it is a dying industry. People are still buying cars. Why do the Government not do more to encourage the production of British vehicles?

**Mr. Pattie:** Of course, people ars still buying cars. The question which the hon. Gentleman and others must consider is why they are not buying British cars in sufficiently large numbers. The reason why they have not done so in the past is that they have not been satisfied with the quality, design, production or after-sales service. Only when those are improved — steps of this sort will improve competitiveness — will the British motor car industry get the success that it requires.

**Mr. Tony Favell** (Stockport): Following the point made by the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks), does my right hon. Frend agree that the problems with the motor industry are not in the private sector? There is no problem with Vauxhall or Ford; they are racing ahead. The problem is with Austin Rover, which is still in the public sector. Does my hon. Friend agree that, for far too long, the management of Austin Rover has dozed on the feather bed of Government support, safe in the knowledge that if there is any risk to management in will come the west midland light horse?

**Mr. Pattie:** Jaguar is an example of a company that has moved into the private sector with conspicuous success, once its management was able to take control and not have to rely on Government subvention or interference.

**Mr. Mark Fisher** (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): Are engineers included among the redundancies? If so, will the Minister explain how designs can be improved if engineers are being sacked?

**Mr. Pattie:** The description of which I am aware is that they are white-collar staff. The company must decide those from whom it will seek voluntary retirement or redundancy.

## Director-General of the BBC

11.12 am

**Mr. Gerald Kaufman** (Manchester, Gorton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will recall that yesterday afternoon my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) asked about what was then described as the resignation of the Director-General of the BBC. This morning's press and last night's television strongly suggest that the Director-General did not resign but was dismissed. The fact that he relinquished his duties immediately gives weight to that suggestion. That creates a very different position for the House.

With your assistance, Mr. Speaker, can we obtain a statement on this matter today from the Home Secretary in the light of his duties in relation to the appointment of the chairman of the BBC? There is serious anxiety that the departure of Mr. Alasdair Milne may have had something to do with the intolerable and unacceptable pressures placed on the BBC by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The fact that the Prime Minister denied that it had anything to do with her naturally leads to suspicion that it was something to do with her.

This is a matter of grave public importance, affecting the major voice of communication in Britain, whose independence and integrity and whose protection from insidious Government pressure are of concern to the overwhelming majority of the population. That being so, Mr. Speaker, will you assist us in obtaining a statement from the Home Secretary as a matter of urgency?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is not a point of order. One thing that I can say is that it is not a matter for me. I am not responsible for any statements that may be made. Nevertheless, the point has been made and the Leader of the House is present. I am sure that he will have noted it.

**Mr. Clement Freud** (Cambridgeshire, North-East): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a private Members' day and it is unfair to take up time with points of order. I shall take the points of order if they are legitimate, but I must say that this matter has nothing to do with me.

**Mr. Freud:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Would it be in order for a Minister from the Home Office to attend the House later today to answer questions on a subject that is exceedingly important for the whole House? The independence of the BBC must be a high priority of all parliamentarians.

**Mr. Speaker:** It would be possible, but, again, it is not a matter for me.

**Mr. Skinner:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As you will probably have read, in your capacity as the Chair of this place, there is just the hint that some hon. Members will take part in a filibuster to try to block the second item on the agenda——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. These points of order are taking up Back Benchers' time. That is what I am concerned about.

**Mr. Mark Fisher** (Stoke-on-Trent, Central): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Skinner:** I have not finished yet. Sit down. My hon. Friend has got a bit of a job, but he had better be careful.

If such a filibuster is to take place, Mr. Speaker, you should look closely at the suggestion that it would make more sense to get a Minister to come here and occupy that time. One Minister who could come here is the one responsible for broadcasting. If you cannot find him, Mr. Speaker, you could find the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. My hon. Friends could then ask why Alasdair Milne has been bullied out of his job at the BBC. That would make more sense to the people outside——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a private Members' day. If a statement was to be made, it would be made at 2.30.

**Mr. Fisher:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. As the Leader of the House is present, would it be possible for him to explain the Government's position on the departure of the Director-General of the BBC? This matter goes to the root of your protection of parliamentary privilege and parliamentary expression in our democracy. It would be appropriate for the Leader of the House to say how the Government will explain the events of the past 24 hours and by whom the Director-General is to be replaced.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is not a matter for me at all.

## "The Secret Society" (Parliamentary Privilege)

11.19 am

**Mr. Alan Williams** (Swansea, West): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I promise you that it is a genuine one. As you know, the Opposition have supported the Government's efforts to suppress possible security breaches in relation to the BBC film. You will recollect our debate the other day, but the matter seems to be descending into a farce in which the privileges of the House may be prejudiced.

I see from today's newpapers that the Government do not intend to seek an injunction against the showing of this film in Wales. We now have the anomalous position whereby, although we cannot see the film in the House, our constituents can see it outside the House. We could go to Wales to see it. It seems that the only place in Britain where the film cannot be shown is in the House of Commons.

Does that not impinge upon our privileges? In this matter, we seem to be underprivileged. In view of the constructive role that you tried to play in last week's proceedings, Mr. Speaker, can you intervene now to ensure that hon. Members' rights are preserved, in the light of what has emerged since our debate?

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** I must repeat that it is unfair to make points of order on a private Members' day. I have to take them, but the House should bear that in mind.

**Mr. Williams:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. This matter greatly affects our privileges——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I did not mean the right hon. Gentleman. My remarks were directed at those Members behind him who are seeking to continue the points of order.

**Mr. Nigel Spearing** (Newham, South): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Did not your ruling the other day state that the injunction would apply until the Committee of Privileges had reported and the House had decided, unless the injunction was subsequently withdrawn? Therefore, would it not be appropriate for the Government to apply the injunction to the Principality, or to withdraw it from the House? May we have a statement to that effect at 2.30 this afternoon?

**Mr. Speaker:** What the hon. Gentleman says is entirely correct; the matter is now in the hands of the House. We debated this exhaustively on Tuesday, in an admirable and excellent debate. The matter is now with the Committee of Privileges. What the hon. Gentleman says is correct. My direction remains until the House has debated the matter, or until the injunction is withdrawn.

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Surely it goes beyond that. You have said that the matter is in the hands of the House, but there is surely an important element of timing here. The Government have kicked for touch. The matter has gone to the Committee of Privileges, it will be discussed there and a substantial time might elapse. It then has to come back to the House for a decision. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, may we appeal to you, as the guardian of the privileges of the House, to recognise the absurdity of the position? When I travel to Wales, as I will today, I shall be able to see the film in a place which shares the common laws of England. The Conservative party claims to be the unionist party, yet it is prepared to countenance a wholly separate position in Wales and to deny to hon. Members, surely on a wholly absurd basis, what it is prepared to allow in Cardiff, Swansea and elsewhere.

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I want to participate in the debate on crossbows. I am one of the sponsors of the Bill and do not want to waste the time of the House, but a serious problem arises. I assume that the reason why the injunction does not extend to Wales is that it is particular to the film that Mr. Duncan Campbell has. This seems to imply that as your ruling is linked to that particular injunction, if hon. Members were able to secure the copy of the film that is in Wales it would not be covered by your ruling and we could see it in this House. Your ruling applies specifically to an injunction in respect of one copy of one film.

**Mr. Williams:** I am grateful for your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and I in no way challenge it. You made the point that the matter was in the hands of the House, but that is not solely the case, because it is also in the hands of the Government as a result of the ruling that you gave the other evening. As you will appreciate, it would take a considerable time for the House to reverse your decision of the other evening, whereas an administrative decision could be taken instantly by the other party in control of the matter, namely, the Government. One of the duties of the Leader of the House is to protect the rights of Back Benchers, and it would be appropriate if, before we finished our business today, the Leader of the House could come to the House and make a statement about what the Government intend to do to remedy the anomalous situation that we are in.

**Mr. Speaker:** The House took a decision on Tuesday. As far as I am concerned, that is where the matter rests. If the injunction is removed, that is a completly different matter.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover) *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall hear the hon. Member, but he should bear in mind that he is prejudicing the rights of other Back Benchers.

**Mr. Skinner:** This time last week there was a furore about this film. Because of it, one man at the BBC has almost certainly got the sack. You, Mr. Speaker, had to come to the House to ensure that motions were debated on Tuesday about the matter. It is well known that you were not exceedingly happy about the prospect of getting into the middle of the argument. You made it clear that that was a problem for you and one that you did not relish.

All the so-called drama of last week occupied reams and reams of newspaper column inches, it was reported on television day after day and it worried you all over the weekend. Now we hear from my right hon. Friend the Member for Swansea, West (Mr. Williams) that this great and wonderful Government have come up with an idea that excludes Wales. Why can we not have a Minister from Wales to come and tell us that he will organise, by order of the Welsh tourist board, trips to Wales to see the film? It holds out endless possibilities. This is a matter for you, Mr. Speaker, and if I were in your place I would be inclined to tell the Committee of Privileges to wind it up as quickly as it can.

**Mr. Speaker:** Perhaps I should take a trip to Wales but I shall now call a Welsh Member, Mr. Keith Best.

**Mr. Peter Shore** (Bethnal Green and Stepney): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid that too many important points have now been raised for us to leave the matter without hearing something from the Leader of the House. Essentially, we are faced with an important shift of Government policy which has not been explained. That which the Government thought was extremely important for them to achieve only a week ago they have now publicly abandoned. There ought now to be a statement from the most appropriate Government Minister and it should be made at 2.30. I hope that the Leader of the House will make some response to this plea.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Leader of the House will have heard that comment.

## Crossbows Bill

*Question again proposed,* That the Bill be now read a Second time.

11.25 am

**Mr. Best:** I was in the middle of my speech before the statement and the points of order. During the points of order the word filibuster was mentioned. I should make it clear to the House that I hope I shall not be accused of filibustering because there is an important Bill following this one. I want to see that properly debated, not least, as I have explained to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) the sponsor of the Bill, because of the total absence of any consideration of the treatment of alcohol offenders or those with habitual difficulties with alcohol or alcohol abuse. These matters should be debated.

In the earlier part of my speech I congratulated my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East on his Bill and I also said that I understood why he had not encompassed within it other matters. I mentioned martial arts equipment as something which would have to be addressed at some stage by the House. In fairness, I should say that I have a copy of a "Guidance to traders" leaflet issued by the Martial Arts Commission in consultation with the Government. It says clearly and in bold lettering:

> "Do not supply martial arts equipment — across the counter or by mail order—without evidence of membership of a bona fide martial arts club. Do not sell to people under 18."

There is also a clear exposition of the law. The leaflet says:

> "Possession of an offensive weapon in a public place without reasonable excuse is a criminal offence under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953."

Martial arts equipment gives rise to the same difficulties as crossbows, because there seems to be no definitive statement as to whether pieces of martial arts equipment are offensive weapons per se or can be so adapted, or whether they can be antiques or something of that nature.

From the case of Crown *v* Jura in 1954 it appears that an airgun is not regarded under section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 as an offensive weapon per se. That was an interesting case in which an air rifle at a shooting gallery was being used by the defendant. He lost his temper—perhaps he was not hitting anything—and fired at and hit a woman who was with him. It was held by the Court of Criminal Appeal that he had a reasonable excuse for possession of the air rifle and that the unlawful use of it did not bring him within the ambit of the section of the Act.

I mentioned martial arts equipment and an airgun. The same problem obtains with a crossbow, because one does not know whether a crossbow is covered by the 1953 legislation. I think that the Government are supporting this Bill and when the Minister speaks he may well say that the advice he is receiving is that a crossbow may not be regarded as an offensive weapon.

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): The hon. Gentleman and I practise at the Bar and know of the array of problems that arise about definition under the 1953 Act. Does he accept that there could be difficulties about antique and non-antique crossbows in actual cases?

**Mr. Best:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for raising that point. He is right. I address myself to the question whether a crossbow, whether an antique capable of being fired, or a modern version, is an offensive weapon per se. One could argue about whether it is adapted but that does not seem to come witin section 1 of the 1953 Act.

When my hon. Friend the Minister comes to the Dispatch Box he should say a few words on that issue because it would be of interest to the House. He might like to bear in mind statements made by the Home Office in the past. For example, a letter of 29 May 1981 was sent to my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Rees). It stated:

> "The misuse of a crossbow could include offences against the person of varying degrees of gravity, under the legislation for the protection of animals and birds and under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 which makes it an offence to possess any offensive weapon in a public place without lawful authority or reasonable excuse."

The letter goes on to say:

> "To seek to introduce a control and licensing system specifically for crossbows would involve police in a good deal of additional work."

One accepts that, and it is probably one of the reasons, although I do not know, why my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East had not decided to go down that route for licensing.

In that letter the Home Office is clearly considering that crossbows come within section 1 of the 1953 Act.

**Mr. Anderson:** Could.

**Mr. Best:** Yes, or could. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman.

I have another letter dated 4 December 1984 sent to my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess). I am not breaking any confidences because these letters have been produced by the home affairs section research division in the Library and are widely available to any hon. Member who wishes to see them. The letter said:

> "The information which you request in the Questions on the number of fatalities and injuries caused to persons and to animals by the use of crossbows is not collected centrally."

I shall deal with that later. The letter goes on;

> "while I recognise the concern that exists about crossbows, they and other weapons not subject to specific controls are already covered, so far as misuse of them is concerned, by existing general provisions of the law. The Prevention of Crime Act 1953, for example, makes it an offence to possess any offensive weapon in a public place without lawful authority or reasonable excuse. Legislation also protects wildlife, and there are local provisions, such as those contained in the Town Police Clauses Act of 1847, as amended, and local byelaws which prohibit the wanton discharge of missiles in any street or public place. Depending on the circumstances, a misuse of a crossbow could also be an offence against the person and, depending on the circumstances, could attract very severe penalties."

The letter goes on to deal with another important aspect. It states:

> "Given the extensive restrictions which already limit the use of crossbows I do not consider that we would be justified in imposing on the police a substantial extra workload that further controls, such as a licensing system, would create. As I have emphasised, they are by no means the only potentially dangerous weapons not subject to specific controls, and our present approach is to rely upon general provisions. We have no plans at present for further legislation on crossbows but we shall continue to keep the matter under review."

In those letters there is the articulation of the difficulty for the police of having a licensing system. What is interesting, as was helpfully pointed out by the sedentary intervention, about which I make no complaint, from the hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson), is that the first letter suggested that crossbows could come within the 1953 legislation but there seems no doubt in the letter of 4

December 1984 that the Home Office view then was that crossbows certainly do come within section 1 of the 1953 legislation.

In view of the time, I do not want to develop that further. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will deal with that when he comes to the Dispatch Box.

This matter has attracted a wide degree of support and I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East will have redoubled his efforts knowing that he has so much support from so many quarters. It is interesting to note that the Association of District Councils welcomes the Bill and asks for it to be given a speedy Second Reading. I hope that I will not be regarded as being responsible for delaying that more than necessary. The National Farmers Union has also supported the Bill. Although it is difficult for the NFU to assess the nature of abuse of crossbows in respect of livestock, one does know that there have been severe cases which have damaged not only the farmer's livelihood, because of damage to livestock, but, perhaps more importantly, have caused intense pain and suffering to the animals subjected to such cruel attacks. In 1985 approximately 16,000 crossbows were sold, I am told by the NFU. That is corroborated in other documents that I have.

I have no intention of going through the history of the crossbow. Some hon. Members who are more opposed to the measure that will come after this, the Licensing (Amendment) Bill, might want me to go back to ancient times and deal in detail with the history of the crossbow. I do not propose to do that because it would be an abuse of the House. However, it is important to remember that there have been demands for some form of restriction on crossbows from a wide variety of organisations such as the Magistrates' Association, the NFU, the Police Federation and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. There is a difficulty in establishing the facts about abuse. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East will concur with that.

The largest crossbow manufacturer, Barnett International in Wolverhampton, has commissioned independent research into the weapon. It is an ancient weapon, as has already been mentioned. The English were firmly wedded to the longbow. From my own reading of the period of history that fascinated me as a schoolboy, I remember Poitiers and Crécy and the superiority of the longbow over the crossbow, which was used by the French. The rapidity of fire of the longbow made it much more effective against the heavy French cavalry. The problem of reloading the crossbow meant that the rate of fire was restricted. It seems that it was also regarded as a weapon for the aristocracy or the upper classes, whereas the longbow was not. There were statutes that made the possession of longbows and arrows mandatory and formal practice was required — *[Interruption.]* I hear a complaint from the Treasury Bench that I am dealing with history. I shall pass on.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Perhaps the hon. Gentleman could clear up a problem relating to Barnett International, the largest manufacturer of crossbows, and the research project that it commissioned. Is that the research report by Colin Greenwood?

**Mr. Best:** Yes. I can identify that report.

I want to put the Bill in perspective. It is important to assess the true nature of the abuse but that does not in any way diminish my support for the Bill's Second Reading. I think that my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East would accept that the itemisation of abuse is limited. There is difficulty in trying to obtain information on abuse, and the nature of abuse is small in comparison with other weapons.

I am happy to support the Bill because I believe that my hon. Friend is in advance of this country because his legislation is in anticipation of a greater abuse of crossbows. He said that there is an increasing use of crossbows and an increasing interest in them. That is likely to continue and this legislation may well become more relevant as the years progress.

In 1985 the total production of crossbows was about 110,000. The total sales of crossbows in the United Kingdom domestic market in that year was 16,000 to 17,000. It is true that some 700 or 800 people are employed in the production of crossbows and that is not a great number. However, there is an estimate that 200,000 to 250,000 bows are presently in the hands of the public. That seems to accord with the views of the manufacturers. There are several clubs dedicated to crossbow shooting but they are much smaller than archery and rifle clubs, some of which have crossbow shooting members. It is reckoned that competitive crossbow shooters operating in the club environment do not exceed 3,000 in number.

Some crossbows are employed in unusual roles. The Central Electricity Generating Board and the Forestry Commission use them for launching light lines so that the heavier ones can be taken across inaccessible spots or to the top of pylons. There is some use of crossbows for launching tranquiliser darts to immobilise animals. The evidence suggests, however, that crossbow owners do not fire them frequently. Abuse is, perhaps, an isolated event, although it is motivated by a great deal of malice and a desire to do much damage. The Bill is therefore welcome because it tightens up the law as a crossbow may or may not be an offensive weapon as defined by existing legislation.

It is difficult for small children to abuse a crossbow as it is a powerful weapon and hard for them to cock, hold, aim or fire. The crossbow was superseded as a military weapon by firearms. It is worth comparing the power of firearms and crossbows. A hunting crossbow, which is a very powerful weapon, produces a velocity of 200 ft per second. The muzzle energy of the two most powerful types of crossbow is 32 and 46 ft lbs. The average crossbow will provide muzzle energy of between 20 and 30 ft lbs. A 9 mm cartridge fired from a pistol, which has a lower muzzle velocity than a rifle, gives about 350 ft lbs and the ·44 magnum pistol gives 1,500 ft lbs. The 7·62 NATO service rifle gives a muzzle energy of 7,600 ft lbs, and the ordinary 12-bore shot gun generates 1,500 ft lbs.

Crossbows are powerful, but it is clear that they are not nearly as powerful as firearms. A crossbow bolt is capable of causing death or serious injury, as are a host of other instruments which are readily available. The crossbow is a low-energy short-range weapon which is extremely difficult to use accurately. Within its restricted capabilities, it can be used humanely for hunting deer-sized animals. It is effective only in the hands of a skilled user at the shortest ranges. It is ludicrous to compare it in terms of power and effectiveness with modern firearms.

It is difficult to establish the nature of abuse. The Home Office statistical branch is unable to assist, as is the Office

*[Mr. Best]*

of Population Censuses and Surveys. Detailed examination for other years could have been undertaken but that would have been time-consuming and costly. The Department of the Environment wildlife division, which was responsible for the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which prohibits the use of crossbows against wild animals, has no statistics on crossbow abuse against wild animals. It seems that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, one is prohibited from using a crossbow against a wild animal but, because a wild animal does not come within the scope of the Protection of Animals Act 1911, one is perfectly entitled to batter a hedgehog or wild cat to death with one's foot — there are unfortunately, reported cases of that—because such animals are neither domestic nor captive. I shall not digress any further, but I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will consider that matter carefully.

The Department of Health and Social Security's statistical research division, the Health and Safety Executive, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, and the Department responsible for prices and consumer protection cannot offer much information about crossbow abuse. It appears, however, that the level of abuse is low.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has produced the most evidence of abuse. The chief veterinary officer said that the society holds no statistics or case records centrally, but he went to considerable trouble to contact every inspector in the country concerning incidents during 1980 and 1985. It emerges that there were three cases each in 1980 and 1985. I should mention the letter which was sent to the F8 department of the Home Office by the RSPCA which itemises those incidents. To save time, I shall not go through the letter, but it provides more information than can be got elsewhere.

During a 15-year period there were only 41 incidents involving the use of crossbows. That is an average of less than three a year. There was one case of homicide, four cases of robberies, four involving assault against the police, four involving other assaults, one fatal accident, three suicides—it is sad, but I am not sure how one commits suicide with a crossbow—one of burglary, six involving domestic assault, two of damage to property and three of other accidents or injuries. There were two incidents against sheep, two against cats, one against a dog and seven against swans, geese and ducks.

The only homicide occurred in March 1976 when two brothers had an altercation about a bequest and one shot the other with a crossbow. There were 24,890 robberies in 1981 in England and Wales, but crossbows were used in connection with robbery only four times in the 15-year period that I have mentioned. Other assaults involving crossbows have occurred in domestic or quasi-domestic circumstances.

I do not want to delay the House because I want to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the debate on the Licensing (Amendment) Bill. I have a sheaf of notes but I shall put them on one side because I do not wish to detain the House any longer save to say that I once again congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East on having brought forward this measure. It will be a lasting and perhaps increasingly useful piece of legislation.

11.49 am

**Mr. Clive Soley** (Hammersmith): It is just as well that the hon. Member for Ynys Mon (Mr. Best) sat down when he did, because the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) has just brought in a crossbow bolt. The timing of the hon. Member for Ynys Mon was opportune.

There is growing concern about the use and abuse of crossbows and other weapons. The Bill is limited in its scope, but it is welcome despite those limitations.

The report by Mr. Greenwood has already been mentioned. In that report he says that there is little evidence of abuse and that what abuse there is can be dealt with under existing legislation. That may be correct up to a point, but the problem that must be addressed is much wider than just crossbows. It is the growth and availability of a wide range of weapons, paramilitary courses and other phenomena that have become associated with some of the frustrations, anxieties and stress in our society. That is what makes the availability of weapons, whether they are crossbows, guns, knives or anything else, so profoundly dangerous.

In more stable societies or more stable times a considerable number of weapons may be available without any great increase in abuse. In Switzerland there is a wide availability of firearms, but a relatively low level of crime involving them because Switzerland at present does not suffer from the extreme problems of the collapse of the community, especially in inner city areas, that we have here. Wherever there is a rapid and dramatic collapse of a community there is likely to be an increase in crime. That is why there have been problems in Britain and in other Western countries in recent times, and why the problem has become much worse in the 1980s. Such crimes as robbery have rocketed and will continue to increase until the Government begin to do something to help rebuild the shattered and battered communities in our midst.

I shall refer to a couple of points in the Bill. I take it that, if the Bill goes into Committee, clause 4 will be subject to the constraints exercised by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. That is assumed but it should be borne in mind.

I shall make a few points about the punishment mentioned in clause 6. One thing that troubles me—I have raised this before on other Bills—is the way in which we always mention fines and imprisonment when talking about weapons of this sort, particularly in connection with young people. Let us remember that the bulk of the Bill is concerned with young people under 17 although it also affects adults who sell them the weapons. We do not wish increasingly to lock up young people or criminalise them early on in their career. Britain already sends into custody more young people than any other comparable country in the Western world. That does them no good at all. If anything, it gets them into the universities of crime that much earlier in life.

It always worries and to some extent puzzles me as to why we pass law after law which impose fines and imprisonment, especially for young people, when we should at least mention compensation and making recompense to society. Far more good could come out of a sentence in which a young person especially was ordered to do some community work—especially if it related to animals that perhaps that child had injured or killed in especially brutal circumstances. That could be far more useful to the health and development of a young person's normal personality than simply locking him up with other people who have a host of social, economic and emotional problems. That really does not help us.

It would be a good idea to direct the ideas of magistrates towards compensation and recompense by putting in Bills of this nature the provision that that sort of compensation was available. I urge the hon. Member for Leicester, East to do that, although I know that he is fond of locking up people and hanging them and has even offered to do it on occasions. It puzzles me how he can then be against crossbows because it seems to me that at the root of the motives of improper use of crossbows and taking a person's life by the judicial measure of hanging is the same problem as having at heart a feeling of anger, vengeance and fear and those sort of emotions which are so destructive of the normal human personality. I ask the hon. Gentleman to take on board the need to bring compensation or recompense to the mind of the courts by including such provisions in one of the clauses. This would be especially appropriate for young people. Perhaps clause 6 would be the appropriate vehicle.

In clause 6(3) the courts are given the power to order forfeiture or disposal of any crossbow or part of it. That is profoundly important and I agree with the provision. For many young people the confiscation of a weapon is more important than any other penalty. It is more important than criminalising them by convicting them in a court of law. A far more effective course is to take away the weapon.

Adults have an undesirable tendency to forget what they did during their own childhood. We must recognise that there are few young males who grow up without using catapults. Unfortunately, many young males, and females to a lesser extent, use airguns. If we forget what we did in our adolescence, we tend to become punitive and respond inappropriately to the problems that young people face. I can remember using catapults and airguns and having a catapult called Big Bertha. It was mounted on a truck and it had elastic a quarter of an inch wide. It could hurl quite a large rock a long distance. It was a dangerous weapon by any standards. In the gang warfare of the area in which I was brought up, catapults were used as a natural extension of fighting for one's territory. I received a secondary modern education in north-east London and it is the north-east London survival instinct that enables me to cope with public-school educated Conservative Members, who probably had more sophisticated weapons such as crossbows and airguns. I could not afford that type of weapon.

In all seriousness, we forget that young males especially will have an interest in weapons and playing with them. I could easily have acquired criminal convictions for some of the things that I did with airguns and catapults as a youngster. There is no sign that criminalising youngsters by convicting them in the courts helps them to mature in a normal healthy adult life. We must concentrate more on confiscation, limitation of damage and prevention at the point of sale. These will be far more effective measures than locking up people, especially the young, and increasing their emotional and social problems.

There is some anxiety about legislating for certain weapons only when society is concerned rightly about the growing availability of weapons generally and associated paramilitary courses. Of the 9,500 notifiable offences involving firearms, 6,300 were associated with airguns. It is clear that airguns are a major part of the problem. As I have said, at one stage in my life I had an airgun. I much enjoyed using it but, fortunately, I did not go in for shooting animals and birds. I would not have enjoyed that and I would not have done it. However, I can remember the temptation to do so from time to time. A young person finds it exciting to shoot at a moving target and I can understand that it is easy for young people to drift into that form of shooting. Whether we are talking about catapults, airguns or any other type of weapon, we must seek to discourage use except in fairly constrained circumstances.

I am not sure whether there is any justification for selling crossbows or any other type of weapon by mail order. I am dubious, and am becoming increasingly worried, about the widespread advertising of paramilitary courses, certain types of knives, catapults, guns and so on. An increasing number of magazines that tend to hang on to the survivalist culture are available in major bookshops and stores and at major stations and other such places. I have already drawn the attention of the House and the media to them. They advertise how to get hold of Bren guns, Rambo knives and crossbows. They mention how to turn one's neighbourhood watch group into a vigilante group—all sorts of things of that ilk.

They also give great descriptions of courses conducted in the countryside to learn survivalism. I shall not discourage people from trying to live in the countryside, as long as they respect the countryside when they do it. It is a healthy and desirable pursuit, but when it is advertised, as it often is in certain magazines, as being about the breakdown of law and order in society, there is a more dangerous result. Often, Right-wing organisations are involved. They adopt a paramilitary practice. They mention weapons such as crossbows, knives and so on in the course of their survivalism.

Since the late 1970s, the use of these weapons has increased considerably, and robbery, as I have said, has rocketed. I suggest to the Minister—indeed, the Labour party has suggested this to the Minister's predecessor and the Home Secretary for some time — that the Home Office should have within it a much more high-powered Committee to review the availability and type of weapons, paramilitary courses and the magazines that advertise them. We need a proper licensing system.

Not long ago, the Minister's predecessor tried to clamp down on the availability of guns by increasing the licence fee. That is not the right way in which to control the availability of weapons. It hits at the low income, responsible user and does not begin to touch the high income, irresponsible user. It is unfair.

The Socialist point of view is that freedom is affected by the amount of income that one has available to spend. If we try to clamp down on the availability of any commodity in society by putting up its price, we shall do nothing to help people on low incomes who might wish legitimately to indulge in the sports that the hon. Member for Leicester, East described. I do not wish to clamp down on legitimate users of guns, crossbows or anything else. These weapons can be of legitimate sporting use.

We wish to deal with the matter not on the basis of cost, but by a proper licensing system, and the only way to achieve that is by setting up a committee in the Home Office that can inform the debate. Such a committee could make reports to a Select Committee of the House so that

*[Mr. Clive Soley]*

we may have the type of debate that led to the earlier legislation that covered these subjects, rather than try to do so in this piecemeal way.

There is a case for licensing every lethal weapon of the type described today. I realise that this could not apply to knives. We should have a licensing system based not on cost. I recognise that cost would need to cover, or at least as near as possible cover, the cost of administration. There is a case for having a licensing system not dissimilar to that for cars. The licence would follow the weapon. In that way, we not only will keep track of the weapon if it is stolen or misused, but can identify it. The problem with shotguns is that we cannot identify how the people who misuse them get hold of them in the first place. Many are available through importations, some are stolen and, of course, some are exchanged by a legal owner selling them to an illegal owner, that is, someone who has a previous conviction.

There is a case for examining all these matters, but I do not think that we should legislate in this way. It would not be appropriate for the Home Office Minister to go too far down this road today, but when he considers the Bill in Committee — I hope it will be examined carefully in Committee—I urge him to examine the suggestions that I have made, particularly on the compensation and forfeiture argument and in the longer term, but, I accept, not within the context of the Bill. I urge the Minister to consider setting up the type of committee that the Labour party has put forward as its policy for the past couple of years since we have had brought to our attention the acute and, in our view, justifiable public concern about the availability of some appalling weapons, not least knives some of which, incidentally, are produced in some obscene forms. One can put these knives into an ordinary belt and pull them out, and there are flick knives that look like pens, all of which are on sale.

We cannot deal with this problem simply on the basis of an offensive weapons charge, but must use a licensing system for their sale. A bread knife may be as lethal as a Rambo knife, but we do not want to encourage the macho culture that fosters the idea that law and order has broken down and we have to take the law into our hands and avenge ourselves. I am critical of the Government's law and order record — it is atrocious by any standards. However, I do not want to encourage that undesirable and dangerous idea, which was put by some people on a television programme in which I was involved the other day.

The Home Office has much to work on. Within its limitations, the Bill is to be encouraged but the Home Office needs to go much further. I recommend some of the proposals that I have put to it this morning.

12.5 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg):** I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels), partly on his success in the ballot, partly on choosing this Bill, and partly on the clear and elegant way in which he introduced it. My hon. Friend reviewed carefully the legislation that deals with firearms. He stressed the point that at the moment we have a comprehensive statutory framework regulating the control, possession and sale of firearms. However, he rightly pointed out that we have no legislation that regulates the sale and purchase of crossbows. That point was also made by the hon. Member for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon). Undoubtedly that is a lacuna.

My hon. Friends the Members for Leicester, East and for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison) gave us an interesting account of the history and development of the crossbow. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East also gave us a revealing description of the nature of the weapons with which we are dealing. He was right to stress the wide range of weapons. At the bottom end of the range are the toy crossbows, to which the Bill is not directed. At the upper end there is a different category of weapons, those that are powerful, accurate, lethal and capable of inflicting substantial injuries or even death.

When, in 1986, concern about the misuse of these weapons was expressed, particularly by my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes), the Home Office decided to carry out a review on the use and misuse of these weapons. To obtain a balanced view of what it was we were dealing with, we consulted a number of interested bodies, including the police, the RSPCA, those engaged in the sport and the manufacturers. A number of interesting conclusions and facts became available to us, and I shall mention some of them.

First, we learnt that there are about 200 crossbows in circulation. We also found that only a small proportion of crossbow users belong to any of the organised clubs, and that a majority of users, as far as one can judge, shoot at targets or on private land, or keep their crossbows on the walls at home for decoration. The sport of crossbow shooting is developing and, as a number of hon. Members have said, is enjoyed by a large number of people. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East is correct in saying that it may become an Olympic sport soon.

In 1985, commercial sales of crossbows within the United Kingdom were around 17,000 and the industry —exclusive of the retail industry—employs about 700 people.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** I apologise to the Minister for intervening, but earlier on did he say that there were only 200 crossbows in circulation in the country?

**Mr. Hogg:** No, 200,000. If I did not say that number, I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman because 200,000 was the number that I intended to say.

It is difficult to form a certain view of the extent of the misuse of crossbows, not least because there are no central police records on the matter. A special survey by the police took place between April 1985 and March 1986. It revealed that about 115 incidents involving crossbows had been reported to them. A breakdown of the cases revealed that 54 were cases of criminal damage and 25 were offences against animals.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East has given us information about a number of incidents regarding animals—from information derived from the RSPCA—and I hope that the House will forgive me if I do not repeat those statistics. Suffice to say that the information proves that it is an increasing problem, and those who use such weapons for that purpose should be condemned.

One must take a broad view of this matter, and so far as we can judge from the statistics the misuse of crossbows is at a fairly low level. Hon. Members have referred to existing legislation, and a number of statutes deal with the misuse of crossbows.

My hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Mon (Mr. Best) raised the important question of whether crossbows are offensive weapons. His experience in those matters is perhaps even greater than mine, but we both approach the subject in an undogmatic manner. My advice is that a crossbow is not an offensive weapon per se. That is what I believe to be the provision in legislation, but if a person is carrying such a weapon with an offensive intent he commits an offence under the Prevention of Crime Act 1953, whether or not it is an offensive weapon per se.

My hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford (Mr. Evennett) made a helpful speech in which he identified the lacuna in the law. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East also drew attention to this. There is no control over the sale of crossbows to, and their purchase by, young persons. We are directing our efforts to that omission.

Last year, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State issued a guidance note to traders urging them not to sell to persons under the age of 17. My hon. Friends will recall that at the same time he stated his intention of supporting any legislation that might be brought before the House designed to stop the sale of such weapons to young persons. Therefore, we strongly welcome the Bill that has been ably introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East.

My hon. Friend the Member for Erith and Crayford drew attention to the clarity with which my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East had introduced the Bill, and we are grateful for that clarity and for the clarity with which he has expressed his intentions.

Offences are created under clauses 1 and 2 in respect of the sale of crossbows to and the purchase of crossbows by persons under the age of 17. That is the core of the Bill. It will be an offence to sell a crossbow to a person under the age of 17, and it will be an offence for such a person to purchase one.

My hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) tackled us about the uniformity of age. He suggested that we should fix the level at 18. There is no magic way in which one can determine whether 17 or 18 is the right age. Seventeen brings the Bill more into line with the firearms legislation, and we have approached it on that basis, but I realise that as between 17 and 18 it is a foolish man who tries to be too dogmatic.

Clause 1 could be improved by extending the prohibition to include letting on hire and clause 2 could be improved by extending the prohibition to the concept of hiring. But that is a Committee point, and my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East will take that into consideration. Clause 3 makes it an offence for any person under the age of 17 to possess a crossbow anywhere unless he is supervised by someone over the age of 21, and I think that that proposal will have the support of the House.

The Bill provides the police with powers of search, and we have considered the clauses that deal with penalties. I hope the House will feel that we have got the balance right. I agree with the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) when he stresses the great undesirability of imposing on young people some form of custodial sentence. Therefore, I would be sorry to see us trying to impose a custodial sentence in respect of the offence committed under clause 3.

As the House knows, and as my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East has said, we have thought to exempt toy crossbows from the scope of the Bill, and I hope that that will have the approval of the House.

My hon. Friend the Member for Epping Forest asked about Northern Ireland. This has been given careful consideration by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He recognises the need to extend the prohibition to Northern Ireland, but he considers that it would be better done by order, rather than directly in the Bill, and he will make the necessary order as soon as possible after the Bill has been enacted.

My hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet asked about publicity designed to encourage parents to take a more responsible attitude. I entirely agree with what he said. He knows that we ran two pilot campaigns in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester police force areas just before Christmas, and we shall soon be in the process of evaluating the effect of those.

The hon. Members for Jarrow and for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock), among others, have put it to us that we should embark upon a more rigorous licensing system. The Government are not persuaded. We have contemplated that possibility, but several important considerations apply. The first is the considerable demand that that would make on police resources. Secondly, the current level of misuse is not such as to justify such a policy. Thirdly, it would be impossible to justify such a policy unless we extended it to, for example, air weapons, and, for a variety of reasons, I would not commend that course of action to the House. Therefore, we do not wish to adopt the licensing proposal put to the House by several hon. Members. Nor do we think that a total ban on sales, whether by mail order or otherwise, would be justified.

The Bill, so ably introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East, has the balance about right. No doubt a number of Committee points will be made and will be seriously examined. The Bill meets a genuine public concern about the purchase and possession of crossbows by young people and we think that we have achieved the desire to impose proper restrictions without unduly prohibiting legitimate use. I hope that, on that basis, the Bill will receive a Second Reading.

**Mr. Rob Hayward** (Kingswood): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As a relatively new Member of the House, may I seek your guidance? We have already had a substantial debate on this legislation, which appears to have received complete support from all hon. Members who have spoken. If a closure motion were to be moved, would you accept it on the ground that other Bills are to be considered later?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** The hon. Gentleman will realise that he is asking a hypothetical question. The Chair will judge whether to allow a closure motion only if such a motion is moved.

12.20 pm

**Mr. Geraint Howells** (Ceredigion and Pembroke, North): After listening to the views of hon. Members from both sides of the House, I believe that enough has been said and that the Bill should be given its Second Reading. However, it would be remiss of me not to say a few words on behalf of the Liberal party and the alliance.

*[Mr. Geraint Howells]*

I should like to congratulate the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) and his colleagues on introducing the Bill. However, like other hon. Members, I believe the Bill does not go far enough.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Leicester, East on the interesting history lesson that he gave us on the monarchy from the 12th to the 16th centuries. I was interested when he reminded us that one of the reigning monarchs was killed by a crossbow. His speech refreshed my memory, and that of other hon. Members, as to what happened in those bad old days.

Yesterday I contacted members of the Farmers Union of Wales. I know that other hon. Members will have contacted various organisations and institutions. The leaders of the Farmers Union of Wales said that they regard crossbows as one of the most destructive and lethal weapons in the countryside, and I hold a similar view. a crossbow can cause cruel and fatal injuries if it is in the hands of an irresponsible person. In the hands of the criminal element, it is a silent and deadly weapon. As many other hon. Members have said, it is easily obtainable across the counter.

Crossbows should be subject to the same control as shotguns. I was very impressed by the Minister's answer on that issue. Whatever views we hold, we should all remember and impress upon youngsters, and also in our schools, the fact that the crossbow is a weapon, not a tool. Unless we are very careful, many youngsters may abuse the present system.

We live in a caring society. We care for people and animals, but we must also care for the rights of those people who enjoy the sport. However, there is a great deal of concern in the countryside at the moment because the rustling of cattle and sheep is on the increase. Perhaps in years to come thieves will take advantage of the crossbow and kill livestock, because the crossbow works quietly and cannot be heard by people. We have heard instances of such slaughter from hon. Members representing various parts of the country.

I welcome the Bill and hope that it will have its Second Reading, and that amendments will be made to it to make it even more constructive than what has been proposed by the hon. Member for Leicester, East.

12.23 pm

**Mr. Julian Critchley** (Aldershot): Out of respect for my thirsty hon. Friends, and especially because of the imminence of lunch, I have decided to cut my already short speech in half.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) on his admirable measure to curb a lethal weapon. Hon. Members have demonstrated that there is a need for control.

When I heard that "Crossbow" was to be banned, I was somewhat confused. I wondered whether the reference was to the bottle of cider that is the flagship of the fleet launched by my hon. Friend the Member for Wyre Forest (Mr. Bulmer). How could one argue whether the drink or the weapon is the more lethal? Or did it refer to that worthy but unread magazine "Crossbow", which is published by the Bow Group on a quarterly basis and which contains articles entitled "Whither the Money Supply?" by eager and ambitious young Conservatives? I was glad to learn that it was neither of those two great institutions.

My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East enjoys an enviably high public reputation. I am not a reader of the *Leicester Bugle* or the *Leicester Mercury*, but if his local publicity is anything like his national coverage, without doubt he will increase his majority at the next election.

In the past I have attempted to write about this place and must even plead guilty to having written about some of my colleagues. Having read an interview given by my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East to a *Daily Mail* journalist, Lynda Lee Potter, of remarkable frankness and humour, I can conclude only that my hon. Friend is beyond satire. Will he at least give his assurance to the House that he will not leave his body to Battersea Dogs Home? Surely we can do better than that.

There is a growing anxiety among the public about crime, and with good reason. That anxiety is encouraged not just by the figures—an annual increase of between 5 and 7 per cent. each year for the past 30 years—but by the media and the focus that it puts upon crime and, indeed, by us politicians. For example, the shadow Home Secretary, the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman), has, on behalf of the Labour party, discovered crime. That has been rivalled by the chairman of our own great party who, in his turn, has discovered sin. Is the blame for the rise in crime to be put at the door of the Prime Minister? I should have thought that that was hardly fair. Youth unemployment is a factor, but it is only one among many.

As for sin, no one who has been a member of the Tory party for as long as me could fail to believe in the Fall. Sin has long been with us and is likely, whatever the party manifestos may say this year, to be with us for some time to come. What are the facts? Criminals are mainly young. For males, the peak age is 15 and for girls it is 14. Fortunately, personal injuries do not rate high because 96 per cent. of all offences are against property. The murder rates have increased, but at nothing like the same rate as the crime rate as a whole because murder largely remains a family crime.

Those growing anxieties are exploited by certain organisations for political purposes. An organisation called RECAP has been founded to try to bring back capital punishment. The organiser is a man called Neill Lynn who works in Cambridge. It is a small organisation of approximately one man and a dog. Neill Lynn sought endorsement from the chairman of the Conservative party and, sadly, he got it. Some hon. Members might remember a piece that I wrote about it in *The Observer* early in January. But what my right hon. Friend the Member for Chingford (Mr. Tebbit) did not know—neither did I—was Mr. Lynn's record as a politician. Last year he was a ward chairman of the Cambridge Conservative Association. [HON. MEMBERS: "Ah."] Aha. But before that he was an organiser and active supporter of the British Movement. The British Movement is to the National Front what the National Front is to the Band of Hope. The British Movement is the successor organisation to the National Socialists. I make that point only because Mr. Lynn is to make a speech in my constituency tonight in which he will make two demands: first, that I should no longer represent the constituency as the Conservative Member because I am an abolitionist, and, secondly, that capital punishmnt should be brought back.

It is only fair that the electors in Aldershot should know who is leading that crusade. Once they know Mr. Lynn's political record, he will be run out of town.

**Mr. Anderson:** Does the Cambridge Conservative Association still accept Mr. Lynn as an office holder in spite of what has been said about him?

**Mr. Critchley:** I have no idea.

12.30 pm

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): First of all, may I apologise to the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) for missing the start of his speech when he introduced the Bill. I was unavoidably detained by crowds of people waiting for the pubs to open.

I was very pleased that the hon. Member for Leicester, East asked me to sponsor the Bill. I hesitated at first because I wanted to see what punishments he was going to write into the Bill. Clearly, I would not have supported the Bill if he intended to use it as a way of bringing back capital punishment. Equally, I am sorry that he failed to bring a crossbow to the House to show us what a crossbow looks like.

**Mr. Bruinvels:** There is one in the police safe.

**Mr. Banks:** I know that my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Leicester, West (Mr. Janner) was more than ready to shoot an apple off the head of the Member for Leicester, East. When I told him about this, my hon. and learned Friend's hands trembled with excitement at the prospect.

I agreed to sponsor the Bill because I have a constituency interest. There have ben a number of cases in the London borough of Newham which have been reported in the local newspapers, the *Stratford and Newham Express* and the *Newham Recorder*, of attacks being made upon wildlife in the area using crossbows and other weapons. Conservative Members might not appreciate that on its northern boundary the London borough of Newham is attached to Wanstead flats and merges into Epping forest. There is ample scope for those who are intent on damaging wildlife in the borough because there are ponds and flats where animals can be found to shoot at. Unfortunately, that has happened. There have also been attacks in Newham—on cats and dogs using crossbow bolts. I have received a number of letters complaining about such malpractices and I have attempted in the past to raise the whole matter of the use of crossbows and other weapons with the Home office but I got nowhere. I was therefore delighted to act as a sponsor to this Bill.

Crossbows can be purchased in Newham. Regrettably, there are a number of shops where so-called martial arts devices can also be purchased. I have drawn to the Home Secretary's attention the sale to a child of a device called a Ninja's claw which is, in effect, a spiked knuckleduster. That device was sold to an eight-year-old boy and that shows a high degree of irresponsibility on the part of shopkeepers who are prepared to sell such weapons to young people.

I was sad to hear that the Minister was not prepared to move against the advertising and sale of crossbows by mail order. It will naturally be difficult for anyone selling through mail order to know the age of the person making the application for purchase. To a certain extent, the Bill will be nonsense if it becomes an Act without an amendment to cover mail order.

Like other hon. Members, I want the Bill to go further in its scope. I hope that amendments will be accepted in Committee that will allow its scope to be extended. Frankly, I am disappointed that the Minister was not prepared to accept that crossbows should be licensed weapons. I understand his points, especially the one about effective policing. For policing such desirable social objectives as the licensing of weapons, the Minister will always get support from the House for additional resources that the Government might be prepared to give to our police forces. We would consider that to be a fitting and proper expansion of public expenditure on the police.

The Minister also said that he would not wish licensing to be extended to airguns. That is regrettable, because hon. Members on both sides of the House have demanded that air weapons be licensed. I have written to the Home Secretary and asked about the possibility of licensing crossbows, but I have been turned down.

The opponents of licensing argue that, in the wrong hands, almost anything can be used as a deadly weapon. I remember one Minister in a debate in the House saying that, if one pushed it to the limit, a fountain pen could be used as an offensive weapon. Of course, that is so. Almost any implement could be used as an offensive weapon—apart from a speech in Parliament, I suppose — if someone was so determined. But we must use some common sense here. Where a weapon so obviously lends itself to abuse in an offensive fashion — that must include crossbows—licensing is necessary. After all, one would hardly walk into a bank and threaten to hold it up by spraying the cashier with ink from a fountain pen if he did not hand over the money. But a crossbow is clearly an offensive weapon that could be used to commit such an offence.

I was worried by the Minister's statement that about 200,000 crossbows are in circulation and that most of them are not in the hands of people who belong to organised clubs. The potential for abuse is enormous. I accept the Minister's statement that the recorded level of abuse is fairly small and not sufficient to worry about, but what concerns me is how many cases of crossbow abuse have not been drawn to the attention of the police and, in turn, to the attention of the Home Office through statistics. Several of the incidents that took place in Newham were not registered by the police as crimes. They can read the local papers, but whether they transfer those incidents to their criminal statistics, I do not know. I suspect that they do not.

The sports lobby for crossbows is highly responsible and is probably as anxious to stamp out abuse as are the hon. Member for Leicester, East and hon. Members on both sides of the House. But if so few crossbow holders are registered in clubs, how can they eliminate the sort of abuse that has worried the House?

**Mr. A. J. Beith** (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Does the hon. Gentleman share my anxiety that the provisions of clause 3, which simply require the supervision of a person who is 21 years of age or under, mean that the Bill depends for its effectiveness merely on such a person being around, not on someone who is a member of a club and a known, responsible crossbow user having charge of the situation?

*[Mr. A. J. Beith]*

Bearing in mind the fact that in many recent incidents of football hooliganism there have been gangs of people some of whom have been over 21 and some youngsters, this does not hold out much hope that, unless the Bill is tightened, there will be effective supervision of any crossbow in the hands of someone aged under 17.

**Mr. Banks:** I agree with the hon. Gentleman. I hope that in Committee it will be possible to so strengthen the Bill. The best way to cover it would be to license crossbows. That would be the most acceptable method. If the Government have already ruled it out, we shall have some difficulties in Committee in getting it through, but we should at least make an attempt.

One cannot accept as of great value any protestations from the sports lobby which says that it will try to ensure that abuse is eliminated. Clearly, that lobby would not be able to do that. Often when we get into areas like this and want to stop implements that are used within a sport being circulated generally among the population, we are told that we cannot do that because it affects serious sporting interests.

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): The hon. Member is stopping consideration of the Licensing (Amendment) Bill.

**Mr. Banks:** If Conservative Members do not even have the courtesy to listen to what I am saying about serious matters raised by my constituents, I can make them sit here for a lot longer while I read a series of briefs that I have been handed on more peripheral matters about crossbows. That could do a great deal of damage to the next piece of legislation. I should be grateful if hon. Members would not provoke me. I have made it clear that I am not attempting to talk out the next Bill.

I was about to finish my speech. I find it rather distressing that at times the sports lobby is wheeled out to say that we should not move against things like crossbows, catapults, airguns or rifles because we would be impairing a sport. The difficulty is that those who seek to abuse those implements are hiding behind respectable sports lobbies. Our eyes must not be blinded by that fact or blind to the camouflage. I appreciate that there is a serious industry involved in the manufacture of crossbows.

I have seen the report commissioned by Barnett International to examine the abuse of crossbows. I reject many of the things in that report, not because I necessarily think that the books have been cooked, but because one must clearly be somewhat suspicious of a piece of so-called research commissioned by a company that has a vested interest in ensuring that no dire action is taken against the users of crossbows.

I do not propose to read them to the House, but I have statistics and a letter from the chief veterinary officer of the RSPCA to the Home Office. That letter makes clear that since 1979 detailed records have been kept about the use of crossbows against domestic and wild animals. Clearly, there is sufficient cause for concern by those of us who want to see this Bill proceed and be strengthened in Committee. I was pleased to be asked to be one of the sponsors and I congratulate the hon. Member for Leicester, East on introducing the Bill.

12.43 pm

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): I shall not detain the House for long, because I accept much of what my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) has wisely said. I was mildly amused by the suggestions from the hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence). My hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West exercised a considerable amount of self-restraint by not quoting the battery of statistics at his disposal. It is a little odd that the hon. and learned Member for Burton, who, I believe, holds the record for detaining the House on the Water (Fluoridation) Bill, using a whole series of statistics and other matters, should criticise my hon. Friend. It is the pot calling the kettle black.

My hon. Friend put forward serious points relevant to his constituency interests. He pointed out what is clearly and readily seen by all hon. Members—that any attempt to regulate an activity of this sort bristles with many difficulties in practice. My hon. Friend spoke about mail order. We have seen in glue sniffing cases the problems of definition about supply. We have seen difficulties about licensing such things as airguns and I suspect that most hon. Members have had brought to them, as I have, people who have suffered injury, and animals which have had the most awful mutilation inflicted on them, by the misuse of airguns. I know of several constituency cases of damage, including a young man who lost his eye as a result of a young teenager wantonly firing an airgun.

The question arises in the case of airguns, as in the case of crossbows: how widespread is the abuse? How far should Parliament proceed along the road of regulation? Is it a question of de minimis? By adopting the Bill, are we going along the road of a nanny society and seeking to regulate that which should not be regulated? From my experience, I believe that this is an area which, in spite of the difficulties, should be properly regulated by the Bill. Therefore, I congratulate the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) on his Bill. If it should come to a Division—I am not sure whether anyone seriously seeks to oppose the Bill—I assure the hon. Gentleman that I, and I am sure the majority of hon. Members, will follow him into the Lobby.

I should say in passing that when we knew that the hon. Member for Leicester, East had a high place in the private Members' ballot there was considerable speculation, given his wide range of interests, as to what he might choose. It is significant that he has chosen a Bill that is able to command all-party support in the House, and I congratulate him.

I was interested in the legal points made by the hon. Member for Ynys Mon (Mr. Best). I was a little amused when he said, during the course of a rather long speech, that he would delay the House for only a few moments. I felt, Aquinas-like, that it was moments under the aspect of eternity. I promise that I shall not do the same as the hon. Gentleman, because he and I, as Welsh Members, have a common interest. We should leave the House as soon as possible to proceed to Wales to view the film that we cannot see here.

I am a father of three boys, only one of whom is still a teenager, and I would ask the Minister, when looking at crossbows and the array of horrific weapons available, to go to one of the shops, such as those described by my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, North-West, and view that which is available easily over the counter to young people in our society. I had the experience the Christmas before last of being pestered for a catapult by my young teenage son. I went with him to a shop, which, incidentally, was in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley). I was frightened and appalled at what is available to young people. I confess that eventually I did purchase a catapult, but it was the weakest that I could get away with as a father.

As the Minister looks at the abuses of crossbows and other weapons available to young people, I ask him to ensure that he looks at what is available to young people whose appetite is whetted by films, television and the violence around them. They all want to be little Rambos. Surely it is against the public interest that crossbows, martial arts weapons and catapults, especially powerful catapults, are available to them.

I could, if prompted, go further along the lines already mentioned by other hon. Members. However, essentially my message is simple. This is part of a wider problem and I believe that all hon. Members would urge the Home Secretary to look at what is available to young people, and I urge him to look at those weapons which, even after, as I hope, the Bill becomes law, will still be available to young people.

12.49 pm

**Mr. Bruinvels:** With the leave of the House, I should like to reply briefly to the debate.

I should like to thank everybody who has taken part, especially the sponsors. The hon. Member for Swansea, East (Mr. Anderson) was right. I was presented with much temptation by the ballot. About 59 possible Bills were suggested to me. I did not want any of the others. I strongly believe in this Bill.

I assure people outside and crossbow sportsmen that never will match and field sports be stopped. It is the use and misuse of crossbows that is on the increase. Some 90 cases involving animals were recorded in the first 10 months of 1986. They are lethal weapons, as my hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) said.

Parental duty must be reinforced. Assuming that the Bill receives a Second Reading, the Committee will consider whether a crossbow can be classified as an offensive weapon. The definition in the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 makes it clear that there is a need to show that there is an intent to cause injury. That is the important point.

Animals that have suffered need protection now. The Bill is to be welcomed. Crossbows will continue to be accurate up to at least 50 yds and we must do our best to get the Bill through the House as quickly as possible.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).*

## Licensing (Amendment) Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.*

12.50 pm

**Mr. Allan Stewart** (Eastwood): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I should like to thank all of those right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House who have supported the Bill. It is a modest, limited and straightforward Bill. Clause 1 would enable licensees, if they wished, to apply to the licensing justices for a variation order. The justices would be required to be satisfied that such orders were desirable, taking local factors into account. They could grant orders permitting opening for up to 12 hours between 10.30 am and 11.30 pm, Monday to Saturday.

I expect that some licensees would take up the opportunity and that others would not. There are provisions for appeal and revocation, on application by the police. My hon. Friend the Minister will be especially interested in clause 4(2), which enables the Secretary of State to decide when variation orders are brought in. That relieves any pressure on licensing justices from any initial rush. I assure my hon. Friend that the Association of District Councils does not think that the resource problem cannot be handled.

The House knows that this subject has been discussed on numerous occasions since the committee under the chairmanship of Lord Erroll of Hale recommended, among other things, substantial liberalisation of licensing hours. My right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General introduced a Bill in 1975, as did my hon. Friend the Member for Upminster (Sir N. Bonsor) in 1979 and my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman) more recently.

A debate on the subject was started on 30 November 1984 by my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward), who spoke in the light of his experience as an alcohol counsellor. During that debate, the hon. Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley) spoke, as did my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) who brought his experience and knowledge of the subject to bear.

On 4 February 1986, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary published the Government's reaction to the 10 years of relaxed licensing requirements in Scotland on the basis of the study by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, which concluded that there was no evidence that the Licensing (Scotland) Act 1976 had caused an increase in alcohol consumption and that there were signs that it had led to more leisurely and responsible drinking. Ministers have suggested that this is an appropriate subject for a private Member's Bill.

For the first time, the industry is united behind the Bill. The National Union of Licensed House Managers, which is Trades Union Congress-affiliated, supports the Bill, as does the National Licensed Victuallers Association and the Brewers' Society. The Bill is also supported by the British Tourist Authority, the English Tourist Board, many tourist organisations and the Association of District Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities.

I turn to the arguments and make two general points. First, no one really defends the status quo, which is based on historic considerations relating to wartime considerations during the first world war. Since then there have been

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immense social and economic changes, especially the massive growth of supermarkets and off-licences in our high streets.

Secondly, no one doubts, least of all the supporters of the Bill, that a minority of people suffer from problems related to alcohol abuse and that it is a serious problem, which can cause damage to those people, to their families, to their employers and work mates and to innocent people travelling on Britain's roads. The arguments for the Bill fall under the headings of freedom of choice, economic effects and health considerations.

I start with health. I quote from a letter that I received from the co-author of two definitive books on the subject, the Reverend G. Thompson-Brake who is the minister of Hadleigh Methodist church in Benfleet, Essex. He states:

> "For over 25 years I have been a student of the emergence of drinking patterns in Great Britain and society's response to them. On the specific matter of the objects of your Bill, I do not myself believe that the kind of extension of hours which you propose will itself lead to an increase in offences of drunkenness and associated offences . . . "

He continues:

> "It has always been my view that well conducted public houses provide the best controlled conditions for the sale and consumption of liquor. I do not see how an extension of hours in this sector of the trade will in future lead to increased consumption."

That point has been put to the House in previous debates. The House knows that my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point has been a stout defender of the English pub. Much has been made of the experience in Scotland. The definitive analysis of that experience is contained in the Plant and Duffy article in the *British Medical Journal* of 4 January 1986. It states:

> "Trends in alcohol related morbidity and mortality in Scotland compared with England and Wales did not show deleterious changes specifically related to 1976, but appeared to be a continuation of the situation that was evident between 1970 and 1976. Conversely, officially recorded rates for drunkenness have declined more in Scotland than they have in England and Wales. This evidence suggests that, in relation to health, the new Scottish licensing arrangements may be viewed neither as a cause of harm nor as a source of benefit. They have, in effect, been neutral."

The article also pointed to the reduction in the Scottish level of public order offences relating to alcohol and the popularity of the new arrangements. The report concluded:

> "The evidence suggests that neither extreme benefit nor extreme harm would result from future charges."

**Mr. Alan Howarth** (Stratford-on-Avon): My hon. Friend mentioned the question of public order offences. I think that he may be interested to know, in support of the case he is making, that the chief constable of Warwickshire told me earlier this week, speaking from the point of view of his professional responsibilities and police operational considerations, that he firmly supports this Bill on the basis that the note that my hon. Friend wishes to introduce would lead to a reduced incidence of drunken driving and other sorts of drunken encounters.

**Mr. Stewart:** I am grateful to my hon. friend. What he has said confirms what police inspectors and chief superintendents and chief constables have said on numerous occasions.

**Sir Bernard Braine** (Castle Point): I have advised senior police officers for the past 20 years and I hope to present evidence to the House that some of them are extremely alarmed at the increase in under-age drinking that is taking place in many parts of the country, including my own.

**Mr. Stewart:** I entirely accept that the police, like many other people, are concerned about the problems of under-age drinking. There is substantial evidence, however, that the police, both in Scotland and England, generally prefer more liberal and flexible licensing hours for some fairly obvious operational reasons. Since 1976, there has been an increase of about 20 per cent. in the number of criminal offences recorded in Scotland following liberalisation. Over the same period, there has been an increase of 74 per cent. in England.

At a press conference this week the British Medical Association claimed that the Scottish experience was controversial and highly questionable. That claim was given considerable publicity, but the following day the BMA issued a statement in which it admitted that the Scottish experience was relevant and that the figures relating to Scotland might be in favour of the Bill. There is no restriction on availability of information, but I cannot remember the BMA's secretary mentioning the figures at the press conference. I shall make no allegations, however, because I was not present at the press conference. It would seem, however, that the statistics should have been presented at that time.

There are many factors that bear on the consumption and excessive consumption of alcohol. I am suggesting that there is no evidence that the proposed modest change to our licensing laws in England and Wales will lead to an increase in excessive consumption.

The British Tourist Authority has estimated that the Bill would create about 50,000 extra jobs and the brewers' estimate is an extra 25,000. That estimate is based on the Mori poll that was conducted of Scottish pubs. The poll showed that at least one third of the pubs employed at least one extra member of staff following the change in Scottish licensing laws. Perhaps the estimate of 25,000 jobs is on the low side.

There is no doubt that extra jobs would be created in many enterprises. This week I was visited by representatives of the three gateway airports of Manchester, Gatwick and Heathrow. They told me that if the Bill were enacted it would enable them to make provision for national and international travellers and that would create 150 new jobs. If the Bill is passed, extra jobs will be created throughout the country.

I consider the economic arguments that are based on choice and tourism to be overwhelming. There are more philosophical arguments about more freedom and there is no evidence that the Bill would aggravate health-related problems. In all probability, it would assist in alleviating them. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends who have concerned themselves with the serious problems of alcohol abuse over the years will give this modest Bill a Second Reading and join me in Committee. In Committee we may be able to reach a consensus on additional measures to provide health education on the problems that arise from alcohol abuse that we can present jointly to the Government. That seems to be a positive——

**Mr. Keith Best** (Ynys Mon): I think that my hon. Friend's last statement will do much to assuage the fears of many of us that there is a lacuna in the Bill, there being no reference to the problems of alcohol abuse. It is clear that that issue must be addressed, and I am sure that the House will take up my hon. Friend's invitation to use the opportunity that will be provided in Committee to articulate that issue.

**Mr. Stewart** : I am most grateful for my hon. Friend's remarks.

Eventually, common sense prevails in British politics. More flexibility in licensing hours simply is common sense. I urge the House to ensure that common sense prevails today and that the Licensing (Amendment) Bill receives its Second Reading.

1.6 pm

**Mr. Gordon Oakes** (Halton): The House and all the people of England and Wales have cause to be grateful to the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart), not only for the way in which he introduced the Bill, but for its terms. No man could be more altruistic than the hon. Gentleman. He has the advantages that he is now trying to confer upon the people of England, Wales and Scotland. His constituents will not gain by his efforts, but mine will. The hon. Gentleman is like a Celtic missionary of old who has come to spread enlightenment and to do something in England that has been needed not only for years but for decades. Shakespeare said that the law is an ass. The licensing laws are a completely inconsistent and hypocritical mule.

The right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) mentioned the increase in drunkenness, particularly among young people. It is farcical that any adult may go into a supermarket from 8 o'clock in the morning until 8 o'clock at night and buy bottles of gin, whisky, wine or beer and drink them in the street, at home or on a park bench, but is denied the opportunity to drink in the controlled, supervised environment of a public house. Tourists must think that we are completely mad.

**Mr. A. J. Beith** (Berwick-upon-Tweed): Would it not have been better to include in the Bill provisions to deal with offsales of this kind, to which the hon. Gentleman rightly drew attention, and thereby gain much wider support for the measure?

**Mr. Oakes:** That matter should be covered by a separate Bill.

The hon. Member for Eastwood is trying, in a moderate and modest way, to draw the support of all people within the licensing trade and many outside it. I am the vice-president of the Association of County Councils and the Association of District Councils. Both bodies warmly and strongly support the Bill.

There is a terminal date in the Bill. Newspaper propaganda was spread by those who are opposed to the Bill to try to persuade the public that public houses would be open 24 hours. That is not so under the terms of the Bill. The hon. Member for Eastwood quoted a statement by the British Medical Association which it later corrected. He also mentioned North Carolina in America. I have been to North Carolina. The position there is different. In North Carolina there is no drinking in public houses. Indeed, if one purchases alcoholic liquor, it has to be carried in a brown bag. One cannot publicly display it. Different conditions exist.

Hon. Members have flexibility in the licensing system that operates in the House. Why should we deny that flexibility to members of the public? Indeed, members of the public will not get anything like the flexibility—even with the Bill—that we enjoy. It is farcicial that public houses must close when their trade may be busiest, when tourists are about and when people need a drink, and must open and remain open during fixed hours when nobody is likely to go into a public house. Publicans must use light, heat, staff and so on at those times.

I warmly congratulate the hon. Member for Eastwood on introducing the Bill. I hope to serve on the Committee when it examines it. I hope that the Committee, as the hon. Gentleman said, is critical in some respects. I sincerely hope that the people of England and Wales and the licensing trade in England and Wales will be given the modest, sensible freedom that the hon. Gentleman's Bill offers.

1.9 pm

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) on introducing the Bill. It required courage, and he has enormous support. I am grateful to him for allowing me to become a sponsor, because I have been involved in this campaign since I came to the House in 1974. One of the reasons is that I represent the brewing centre of Britain, but it is not just the brewers of Burton, but the licensees, the managers, the millions of customers, those who will get work out of the industries related to brewing and the potential employees, who think that the Bill would be a good measure. Possibly millions of people support the Bill, and some evidence of that fact has come in the opinion polls.

It is not just the need for jobs and a successful industry that moves one to support the Bill. In our much more sophisticated and modern times it is important that freedom should be given or restored to people to behave responsibly. That is a fundamental principle of the Conservative party and the Government. There is a need to rid ourselves of outdated restrictions imposed at a time of war on a society in which Governments were then expected to order social behaviour.

We have not, I think, had to wait so long for a Government to support such a Bill because of the fear of ill health resulting from flexible licensing hours. It is no longer acceptable in our modern society, which is much more self-responsible, to argue that the overwhelming majority should have their freedom curtailed because of the abuse of the few. It is more likely that they feared that flexibility would lead to more drunkenness and crime. The police, at an earlier stage, opposed such a change, for that reason, and we backed them. Those who doubted whether that would happen, because it was the closing hour that was causing drunkenness, and that problem will be reduced, if not avoided, by flexible hours, could only, in the years after 1974, look into the crystal ball and say, "We do not accept that mournful diagnosis."

Now, we no longer have to gaze into any crystal balls because we have the evidence of what results from flexibility, after 10 years of that in Scotland. I shall not waste time repeating what my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood said and what other colleagues will say. However, it is clear that there is no evidence of any deterioration in the moral fibre of the Scots over the past 10 years, and no evidence of any resulting increase in crime.

As a result, senior police officers who earlier had doubts about this have withdrawn their objections and a high

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proportion of police, and those who represent them, know this to be so. They have changed to support of a Bill which introduces flexibility and does away with the problem of the closing hour, in which people drink intensively and then go out and smash the place up. Those of us who practise in the criminal courts know that most criminal drunks commit their acts of violence in or immediately after those last moments of drinking-up time at a late hour.

I hope that the House will give the Bill a fair wind. It deals with the matter in a controlled and sensible way. It is not open house, and automatic, that anybody can stay open indefinitely and provide drink endlessly. It introduces a new procedure by which licensing justices can continue to control the drinking hours. There are doubtless all kinds of improvements and some have already been suggested, concerning health, and these can be made in Committee. I hope that the Committee will not last for anything as long as previous stages. On one, I listened for hours to the persuasive but misguided words of my right hon., and dedicated Friend, the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine).

**Sir Bernard Braine** *rose*—

**Mr. Lawrence:** Because the Bill is sensible, well-researched, job creating, contains a nationally supported principle of freedom, and is long-overdue I support it. I am a sponsor of it and commend it, but that is in no way a criticism of my right hon. and very righteous Friend the Member for Castle Point.

**Sir Bernard Braine:** I am grateful to my hon and learned Friend for giving way. He will recall that my objection to that Bill was that it contained a proposal that children under the age of 14 should be allowed into licensed bars unaccompanied. I managed to persuade the vast majority of the House that that was morally wrong. The House threw that proposal out, and rightly so.

**Mr. Lawrence:** I am absolutely delighted that the central reason why my right hon. Friend opposed that Bill has been removed from this Bill and that there are now no other grounds on which it may be opposed by my right hon. Friend.

**Sir Bernard Braine:** Oh yes there are!

1.15 pm

**Mr. Clement Freud** (Cambridgshire, North-East): I congratulate the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) on introducing the Bill, and I especially welcome the moderation of the Bill, the basic task of which is to rationalise and simplify.

I think it is fair to say that if one knows where to go it is already possible to do everything that is being sought in the Bill. One can start drinking at Smithfield Market at 6 o'clock in the morning, and if one finds a market extension one can carry on drinking through the afternoon. If one's desires to drink in a public place are frustrated, one can board a train with a bar and go to Brighton and back; one can book in as a resident in a hotel and drink in the residents' lounge. What this admirable Bill is trying to do is to simplfy the legal mess regarding licensing hours.

I am aware that there will be objections to the Bill, and indeed the right hon Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine), who has never been hesistant in making his views clear, has told us that he fears the effects that the Bill will have on under-age drinkers. The lengthening of the licensing hours and the flexibility contained in the Bill will, by reversing the concentration of drinking time, make the supervision of young drinkers easier. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will give a fair wind to the Second Reading of the Bill. Once it is in Committee we can discuss any problems.

I accept that there are anomalies and dangers in the free licensing trade which enable people to go into supermarkets and off-licences and buy drink at all times of the day. I do not believe that the Bill is the right one for amending that. Hon. Members who are opposed to free access to alcohol in unlicensed places realise that if anyone is hell-bent on drinking, it is very hard to stop him. The price that is charged for the convenience and community spirit of a public house is already a deterrent to alcoholics and is very different from going into an off-licence and snatching drink with the specific desire to get drunk.

I have discussed with a Scottish chief constable the effects of flexibility of Scottish licensing hours. On the whole, he was in favour of them. He said that it had not vastly changed the amount drunk, but that it had staggered the hours during which drunks smash up their cars or are taken into custody—which was helpful. I do not believe that the non-existence of the Bill will do anything other than concentrate drunkenness and cause greater trouble.

The licensing laws are a mess. Those hon. Members who have been consulted by their constituency publicans and asked to give support to the Bill deserve an opportunity to put the arguments succinctly, and I ask that hon. Members expedite the Bill to Committee where we can consider the fine print. I am honoured to have been chosen as a sponsor of the Bill, and I wish it well.

1.19 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr Douglas Hogg):** First, I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) both on his good fortune in winning a place in the private Members' ballot and on his fortitude in introducing the Bill, not least because my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) is not completely in sympathy with it.

It might be helpful if I were to express the Government's view briefly and in general terms. My reason for that is not discourtesy to the proponents or opponents of the Bill, but is rather because I know that many right hon. and hon. Members wish to speak and I in no way wish to impede them. Moreover, many of the detailed points that the Government would wish to express can properly be made later should the Bill go to a subsequent stage.

**Mr. Beith:** I hope that the Minister will address himself to what other measures need to be taken alongside the Bill, such as have been referred to by the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart)—the availability of alcohol on off-sales, pricing and other related matters. It is upon that that the attitudes of many hon. Members to the Bill depend. Many might accept some relaxation of the licensing laws if other measures are taken at the same time.

**Mr. Hogg:** We are considering this Bill, and I shall say in general terms where we stand on it. I hope that when

I have finished the hon. Gentleman will accept that I have done no injustice either to his point of view or to the point of view of any other hon. Member.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood has described with considerable clarity the changes that are contemplated by the Bill, and therefore I do not want to repeat what he said. All I would do is to emphasise two points.

First, generally speaking, the variation orders would be subject to a maximum of 12 hours. Secondly, the licensees are not under an obligation to apply for longer hours. The Bill enables them to apply for longer hours in line with customer demand, subject, of course, to satisfying the court that there is a case for a variation order and that local interests have been properly taken into account.

As hon. Members will know, the Government are on record as favouring some reform of the licensing laws. We have come to that conclusion after a careful examination of the available evidence on the likely effect of alcohol consumption and alcohol-related offences. In principle, we support a measured relaxation of the present restrictions.

Hon. Members who have spoken have largely been in support of the Bill. Not surprisingly, support for flexible licensing hours has come from the drinks trade, sectors of the licensed trade and the catering, leisure and tourist industries. All those rightly point to benefits that would accrue from reform, such as employment, a boost to tourism and, indeed, the greater freedom of choice for the consumer.

However, there is another point of view. It is the point of view of which my right hon. Friend the Member for Castle Point is a notable exponent. We, as a House, would be foolish to dismiss the sincerely held views of organisations and individuals who warn that longer hours will lead to an increase in alcohol consumption and to alcohol-related problems.

I want to make it clear that the Government would not wish to do anything that would exacerbate the incidence of alcohol abuse, the deaths and injury caused by drunken driving or the domestic violence and criminal offences committed under the influence of alcohol. All those are important considerations to which the House will wish to attach importance.

**Mr. Best:** Rather than doing nothing, will the Government do something, such as looking again at the funding of detoxification centres and trying to deal with the massive increase of alcohol abuse by young people and under-age drinking? We are spending a lot of money on heroin and cocaine abuse, but nothing, effectively, on alcohol abuse.

**Mr. Hogg:** The Government understand the importance of the point that has been made so eloquently, not only today, but on previous occasions by my hon. Friend. This is an area in which we are considering what can properly be done. We attach considerable importance to the maintenance of adequate and effective control on licensed outlets, especially because of our concern about alcohol misuse.

We have taken considerable note of the reports on alcohol misuse which the British Medical Association, the Royal Colleges of Psychiatrists and General Practitioners and others have published recently. We continue to share their concern about the health and social harm that can result from excessive or inappropriate drinking, and remain committed to developing effective health education and the appropriate preventive measures.

Moreover — this is specifically a matter of Home Office concern—we have substantial reservations about the resource costs that the Bill will involve. There are about 122,000 licensed and registered club premises in England and Wales which could apply to the courts for variation orders, and a reasonable assumption is that about 75 per cent. will seek to do so in the first year. Clearly, that will occupy a substantial amount of court time. Moreover, it will inevitably impose substantial burdens upon the police. The House must take those matters into account.

In conclusion, the Government favour a liberalisation of the licensing laws in England and Wales. The approach that has been adopted in the Bill is, perhaps, not the Government's preference, because of the resource implications to which I referred. We do not wish to oppose the Bill, but if it proceeds to Committee—that is for the House to decide — we shall need to consider whether amendments might be necessary to reduce the resource cost implications.

I recognise that many will regard the Bill as a step in the right direction. It is for the House, not the Government, to decide whether the Bill should proceed further today.

1.27 pm

**Mr. Alfred Dubs** (Battersea): Everybody agrees that, although alcohol is a source of pleasure and relaxation for many, it is a harmful product for a minority. We must judge the Bill on the extent to which it may increase the harm to the minority, as against the pleasure or added pleasure that it could give to the majority. Virtually all countries in the world face that difficult problem.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) on his success in the ballot. However, I should have preferred any approach to relaxing the licensing hours to have been part and parcel of an overall approach to tackling alcohol abuse. I should have preferred more emphasis to be placed on health education and better funding for provisions in the community to help those who suffer from alcoholism and alcohol abuse. Although I am not seeking in any way to criticise the hon. Member for Eastwood—a private Member's Bill must inevitably be limited in its scope if it is to succeed — I should have preferred the Government to grasp the problem and to say, "Let us tackle this as an overall problem", instead of allowing it to go through in piecemeal measures. Another measure is going through the other place to relax the licensing provision for restaurants, which may well find favour in the House. Again, that is a piecemeal approach and I think that the House and the country would prefer to see an overall approach.

Over recent years there has been a significant increase in alcohol consumption. We have seen an increase in all types of outlets — on and off-licence outlets — that sell alcohol. At the same time, the policy of successive Governments has effectively reduced the real price of many types of alcohol to consumers. In other words, alcohol has become cheaper. There must be a relationship between that and increased alcohol consumption.

It would be wrong to say that there is not a serious problem of alcohol abuse. We know that families break up because of it, that teenage drinking can be a serious

*[Mr. Alfred Dubs]*

problem, that absenteeism and job losses are associated with alcoholism, that many crimes, from football hooliganism to murder, are strongly associated with alcoholism and that many road accidents have alcohol as a major contributory factor. Many organisations have produced the statistics to support what I have said. I shall not take up the time of the House in quoting them.

Sometimes we make comparisons with drinking on the continent. People say, "Would it not be nice if our pubs were like cafes in France, with a family atmosphere and none of the pressure to drink?"

All too often in pubs in this country there is the pressure to confine oneself to drinking alcohol. Although coffee and soft drinks are available, all too often the atmosphere is that one is there to drink alcohol and not other beverages. I wish that there was a more purposeful move in our pubs—there has been a move already—towards making the atmosphere less one of concentration on alcohol only and on other things that can be a part of social and relaxing evenings.

On the other hand, in countries such as France there is a more serious problem of alcoholism than in this country. Perhaps the fact that there are virtually no limits on the hours in which alcohol can be bought is a contributory factor to the greater prevalence of alcoholism in France than in this country.

I shall refer briefly to the Bill, because I do not wish to take up more than a few minutes of the time of the House. I note that it will allow an increase to up to 13 hours a day during which pubs can be open, with specific outer limits. I am not against flexibility, but I wonder whether it is right to have the flexibility that the Bill proposes. I should have preferred the flexibility to be in the context of the present limits on hours, within nine and a half hours' drinking time rather than a 13-hour day.

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** May I make one point clear? The Bill allows for opening for up to 12 hours within a 13-hour period. The maximum is 12, not 13 hours.

**Mr. Dubs:** I take the hon. Gentleman's point. I should have said that 13 hours is the maximum parameter, with 12 hours drinking time within that.

Nevertheless, my point holds. I should have thought that it would have been a more acceptable and a safer step, if we are to adopt a piecemeal approach, to go for flexibility in the context of a nine-and-a-half hour maximum drinking day rather than the hours envisaged in the Bill.

I am also concerned about the impact upon those who work in pubs. Some may welcome the longer hours, but I suspect that for others the longer hours will be a burden and it will be difficult for them to get home later at night. However, I welcome the undertaking by the hon. Member for Eastwood that, if the House gives a Second Reading to the Bill today, the Committee will be the appropriate occasion to add elements of health education to the measure. I welcome that, although I wish that the Bill had started off in that way. It would have been more acceptable at the outset if it had contained those elements.

**Mr. Beith:** Does the hon. Gentleman recognise that the title of the Bill scarcely permits much discussion, let alone amendment in that area? The title states that the Bill enables

"different permitted hours to be specified for individual on-licensed premises and registered clubs."

The procedure of the House may not allow the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) to live up to the helpful undertaking that he tried to give.

**Mr. Dubs:** I take the hon. Gentleman's point. That is why I said that I should have preferred it if, at the outset, the Bill had sought to cover all those matters. I should have preferred that to the hopes being expressed that somehow we might manage it in Committee, because some of us have been taken in by that before. Committees are not always successful in achieving that.

I agree with the Minister that it is for the House to decide. If the measure is approved and receives a Second Reading today, I hope very much that important amendments will be made in Committee. For the moment, I leave it to my colleagues to decide how they wish to vote, if we have a vote on Second Reading today.

1.35 pm

**Sir George Young** (Ealing, Acton): I do not propose to speak for long, but I want to inject a note of caution from the Conservative Benches about the Bill.

Over the past few days I have read in the papers that the Government support the Bill. In his speech, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department put a gloss on that. I believe that he said that the Government do not wish to obstruct the Bill. That places a slightly different complexion on things. He also said that the Government did not want to do anything that would exacerbate the problems of alcohol abuse. The opponents of the Bill claim that it would make the problems worse.

I have no rooted objection to liberalisation. However, if my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) is claiming that the licensing laws are out of date with regard to opening hours and that society should adjust that interface, surely there are other points at which society and alcohol interface which should be examined. If the Bill receives a Second Reading, I am worried that the opportunity to take a slightly broader look at the role of alcohol in society will be missed.

I am delighted to see my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security in the Chamber because I am most concerned about the health aspects. I have examined the evidence from Scotland and, in common with many hon. Members, I listened to a research fellow from Paisley. The evidence from Scotland is somewhat conflicting. Evidence can be produced for both sides as was revealed on the "Today" programme and my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood might have heard that programme if he was awake at that early hour. The unbiased listener would have come away with the impression that the case is not proven.

The Government have a pre-eminent role in this debate. They virtually fix the price of alcohol because excise duty is such a high proportion of the price. Parliament decides the age at which people shall drink and through the licensing hours we control opening hours. The Government are heavily involved on the health side as the DHSS provides detoxification centres. Through their influence on the Health Education Council, the Government influence the way in which the dangers of alcohol are promoted. Through their agreement with the brewing industry, they control how alcohol is advertised on television and elsewhere.

It is wrong to consider only one interface between alcohol and society and tackle that but not consider the other interfaces. Because of the way in which the Bill is drawn, the opportunity to take a broader look is denied to us. I regard the Bill as a dry run. I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood has started a useful debate on this subject and that the Government, after we have won the election, will introduce a Bill which may incorporate provisions along the lines of my hon. Friend's Bill. I hope that a Government Bill will also do something about the problems.

A representative from the Brewers Society conceded on the BBC "Breakfast Time" programme that there were problems, and said that there was a real difficulty about under-age drinking. If the Brewers Society admits that there is such a problem, we should try to consider that alongside increasing moves dealing with increasing the opportunities for drinking.

As one would expect, my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood moved the Bill in a moderate and sensible way. However, if there is a Division I will not follow him in the Lobby, not through any fundamental opposition to his proposals, but because I believe that other points must be tackled at the same time. The Bill does not allow me the opportunity to consider such problems.

1.38 pm

**Mr. Stan Crowther** (Rotherham): I wish to join other hon. Members in expressing my warmest thanks to the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) who comes from a part of the United Kingdom where a more enlightened attitude prevails. He has had the generosity of spirit to try to extend the benefits of civilisation to the benighted English. Clearly, King Edward I has been forgiven.

I support the Bill because it is the best that we have. However, I have certain criticisms. I do not understand why Sundays should be excluded from the provisions in the Bill. If it is not sinful to drink in a public house at 2 o'clock on a Sunday, why should it be sinful at 4 o'clock? I cannot see the point of that exclusion. As for weekdays, I strongly support the view that a licensee should be able to decide the most appropriate opening hours for his pub. Why then should he have to apply to the magistrates' court for a variation order? Why can he not merely register his hours so that they can be checked and monitored by the police?

In my constituency, at the last count there were 115 pubs and many clubs. In the Rotherham area as a whole the total must be well over 300. If all those licensees, or even the majority of them, applied to Rotherham magistrates' court for variation orders, I share the concern expressed by the Minister about the burden that that would impose on the magistrates. There is no reason why such a restriction should be introduced.

My third reservation is that I do not believe that the maximum number of hours should be as high as 12. Very few licensees will wish to open their premises for as many as 12 hours a day. Probably 10 or 10½ would be more appropriate.

All those matters can be considered in Committee and there is no reason in what I have just said for not giving the Bill a Second Reading.

I deplore the hysterical campaign that has been mounted in recent weeks against the Bill. Much of the opposition has been based on deliberate lies or on evidence which, to say the least, is dubious. I especially deplore the activities of the organisation called Alcohol Concern, which is clearly more concerned with alcohol than it is with the truth. It sent a circular to hon. Members saying that the Bill provides for all-day opening. Anyone who thinks that the Bill provides for all-day opening must start his day at 10.30 am; if so, he is more fortunate than many of us. The British Medical Association has issued stern warnings about a massive increase in alcoholism and alcohol-related diseases resulting from the Bill. I do not believe it. If people can enjoy a drink in a more relaxed and leisurely way, it will reduce alcoholism, not increase it.

I must put this question to hon. Members who, from time to time, visit licensed premises. I do occasionally. Do they see alcoholics in pubs? I do not. I see people enjoying a drink, usually in company. Occasionally, I see people who may have had a little too much, but that is not the same as alcoholism. I am convinced that private, secret, solitary drinking in the home is a much greater cause of alcoholism than is social drinking in a public house. The serious problem of widespread alcohol abuse is much more associated with the ready supply of alcohol in supermarkets than it is with the ability to get a drink in a pub.

Making pub opening hours more flexible will not have the slightest effect on alcoholism. The Bill is about flexibility, not about longer hours, although that may result in some cases. I strongly support its main purpose of making opening hours more flexible. I do not advocate a free-for-all in pubs any more than I support a free-for-all in the retail trade, which is why I opposed the Government's ill-fated Shops Bill. But licensees must be treated as responsible citizens who know best how to run their businesses within reasonable statutory limits. We must stop treating them as an anti-social breed of people who must be rigidly controlled, licensed, watched, monitored and visited by the police to see whether they are leading the innocent public on to the path of wickedness. We must get rid of that attitude.

Apart from the organisations mentioned by the hon. Member for Eastwood, the Bill is supported by the Transport and General Workers Union, which organises bar staff and can see in the Bill the opportunity to create much more employment. It is also supported by the Campaign for Real Ale, of which I am also a member, which represents many thousands of the most discerning customers.

**Mr. Beith:** I hope that in his comments about the restrictions on licensees the hon. Gentleman is not suggesting that there should be removed from the control of alcohol the procedures that require licensees to place themselves before a magistrates' court and have police approval. That is one of the protections and one of the means by which we ensure that the licensed trade is run, by and large, by extremely responsible people.

**Mr. Crowther:** I fully support that point and do not suggest that those restrictions should be removed. Having received his licence and thus secured the approval of the licensing bench, the licensee should be allowed to get on with his business in a responsible way.

If the Bill is turned down, the House cannot escape the charge of double standards. My right hon. Friend the Member for Halton (Mr. Oakes) reminded us that the bar in the House to which hon. Members may take personal

*[Mr. Crowther]*

guests is open at all hours of the day and night for as long as the House sits. Any hon. Member who opposes this Bill must, if he wishes to be consistent, table a motion to close the Strangers' Bar at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and at 11 o'clock at night. I wonder how far he would get with that?

1.46 pm

**Sir Bernard Braine** (Castle Point): At first glance this Bill, which seeks a relaxation of licensing hours, seems reasonable enough. It was advanced by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) in a speech of quiet moderation. It is certainly much less objectionable than two previous private Members' Bills on the subject, of which I earlier took the opportunity to remind the House, aimed at introducing children under 14 into licensed bars. One of them actually proposed that children under 14 should be introduced unaccompanied into licensed bars. That Bill got a Second Reading and went to Committee, but when it again reached the Floor of the House the penny had dropped and hon. Members realised the iniquity of such legislation. Rightly the House threw out that Bill and threw out the other one as well.

I have listened intently to the debate but I wish to oppose the Bill for three main reasons. First, I am worried about a measure that provides not only for longer hours but for flexibility within those hours. That is all very well for the licensee, but one must consider the opportunity for drinking that this presents to the customer. It is that with which licensing is primarily concerned and which over the years has caused Parliament to be cautious on the subject of licensing.

One consequence of the flexibility provided by the Bill is the opportunity that it gives to people to drink continuously for up to 13 hours. It is not, therefore, the modest measure that my hon. Friend introduced with his quiet charm. It would have the affect of extending drinking time from nine and half hours, with the present afternoon break, to 13 hours. That is an increase of one third.

**Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn** (Perth and Kinross): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

**Sir Bernard Braine:** I shall certainly give way, but I have a great deal to say, and I understand that other hon. Members want to speak.

**Mr. Fairbairn:** Does my hon. Friend appreciate that in a dwelling house one can drink at any time of the day? In Scotland, one can drink at any time of the day and people can have a drink when they want one. They do not say to themselves, "I am allowed to drink for 13 hours, and I will do that." People have a choice about when they want to drink. If a person comes off night shift or day shift, he can have a drink and it becomes natural and not forbidden. Anything that echoes prohibition increases the charm of doing that which is forbidden.

**Sir Bernard Braine:** With his customary forensic skill, my hon. and learned Friend has made a statement of the obvious. The overwhelming majority of people in Britain who frequent public houses drink moderately. The overwhelming majority of people who consume liquor in the home drink moderately and the overwhelming majority of parents with young children see to it that they are not introduced to alcohol until they have some judgment of their own. We are not talking about that. We are talking about a growing minority who misuse alcohol.

I should like to make two statements. First, alcohol is a pleasant adjunct to civilised living. It adds to conviviality and sociability. It is a delight to us all and, drunk with moderation, it can add to the sum of human happiness. Second, alcohol is a potent drug which, as we know from experience in this country, in Scotland and all over the world, can harm health, shorten life and cause an immense toll of human misery. It has been said many time before by eminent medical men that if alcohol was invented now it would have to be on medical prescription because, used immoderately, it is damaging to health. Parliament alone, because this is the sole regulating body, can decide what should be the parameters within which this potent drug shall be consumed.

It is significant that my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young), a former Health Minister who spoke earlier, was critical of the Bill. I too had a spell at the Department of Health and Social Security and I am critical of the Bill for good health reasons.

**Mr. Fairbairn** *rose*——

**Sir Bernard Braine:** If my hon. and learned Friend seeks to intervene he will lengthen the speech I have to make. I have to make this speech because so far, apart from my hon. Friend the Member for Acton a considered view of the Bill and what it will do or not do has not been expressed.

I object to the Bill because it must be viewed against the serious background of alcohol abuse, especially among adolescents, young adults and the increase in under-age drinking in public houses. It is no good for my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood to tell us that some chief constable says that the Bill is all right. All I can say is that up and down the country the field officers, superintendents of police who have to enforce the law, are worried about under-age drinking.

**Mr. Lawrence:** While my right hon. Friend is getting a drink of water, may I ask whether his information from chief constables is that they are opposed to the Bill or in favour of it?

**Sir Bernard Braine:** I am concerned not with opinion but with fact. I shall quote from the journal described as the best evening newspaper in the country, "The Evening Echo", covering south-east Essex and my constituency. It states:

> "Children as young as 12 are drinking in pubs, a police chief claims. Some are even boozing during their school lunch breaks, he says".

It went on:

> "I believe some youngsters leave their schools during their dinner break for a lunchtime drink. If they are going out to the chip shop they can easily go on to a pub without the school being aware . . . Basildon police commander, Chief Superintendant Alan Gilling, said youngsters were more likely after drinking to commit offences such as criminal damage, theft, burglary and stealing."

I could produce much more such evidence. If the Bill ever goes to a Standing Committee we will get the facts, not the opinions of this chief constable or that chief constable. We shall get the opinions of the police officers who have the task of enforcing the law, who, for example, have to deal with drunken youths late at night.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong):** Order. The hon. Gentleman has his back to the Chair and the rest of the House. He must address the House.

**Sir Bernard Braine:** I was straying because of the interruptions from the Benches behind me because those interruptions indicate the uneasiness of the proponents of the Bill who now fear that its seeming moderation will not delude the House into thinking that it can be passed without harm, and possibly even with some moderate benefit.

The third reason why I object to the Bill is that I do not believe that tampering with the licensing laws regarding availability is a matter for private Members. It is one for Government. Moreover, no Government should approve any tampering with the licensing laws until they are able to present the House with a national strategy to deal with the problems of alcohol abuse and are ready to achieve a more co-ordinated approach. No fewer than 16 Government Departments have responsibilities in regard to the production and sale of alcohol or the amelioration of the problems that its use entails.

No such strategy has been developed. I must remind the House that the Erroll report, which started some of my hon. Friends down the road of seeking the liberalisation of licensing laws, was severely criticised at the time by the medical authorities for its complacent and ill-informed disregard of the dangers of liberalisation in terms of public health. I should like to quote from a leader in the *British Medical Journal* at the time, which said bluntly:

> "From the public health point of view the report's major proposals must be condemned as untimely. Their adoption in practice would be to risk a further increase in alcoholism, with its attendant dangers to harmony in the home and life on the roads."

If it was untimely to liberalise the licensing laws in 1972, it is infinitely more untimely to do so in 1987 because, since 1972, the epidemic of medical and social problems caused by the misuse of alcohol has not abated. On the contrary, it has increased in scale and severity because, over the years, legal and other controls on alcohol consumption and misuse have been gradually whittled away. I have some sympathy for hon. Members who referred to the way in which, in a fit of absent mindedness I suppose, the House has approved the proliferation of outlets for the sale of alcohol. We have allowed the proliferation of outlets—the sale of liquor in restaurants, clubs, corner shops, supermarkets and even garages. We have allowed the price of alcohol to grow ever cheaper in real terms to such an extent that the average consumer is now able to buy, from a greatly increased choice of outlets, three bottles of whisky for the same money in real terms as his or her parents would have required to buy one.

This hugely increased availability of alcohol has arisen more through a protracted fit of absent mindedness than by any conscious desire. No Government deliberately sought the doubling of alcohol consumption which has occurred in Britain since the 1950s. It has nevertheless happened, and it is the result of a series of changes which are unco-ordinated and fairly small, but their cumulative effect has propelled us into a national alcohol problem the like of which we have not seen since the turn of the century.

We are today asked to support yet another measure which would take us one more step down this dismal road. We shall not be able to claim this time that we have stepped blindly in the wrong direction, for we have been told in the clearest possible terms by expert bodies that further liberalisation of licensing laws is virtually certain to result, in the short or longer-term, in an exacerbation of what is already one of the most serious public health problems facing the country.

The House knows that I speak as a former chairman of the National Council on Alcoholism. I am currently president of the Greater London Alcohol Advisory Service —the people who have to pick up the pieces in the metropolis. I do not know of one reputable body which is concerned with public health that supports the Bill. We have been told that some publicans favour it, that the drinks trade favours it and that one chief police officer favours it, but we have not been told of the public health bodies that support it .

The British Medical Association opposes the Bill. Alcohol Concern, which is the Government's appointed agency for tackling alcohol abuse, opposes it. The Institute of Alcohol Studies opposes it, as does Action on Alcohol Abuse, a body established by the medical royal colleges. In Scotland, the Scottish Council on Alcohol and the Alcohol Studies Centre at Paisley has vigorously and persistently rebutted the claim that the so-called Scottish experiment provides support for the further liberalisation of the law in England and Wales. Both oppose the Bill. Thus the most significant and telling feature of the debate is that the expert bodies that are concerned to protect public health uniformly oppose further liberalisation while supporters of relaxation, almost without exception, have a clear vested interest in increasing alcohol sales.

I do not condemn the liquor trade for seeking to increase its sales, for that is what it is in business to do. We have long since passed the stage, however, when the interests of the trade should be allowed to have priority over the nation's health, and that is the crux of the issue.

It may be, as is said by proponents of reform, that further liberalisation will boost the tourist trade, but I have yet to find any convincing evidence in support of that claim. The figures from the British Tourist Authority show that between 1979 and 1985 the number of overseas tourists visiting Scotland increased by 8 per cent. Unfortunately for the advocates of liberalisation, during the same period the number of overseas tourists visiting England increased by 54 per cent. Between 1973 and 1985, overseas tourism increased in Scotland by 33 per cent. while it increased by 77 per cent. in Britain as a whole over the same period. I would not claim that the relatively poor figures for Scotland are due to the dislike of foreign tourists for all-day opening. Such an argument would be absurd, but it would not be more absurd than the claim made by the proponents of liberalisation that English licensing laws have an adverse effect on the tourist trade.

The Bill's supporters assert that liberalisation would create much-needed new jobs. That claim has already been made in this debate, and specific figures have been mentioned. Liberalisation would also mean that consumers would shift spending from other goods to spending on alcohol, which would lead to job losses elsewhere. In fact, the job argument gives the game away. The licensing trade and the proponents of liberalisation are apt to claim that reform will lead only to more leisurely and civilised drinking. How could it create additional jobs except by increasing overall consumption? How else will the putative extra jobs be financed?

The other argument is that our existing pub opening hours are a paternalistic affront to the British public's sensibilities.

**Mr. Lawrence:** Hear, hear.

**Sir Bernard Braine:** I know that my hon. and learned Friend holds that opinion sincerely. We disagree on some issues but we agree on many others.

If the paternalistic-affront argument were valid, I, like other hon. Members, would expect to be besieged by irate constituents clamouring to be given their freedom from arbitrary interference by the licensing laws. I have received few such letters. I receive many complaints from constituents who object to the noise, fracas and violence that they have to experience as a result of a public house being close to residential property, but not about the liberalisation of licensing laws.

The "Beer Market Survey" that was carried out by Public Attitudes Surveys Research Limited in August 1985 found that 60 per cent. of the population felt that existing opening hours were right. Indeed, there were many who favoured shorter opening hours. There are those who claim that liberalisation in Scotland has proved highly popular with the public, and that will be the response in England and Wales. In fact, my advisers and I have carefully studied the many public opinion surveys that have been taken on the subject. These reveal that the elements of reform that have proved popular in Scotland are precisely those that brought Scotland into line with England and Wales.

The 1986 Goddard Survey from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys showed that only a minority of respondents positively approved of afternoon opening, which, of course, is a central issue of the Bill. Indeed, the most frequently mentioned disadvantages of afternoon opening were fears of more heavy drinking, more anti-social behaviour and adverse effects on family life. Opinions were even less favourable towards late evening extensions than towards afternoon opening. Considerably more respondents mentioned the disadvantages rather than the advantages of late evening extensions.

The Bill has not been introduced as a result of the irresistible force of public opinion — of constituents queuing up at hon. Members' weekly surgeries, demanding liberalisation of licensing hours. Nor is the real issue to do with the convenience of overseas tourists. The issue is whether we encourage more drinking and can afford to take yet another step in the dismantling of one of the few remaining controls on alcohol abuse.

The intervention that my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) made at the beginning of my remarks prompts me to consider the background to the debate in a little detail. Since the 1950s, overall alcohol consumption in the United Kingdom has doubled and all the indices of alcohol-related harm have risen commensurately. The Royal College of General Practitioners, in its report published as recently as last November, calculated that alcohol misuse is directly responsible for about 40,000 premature deaths each year in the United Kingdom. Alcohol is directly implicated in 10 per cent. of all deaths of persons under 25 years of age. Studies have shown that approximately one in five admissions to general hospitals are alcohol related. That is about half the rate in France, yet the Bill would take us a little further towards the French level.

In the past decade alone, admissions to psychiatric hospitals for alcohol-related problems have doubled. I am delighted to see the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security in the Chamber. She will have these facts at her finger tips, and so will my hon. Friend the Member for Acton. As a former Health Minister myself I cannot ignore these facts. The House of Commons cannot ignore them either.

Perhaps extra employment will be provided if the Bill is passed. That seems to be a bull point made by the proponents of the Bill. It will certainly mean extra doctors, nurses, social workers, alcohol consultants and police officers, for alcohol is the common thread running through a range of medical and social problems, from premature death and avoidable illness to absenteeism at work and football hooliganism. In recent years all these problems have grown worse. The House has been concerned about them again and again but it does not add them all up. Surely we must look at the picture as a whole. Abuse is linked with an increase in overall consumption.

The Royal College of General Practitioners has given a clear warning. It tells us:

> "It is increasingly accepted that in general there is a clear link between the overall consumption"—

of alcohol—

> "in a country and the level of alcohol related harm there . . . Changes in consumption affect drinkers at every level and upwards changes will shift some of those drinking at the top of the 'moderate' range into the high risk zone."

How foolish we should be to pass this modest measure on the assumption that it will not add one tittle to what is manifestly already a major problem.

Moreover, it is clear that regular and in many cases heavy drinking is becoming more entrenched with each new generation. The latest Home Office statistics on drunkenness—if I am wrong about this, my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary will correct me — reveal that the rate of convictions is now higher among 16 and 17-year-olds than among 30 to 60-year-olds. The recent Office of Population Censuses and Survey's survey on adolescent drinking provides yet more information, as if any were needed, that we have a massive problem of under-age drinking. The Institute of Alcohol Studies, in an examination of Home Office statistics from 1955 to 1985, has found that the under-21s now account for one in four of all drunkenness offences, compared with one in 12 30 years ago. Under-age drinkers now account for one in 14 of all drunkenness offences, compared with one in 100 30 years ago.

In February 1986, I asked my hon. Friend the Minister for Health why he did not publish the findings of the OPCS survey on adolescent drinking, which his Department had commissioned. The fieldwork for this survey was carried out in 1984. It was delivered to his Department in October 1985. Despite that, the report was not released until 17 December 1986, just before the Christmas recess. I fail to understand the reluctance to publish, and I have been given no explanation for the year's delay.

What are the findings of that survey? Among 13-year-olds, 19 per cent. of boys and 14 per cent. of girls who drink do so in public houses. Among 15-year-olds, this figure rises to 44 per cent. and 42 per cent. respectively, and among 17-year-olds the figures are 68 per cent. and 57 per cent. What can we say about a chief police officer who sees the law being flagrantly broken in this way but is satisfied that this modest little measure will make a useful contribution? I would like to know who that chief officer is. His name should be stated in the House.

There is good reason to believe that the earlier that a young person begins a habit of regular drinking, the more likely it is that he or she will drink heavily later in life. We have an enormous problem with alcohol now, but there is an even greater one in preparation unless present trends can be reversed. That is the criterion by which this Bill should be judged. Will it do anything to reduce the level of harm arising from misuse of alcohol, or will it cause more young people to drink to excess?

Understandably, the drink trade is keen to entice the younger generation into pubs, because they are providing its best customers. I fear that it will be the younger generation, including, in all probability, under-age drinkers, who will form a large part of the clientele until 11.30 pm if the Bill is passed. The claim that a solution to even a small part of our problem of alcohol abuse is to open public houses all day is so opposed to common sense and so unlikely that it cannot be taken seriously.

I agree that the question is a complex one. What has or has not occurred in Scotland is difficult to assess. The statistics are ambiguous and can be interpreted in a number of ways, but it seems clear that there is no basis for the claim that the Scottish experiment proves that licensing liberalisation would be of benefit in England and Wales.

It is frequently stated that, since 1976, drunkenness in Scotland has declined and that that has been due to extending the hours and thereby reducing the "beat the clock" drinking. It is true that convictions for drunkenness have declined in Scotland since 1976, but that decline has been so precipitous — the conviction rate in 1984 was less than half that of 1979—that it is inconceivable that it is the result of reform in the licensing laws. A fall of such magnitude is much more likely to be the result of a change in police practices. That suspicion is given considerable support when one considers that, since 1976, while officially recorded drunkenness figures have declined, the figures for breach of the peace and petty assault—both alcohol related—have increased.

According to Stephen Allsop, director of the Alcohol Studies Centre at Paisley, overall alcohol-related public order offences in Scotland have increased since licensing reform. That is incontrovertible.

The decline in drunkenness offences in Scotland did not begin until 1981 during which period there was also a decline in England and Wales. That decline started in England and Wales and the reason was that the economic recession was hitting people in their pockets. They drank less because they had less money to spend.

**Mr. Best:** Does my right hon. Friend also agree that that decline was due to the introduction of legislation in 1980 that banned drink from or near football grounds?

**Sir Bernard Braine:** That may well be a factor. The number of deaths from cirrhosis of the liver—normally used as the best indirect measure of the extent of alcohol abuse in a society — appears to be much clearer. Unfortunately, for the proponents of liberalisation — again based on calculations at the Alcohol Studies Centre at Paisley — between 1975 and 1985 deaths from cirrhosis of the liver have increased in Scotland by more than two-and-a-half times the level experienced in England and Wales. That is consistent with OPCS findings that extending opening hours in Scotland may have encouraged already heavy drinkers to drink more.

It is true that a small number of other academic studies have suggested that licensing relaxation has not had a significant effect on alcohol misuse. However, I say with certainty—I am sure my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Mon will agree with me—that informed opinion is that it is unlikely that relaxation has improved matters in Scotland and that relaxation has worsened the position. In the words of a statement published by the British Medical Association only this week, the available evidence in favour of relaxation is controversial and highly questionable, and indeed it is hardly a satisfactory basis for extending the Scottish experiment into England and Wales.

The dangers of extending hours are all too evident. There is the danger that this will increase alcohol consumption and will encourage heavy drinkers to drink still more. I have already referred to the evidence that has shown that that is precisely what has happened in Scotland. There is also the danger of increased risk on our roads.

It is almost inevitable that, if public houses in a given locality open and close at different times, some people will travel from one public house to another to maximise drinking time. How will they travel? It takes a great deal of credulity to believe that that travel will not be made by road vehicles.

It is significant that the Department of Transport, in its evidence to the Erroll Committee, opposed the possibility of flexible hours on exactly those grounds. It expressed the fear thar flexible drinking hours would coincide with afternoon traffic peaks between 4 pm and 6 pm. Those fears are as well founded today as they were then.

Department of Transport figures reveal that between 3.30 pm and 6 pm is the peak time for traffic accidents, especially those involving children—I emphasise that. At such times children would be making their way home from school. In the absence of special measures against drinking and driving, this Bill, if introduced, will bring about even greater dangers to road users than exist at present. As we know, alcohol is already the main cause of road traffic accidents. It may be that the young would welcome the Bill, but let me remind the House that the major cause of death for young males between the ages of 16 and 24 is a road accident in which alcohol has been a factor.

My postbag has contained letters from the Campaign against Drunk Driving, the aid group composed of victims' families. I remember one particularly moving letter from a family whose son was killed by a motorist who had been drinking during the afternoon, the extension having been granted by the magistrates.

Not only are there fears about afternoon extensions; there are also fears about late evening extensions. How will people get home after 11.30 pm? We already know of the particularly high rate of drink-driving accidents in the late evening. Over the Christmas period the brewers said, "Don't get a ban, get a bus". How do these gentlemen move about their business? Where does one get buses so easily these days after 11.30 pm? What happens here in the great metropolis to many bus conductors as a result of people having had too much to drink? This is madness, and it is high time somebody stood up in the House and said that Government neglect of the overall problems and the pretence that vested interests have, somehow or other, all our interests at heart and that there is nothing to worry about is wrong. The evidence to the contrary is there. How can it be ignored?

*[Sir Bernard Braine]*

Thirdly, there is the symbolic significance of licensing law itself. The law is important not just because of its direct effect in controlling alcohol misuse, but also because its very existence is a way of informing society, especially children and young people, that alcohol is a special commodity requiring special treatment. What lesson would the young learn from the introduction of a measure such as this? Would it help us to convince them, as we need to do, that alcohol is a special commodity which should be treated with caution?

Any doctor will confirm that alcohol is the most potent pharmacological depressant freely available without prescription and its misuse can damage almost every organ and system of the body. I am talking of misuse by young immature people. The evidence is there of under-age drinking. The licensee has all my sympathy because it is difficult these days to distinguish between somebody who is under 18 and somebody who is over 18.

The Government are campaigning hard against the threat posed by illegal drugs and they are right to do so. But we must be careful not to appear hypocritical in the eyes of young people. If we tell them that their drugs are dangerous and must be banned but ours are enjoyable and can be pushed all day and that we want to extend the hours in which they can be enjoyed, our efforts to curb the abuse of both alcohol and illegal drugs will be undermined.

It may be argued that public houses are being asked to bear too high a proportion of the blame for alcohol misuse. Is it not the case that the proliferation of outlets has meant, as has been said, that if one wants to drink, one will, because it is easy to obtain liquor? If we had a proper licensing law and parallel accompanying measures, including appropriate excise duties, we would not be facing the epidemic that we are faced with today. I hope that I have given the House enough reasons to cause it to think again about the Bill and will not give it a Second Reading.

2.23 pm

**Mr. A. J. Beith** (Berwick-upon-Tweed): The right hon. Member for Castle Point (Sir B. Braine) has deployed some aspects of the case against proceeding with the Bill. Even those who have not campaigned in the long and dedicated way that he has for a more systematic approach to our licensing laws should look at the position in which we are left following the Minister's speech. Not all hon. Members who are present now heard what the Minister said.

I advised him earlier that it would be of great relevance to the attitude of many hon. Members if he could announce that, in conjuction with enabling the Bill to go through the House, he would ensure that the Government took steps to deal with some of the other problems that have been referred to by hon. Members of all parties, even by those hon. Members who are sponsors of the Bill. Such problems are the ease with which alcohol can be obtained from off-licences by people who are under age, and problems of enforcement, pricing, health education and alcoholism. We have not received any evidence from the Government that help will be given on any of those points. The Minister said that the Government are looking at them, but they have been looking at them for years. I cannot recall an occasion on which a Minister has come to the Dispatch Box during a debate on licensing laws and has not said that the Government are looking at those problems. However, those problems have become consistently worse.

**Mr. Donald Anderson** (Swansea, East): Has the hon. Gentleman seen the latest issue of "Social Trends" which shows dramatically how the real value of whisky has decreased? Surely an element in the increase of alcohol consumption, apart from the availability points upon which the hon. Gentleman has touched, is that the real value of alcohol has fallen.

**Mr. Beith:** It is well known that the price of alcohol has fallen. There is a great deal of evidence from many countries that price and consumption are closely related. When the price is low, consumption is higher, as can be seen from the evidence that is adduced from Scotland.

Equally important to the way in which hon. Members judge the Bill today is not just what the Minister said, but what the hon. Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) said when he introduced the Bill.—*[Interruption.]* Does the right hon. and learned Member for Warrington, South (Mr. Carlisle) wish to intervene? I see that he is speaking from a sedentary position.

I accept the sincerity of the hon. Member for Eastwood in saying that he should like to have discussions in the context of the Bill about the other problems which I have described. However, he cannot do so in Committee because the Bill is specifically to enable different committed hours to be specified for individual unlicensed premises and clubs and I am sorry to say that the Chairman would have to call him to order constantly if he sought to extend it.

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** My point was that a private Member cannot, by definition, commit the Government to extra expenditure on health education.

**Mr. Beith:** Indeed, that is so. Therefore, amendments could not be tabled to the hon. Gentleman's Bill to deal with the price and taxation points that I have mentioned. However, the title of his Bill could have allowed it to be extended to some of the problems of off-sales, as well as of order and the difficulties that licensees and others face in enforcing the under-age drinking laws at present. There would have been scope for extensions if the title of the Bill had been wider. —*[Interruption.]* Hon. Members are trying to intervene, but I shall not give way because many other hon. Members still wish to speak.

There is a lot more that I should like to say, because we should have the opportunity of considering not just licensing hours in isolation but the means by which we can deal with the health problems and the problems of violence presented by alcohol.

I need refer only to what happened on New Year's Eve. The Home Secretary is currently conducting inquiries into the events of old year's night in various parts of the country. According to an article in *The Times*,

> Staff at the Sunderland District General hospital in Tyne and Wear are said to have been appalled at the extent of the injuries which occurred at new year, the majority of which were directly related to alcohol abuse"

and, of course, to alcohol abuse in a period of licensing extension because special extensions were granted on New Year's Eve. The article continues:

> "Between 8 pm on New Year's Eve and 6 am the following morning, the hospital treated 118 patients for injuries resulting from violence and drunkenness. These included a stabbing, several assaults and a serious head injury."

The article reported that the statement issued by the hospital said:

> "'Many of the patients were abusive, although the staff were spared from being physically assaulted this year owing to a heavy police presence which had been arranged in advance.'"

That police presence was arranged in advance because the hospital knew that extended licensing hours would give rise to problems that night. Such grave problems cannot be discussed in isolation. We need the opportunity to consider what other measures could make an extension of the licensing hours a reasonable step forward. The House had not been given that opportunity today.

**Mr. Allan Stewart** *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put; *but* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *withheld his assent and declined then to put the Question.*

**Mr. Rob Hayward** (Kingswood): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have now had 10 speakers in the debate, and we have had speeches from both the Opposition and Government Front Benches——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I hope that the hon. Gentleman is not questioning the decision of the Chair.

**Mr. Ted Garrett** (Wallsend): Further to that point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am questioning, not the decision, but the judgment, of the Chair. Hon. Members who have spoken in the debate have made known declarations against those who take alcohol. You are an experienced Member, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you know that the debate has not been properly conducted to allow the case for and against to be presented. I submit that that is a point of challenge.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman can have his opinion.

*It being after half-past Two o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.*

*Debate to be resumed upon Friday 27 March.*

## COMMUNITY HEALTH COUNCILS (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) BILL

*Read a Second time and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).*

## SCHOOL GOVERNORS (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**Hon. Members:** Object.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Second Reading what day?

**Mr. Stan Crowther** (Rotherham): Friday 6 March.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I take it that that is with the leave of the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts), who is in charge of the Bill.

**Mr. Crowther:** Yes. Unfortunately, my hon. Friend is unable to be present.

*Second Reading deferred till Friday 6 March.*

## POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY (INFORMATION) BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**Hon. Members:** Object.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Second Reading what day?

**Mr. Robin Squire** (Hornchurch): With the authority of the hon. Member in charge of the Bill, Friday 6 February.

*Second Reading deferred till Friday 6 February.*

## SOCIAL FUND (MATERNITY AND FUNERAL EXPENSES) BILL

*Ordered,*

That, in respect of the Social Fund (Maternity and Funeral Expenses) Bill, notices of Amendments, new Clauses and new Schedules to be moved in Committee may be accepted by the Clerks at the Table before the Bill has been read a second time.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

## Overseas Pensioners

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

2.31 pm

**Mr. Neil Thorne** (Ilford, South): As I am chairman of Ilford Age Concern, it will come as no surprise to my hon. and learned Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State that I should like to see a substantial increase in the national retirement pension.

Increasing numbers of my constituents are asking me why the Government are paying out unemployment and other benefits to unemployed school leavers who have never worked when other industrialised countries pay unemployment benefit only to those who have earned it through contributions made while in employment. Those countries which make it much harder by relating benefits to contributions then seem to be in a better position to be more generous with their retirement pensions for those who have regularly contributed throughout their working lives. I am not suggesting that young people should be left destitute, but I propose that it should be made much harder for any young person to exercise the option of drawing the dole and staying at home, particularly when there are now so many training schemes and opportunity programmes.

I was very pleased to meet one young man in my constituency earlier this week working on the test bench at Plessey Military Communications, who had first joined the company on a youth training scheme and is now an integral part of its work force. He is earning good money.

As I have said, countries that make it much harder by relating benefits to contributions seem to be in a better position to be more generous with their retirement pensions for those who have regularly contributed throughout their working lives. My suggestion would introduce a new concept. At present pensions are paid under the Social Security Act 1975. Instead of being a return on contributions made throughout the working life, they are paid out of current taxation. In my view, a good Conservative principle would relate much more closely to contributions and benefits.

Section 82(5)*(a)* of the Social Security Act 1975 provides

> "Except where regulations otherwise provide, a person shall be disqualified from receiving any benefit, and an increase of benefit shall not be payable in respect of any person as the beneficiary's wife or husband, for any period during which the person—
>
> *(a)* is absent from Great Britain; or
>
> *(b)* is undergoing imprisonment or detention in legal custody."

I have no quarrel with the second of those two provisos. However, I feel that having contributed towards a pension scheme throughout a working life, sometimes for 40 years or more, it is only reasonable that the person who has made such contributions should be entitled to look forward to a pension which can allow for the ravages of inflation.

We appear to have double standards in that respect. Some countries have a reciprocal arrangement with us whereby increased provisions are catered for. Other countries, however, do not have such arrangements and people who retire to those lands find that they have to exist —I use the word exist intentionally—on that level of pension for the rest of their lives.

The only basis upon which the Social Security Act 1975 provides for payments to be made overseas is under the Social Security Benefit (Persons Abroad) Regulations 1975, Statutory Instrument No. 563, as amended Regulation 4(1) of that statutory instrument states:

> "Subject to the provisions of the regulation and regulation 5 below, a person shall not be disqualified for receiving widow's benefit, child's special allowance, a guardian's allowance or a retirement pension of any category by reason of being absent from Great Britain."

The regulations go on to restrict the amount of pension payable to the level current at the date of retirement or the date when the pensioner was last ordinarily resident in Great Britain, whichever is the later. Reciprocal agreements made with other countries under section 143 of the Social Security Act 1975 can override that disqualification from benefit uprating.

In answer to a private notice question on 17 March last year, the countries in which pensions increases can be paid, apart from those in the European Community, were shown to be Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Iceland, Israel, Guernsey, Jersey, Malta, Mauritius, Sark, Switzerland, Turkey and Yugoslavia. These countries were listed in the reply given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Social Security and the Disabled. He went on to say that pensioners in a further group of countries receive increases which became payable after the date that an agreement was entered into force — Bermuda from 1 November 1969, Jamaica from 1 October 1972, and the United States of America from 26 September 1969.

Those are major concessions because substantial numbers of pensioners now live in those countries. I want to give some examples. The position on 31 December 1985 was that pensioners receiving pensions without increases received an average of only £13·32 a week. In Australia there were no fewer than 96,126 recipients. In Bangladesh there were 1,253; in Canada 54,388; in New Zealand 23,167; in Pakistan 3,369; in India 2,580; Nepal — I know that my hon. Friend the Minister would not expect me to omit Nepal—there were 14 recipients; and in the United States of America there were 32,077.

Arrangements are in force in a number of those countries, but there are no provisions in other countries. My hon. Friend the Minister will note that there are more Than 8,000 pensioners in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. These pensioners have to live on the pension that they received when they first became titled as having left the country.

Although I have made no costings for the increased provision, I believe that other savings could be effected. My hon. Friend will know that the current retirement pension is £38·70 a week, to which a wife will add £23·25, making a total for a married couple of £61·95. But that is only part of the story, because people who retire are advancing in years and we must consider how much they cost the taxpayer by way of other services. Such people increase considerably the cost of the Health Service.

I shall give some examples. In 1983-84, the estimated gross current expenditure per head in England for those aged between 16 and 64 was £95 a year on hospital and community health services, £55 a year on family practitioner services and £20 a year on personal social services, making an average total of £170 a year. For those aged between 65 and 74, the figures are £370 for hospital and community health services, £85 for family practitioner services and £75 for personal social services, making a total of £530. For those aged over 75, the figures increase sharply to £875 for hospital and community health services, £135 for family practitioner services and £330 for personal social services, making a total of £1,340 a year. That is a substantial sum and one that we must take into account when we consider the money paid to the elderly.

We should consider seriously giving those who wish to leave these shores to seek sunnier climes on retirement—which, after a lifetime of service to the community they are entitled to do, provided that their passports are endorsed with a waiver to prevent them from making subsequent claims on the Health Service—a much more generous pension to allow them to live where they wish and to be responsible for their own health needs.

My figures do not include costs in relation to part III accommodation. Many people make that additional call upon ratepayers and the community. On current figures, one would expect to pay more than £200 a week on part III accommodation. That is a total of £10,000 or more a year, which is a substantial cost to the community and which is not taken into account in the Government's calculations on pensions.

In the past, the Government have been much more concerned about reciprocal arrangements with other countries. I understand that we are about to reach a reciprocal arrangement with Canada, and the same may apply to Australia. But there will be no similar provision in the foreseeable future for India, Pakistan or Bangladesh, to which many of my constituents wish to retire. We should consider the matter in the round and not too narrowly, as we have done in the past. Hon. Members have raised the matter before. On 23 April last year, my hon Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) asked about pensioners retiring to Canada. Many people retire to Canada, Australia and New Zealand because that is where their children have emigrated and they wish to join them. It is perfectly satisfactory and suitable that people should be able to do that and, although reciprocal arrangements were speedily organised between members of the European Community, we seem to be short of achieving with the Commonwealth an arrangement that takes into account a relationship that goes back a lot further. For historical reasons if for no other reason, that should be put right.

There is a real need in relation to the new Commonwealth, and I urge my hon. and learned Friend to look closely at the matter, not in the narrow way in which it has almost exclusively been examined in the past, but globally in order to ensure that taxpayers will be as well off if not better off. The Government should also try to find a way of giving people who have spent a lifetime working in Britain what they want, which is to spend their last few years in their chosen place of abode.

2.45 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Lyell):** I shall begin by congratulating my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford, South (Mr. Thorne) on raising the matter of pensions payable to those who choose to live abroad. We know that it is a significant and long-standing problem. As my hon. Friend knows, the retirement pension is today at its highest ever level in real terms. It is not widely recognised that, as a proportion of our gross national product, Britain spends the third highest amount of any country in the European Community. Only two countries, Denmark and France, spend more. If one looks at overall support, not only in terms of the retirement pension, but in terms of occupational pensions and other forms of support, one sees that we are third in the European league table. That is an honourable position.

I shall now deal with British pensioners living abroad. My hon. Friend will realise from his detailed study of this matter that the subject raises difficult issues. I shall set out the background, the nature of the problem, the way in which the Government approach it and the way in which we might, subject to the pre-eminent matter of financial constraint, which my hon. Friend recognised, hope in due course to make progress.

The general rule—and there are exceptions to this rule to which I shall return later—is that United Kingdom pensions paid overseas are paid at the rate in force when the pensioner leaves this country or when he first qualifies for a pension if he is abroad at that time. The pensions are not subsequently uprated. Until 1955, except for Commonwealth countries, United Kingdom pensions were not payable outside this country at all other than for short periods of absence. In July 1955 the law was changed and, for the first time, United Kingdom pensions became payable anywhere in the world. This was a major change in policy. There was, however, no provision for the pensions that were to be paid abroad to be uprated.

At the time that decision was reached it was considered that the social security system was primarily designed for people living in the United Kingdom. The purpose of the review and uprating of pensions was to ensure they retained their value for people living here in relation to the cost of living in this country. As the cost of increasing benefit falls mainly on contributors and employers in the United Kingdom, it was at that time considered unreasonable to ask them to bear the cost of increases paid to people who had voluntarily left the country.

The national insurance fund is run on a pay-as-you-go basis which means that we estimate expenditure each year and set the rate of national insurance contributions in order to produce an income which will broadly match expenditure. It is not always widely recognised that even today the figures for contributory benefits, nearly £24 billion a year, and the amount raised by national insurance contributions, over £21·5 billion, show the same close correlation which has underlain the contributory principle for nearly 40 years. The estimates of expenditure allow for the fact that pensions paid overseas are, in general, not uprated and would clearly have to be amended were that to be changed. Successive Government have endorsed this policy.

On costs, out of the total £42·5 billion a year which we spend on pensions and benefits, some £338 million is paid to pensioners living outside the United Kingdom. That figure would increase by another £166 million—about 50 per cent. on its present figure at November 1985 rates—if we were to pay all United Kingdom pensions overseas at the same level as pensions paid in this country.

I would like to say something about the bilateral social security conventions that we have with some other countries. Most of them are with our close neighbours—the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands, and the countries of Europe and Scandanavia—but we also have long-standing agreements with Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States. They vary widely in scope but exist to protect the social security interests of people moving between the United Kingdom and those other

*[Mr. Nicholas Lyell]*

countries. Many of the conventions provide for pensions to be uprated but not all do. In all, pension increases are paid to only about 40 per cent. of United Kingdom pensioners living abroad, leaving some 60 per cent.—over 220,000—who do not receive pension increases at all.

The United Kingdom pays pensions to over 376,000 pensioners overseas at a total cost of about £338 million a year. We have no accurate information on the total number of pensioners living in this country receiving pensions from overseas. From what we do know—there are, for example, some 4,500 people in this country receiving Australian pensions, something in excess of 3,000 people receiving Canadian pensions and 14,500 people receiving pensions from the United States—it would seem likely that the total amount of money returning to this country indirectly from those people is very substantially less than the amount of money which we are exporting. We cannot easily afford to increase that imbalance.

As I have said, to bring the pensions of those not already receiving increases up to the level of pensions paid in this country at November 1985 rates would cost about £166 million a year. To pay future costs of living increases alone, ignoring past increases and working again on November 1985 rates, would cost about £22 million in the first year. But that cost would rise significantly over the years until all pensions overseas are paid at the full United Kingdom rates. When that will be, or what the costs will then be, it is not possible to say. There is no comprehensive information on which we can make accurate forecasts. What we can say is that if the number of pensioners were to remain static then, based on the November 1985 rates of benefit, the ultimate extra cost would be that which I quoted earlier for fully uprating existing pensions—no less than £166 million a year.

Government spending is always subject to constraints and priorities. The strict constraints, including the cost of paying cost of living increases to all United Kingdom pensioners overseas, has to be assessed alongside the Government's priorities for other improvements to our social security system. The resources are simply not there to make all the improvements that we would wish.

As for the existing conventions, one may ask about the background to those cases where we have entered into commitments with various overseas countries which do provide for payment of pension increases. The reason is that the negotiations for the bilateral conventions that provide for pensions to be uprated were set in train a considerable time ago, at a time when Government spending, not only of this Government but of former Governments as well, was not subject to such strict constraints as now has to be the case and when the costs were, in any event, significantly lower. In principle, it remains our wish, in suitable circumstances, to negotiate further bilateral conventions which will make similar arrangements for people who retire in a country other than one where they have been working and earned pension rights. Because such arrangements are expensive, we have to hold back on them at present.

Leaving aside the question of financial constraint, whether a bilateral convention is entered into between ourselves and another country depends on a number of factors, including the benefits available under the other country's scheme, how far reciprocity is possible and the extent to which the advantages to be gained by an agreement outweigh the additional expenditure likely to be incurred by the United Kingdom.

As for Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, I listened with interest to the detailed research that my hon. Friend introduced into his speech. He mentioned United Kingdom pensioners living in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan—some 9,000 in all. The United Kingdom has no bilateral convention on social security with those countries and the United Kingdom pensions paid there are subject to the general rule and are not uprated.

My hon. Friend also mentioned United Kingdom pensioners living in Canada, and I should like also to refer to those who live in Australia and New Zealand. Nearly 179,000 United Kingdom pensioners live in those countries, the largest proportion—almost 99,000—in Australia, more than 56,000 in Canada and more than 23,000 in New Zealand. The United Kingdom has social security arrangements with all three countries dating from the 1950s.

The agreement with Canada is very limited in scope. Although the agreements with Australia and New Zealand are much more comprehensive, none provides for pensions to be uprated. In 1972, the United Kingdom Government proposed a comprehensive agreement with Canada which would have included pension upratings. The Canadian authorities, though, were unable to enter into negotiations.

Officials of my Department and their Canadian counterparts have done some work on preparatory technical matters for a comprehensive convention between the United Kingdom and Canada, but until the necessary finance is available it will not be possible to make any meaningful progress on it.

Officials of my Department have also had discussions with their Australian counterparts about the existing agreement between our two countries, but we have always made it clear that until the money is available, and that is unlikely to be in the foreseeable future, it is not possible for the United Kingdom to enter into negotiations for a revised convention which would include pension uprating. I am sorry to have to give my hon. Friend such disappointing information, but it is important to state that.

My hon. Friend suggested that, as pensioners who live overseas do not use the National Health Service or the social services in this country, there are consequent savings which should be set against the cost of uprating their pensions. I listened carefully to what he said about that, but I regret that it is not possible to quantify any savings of this kind, nor is it possible to trade one thing off against the other in this way.

The National Health Service and social services are part of the social structure available to residents here. They are financed on that basis. We could not give a cash benefit in lieu to people who decided to live overseas any more than we do to people here who opt for making private arrangements.

I am sorry that I cannot hold out hope of an early change in the present arrangements for the payment of United Kingdom pensions overseas, but I am pleased to remind my hon. Friend that we have arranged some improvements in the way in which pensions are paid to beneficiaries who live abroad. My Department has awarded a contract to the Bank of Scotland to make payments in local currency by overseas credit transfer.

When the new system of payment comes into operation —which I hope will be in the near future—we expect it to be generally more efficient and dependable than the present method. That will be of significant value in some countries. In addition, pensioners should get preferential exchange rates and a reduction in bank charges. The new arrangements will be offered to beneficiaries in countries where payment by automated credit transfer is a practicable and economic alternative.

**Mr. Thorne:** Would my hon. and learned Friend be kind enough to consult his Treasury colleagues to see whether they might be prepared to take a rather more global view? Such a view would be in the interests of taxpayers, ratepayers and the country.

**Mr. Lyell:** I have listened with great care to what my hon. Friend said. He has raised some interesting points which I shall most certainly draw to the attention of my colleagues in the Treasury.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at one minute to Three o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Monday 2 February 1987*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**Mr. Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that I have appointed as Speaker's Chaplain the Rev. Canon Donald Gray, TD., Rector of Liverpool, who is shortly to become a Canon of Westminster. Canon Gray will take up his duties here when the House returns after the Easter recess.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my thanks, and I am sure those of all hon. Members, to Canon Trevor Beeson for his exceptional contribution to the life of the House of Commons during his years as Chaplain from January 1982. He takes with him the good wishes of the House as he assumes his responsibilities as Dean of Winchester.

I am also most grateful to the Rev. Canon James Mansell for acting as Speaker's Chaplain during the present interregnum.

# Oral Answers to Questions

## TRANSPORT

### Thames Crossing (Dartford)

1. **Mr. Watts** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates he has of the numbers of people who will be employed in the construction of the proposed third Thames crossing at Dartford.

**The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. John Moore):** The proposed new bridge should provide up to 5,000 man years of employment. Many jobs will be in steel production and fabrication in the north-east.

**Mr. Watts:** I thank my right hon. Friend for his reply. Any measure to relieve congestion at the Dartford tunnel and speed the flow of traffic on the M25 will be of benefit to all users, including many companies in my constituency. What advantages are there in the method of construction and operation using the private sector, and does my right hon. Friend feel that that principle could be applied to any other major transport project?

**Mr. Moore:** The project will relieve congestion at the Dartford tunnel and I know that all hon. Members will welcome that. Private sector financing will enable the bridge to be provided over and above the Government's road programme. To put that in context, it might be the equivalent, in money terms, of 10 to 15 bypasses. Of course, I could not make any commitment about further projects, but I am sure that all hon. Members will welcome the spending of additional money on such quality infrastructure projects, and it would clearly be of assistance if that could be done through private sector financing.

**Mr. Roy Hughes:** Does the Secretary of State appreciate that that is the last sort of arrangement that we require in Wales in respect of the proposed second Severn crossing——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The question is about Dartford.

**Mr. Hughes:** The principle is identical, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** But not today.

**Mr. Squire:** I am sure that my right hon. Friend is aware that news of the bridge has been widely welcomed in my constituency. Will he advise the House whether there will be any form of performance contract in the construction of the bridge to encourage its completion by the earliest possible date?

**Mr. Moore:** Of course, such details will be in the Bill when it comes to the House. My hon. Friend will be aware that one of the great advantages of ensuring early completion, which will be in the interests of all motorists, is that by financing the project through the private sector the risk will be transferred, to that extent, to the private and not the public sector. Therefore, we shall not have the inordinate delays that there have been in some public sector projects.

### Traffic Congestion (London)

3. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has had with local government officials concerning the effect of deregulation in London on traffic congestion.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Peter Bottomley):** We meet the boroughs to discuss traffic matters of common interest. We share the responsibility for helping Londoners to get about and to make London more prosperous, safer and pleasanter.

**Mr. Hughes:** Is the Minister aware that in recent correspondence the local district general manager of London Buses in the Selkent area told me that his greatest problem and the most serious cause of unreliability in bus services was the traffic congestion in central London, where my constituency is located, and that that was totally beyond his control? Can the Minister give the House any hope that the substantial remaining problem of congestion, which is increasing, and which I am sure he will accept is the biggest problem facing all those who try to keep buses running on time, will be brought under better control in the future? What steps can the Minister promise will be taken in that direction over the next few months?

**Mr. Bottomley:** Like any London Member of Parliament, I have had dealings with Selkent and London Buses. I should like to pay tribute to London bus staff who go through turmoil, show great courage and a degree of love, or at least concern, for their passengers in traffic jams and congestion. Clearly, one of the major problems is illegal parking. Indeed, sometimes it is difficult to find a space on a yellow line. Clamping and some privatising of parking enforcement will help. The issue of congestion comes up at the meetings between LRT and my hon. Friend the Minister of State, and we hope to make further progress on it.

**Mr. Chapman:** Does my hon. Friend agree that one of the best and most effective ways to tackle congestion in the capital is to give support and encouragement to the London boroughs' local road schemes? Will he confirm that in this next financial year the Government are supporting financially a total of £77 million worth of such local road schemes, which will have the most practical, beneficial effect on traffic movement in the city?

**Mr. Bottomley:** My hon. Friend rightly draws attention to the importance of the transport supplementary grant system through which we work in partnership with the London boroughs. Local roads need to be made safer for local residents, but through roads and through traffic are important for public transport. My hon. Friend will recognise the significant improvements for buses made in most of the major schemes announced in London.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Would the Minister be interested to know that I was able to stop and personally thank the police on the Mile End road recently for doing an excellent job in enforcing the bus lane that runs all along the Mile End and Bow road? Will the Minister tell the House whether he has had any discussions with the Home Secretary about providing sufficient policing resources in London to ensure that the bus lanes are enforced and, indeed, that parking restrictions are enforced, because therein lies the key to an easier flow of buses throughout the capital city?

**Mr. Bottomley:** The hon. Gentleman rightly draws attention to the newsworthiness of his support for the police in their work. If that could spread to other areas of police work, I am sure that it would be greatly welcomed throughout the House, London and especially the Metropolitan police. Obviously, it is important that where bus priority measures apply the rest of us should stay out of bus lanes. I suspect that the House will agree that some bus lanes work well, but others may need reviewing.

**Mr. Greenway:** Will my hon. Friend congratulate LRT on its many successes, especially on the Underground services and some bus services? Will he note, however, that the 207 bus service is appalling and that my constituents do not believe that one-man operated buses will improve the situation? Heavy traffic notwithstanding, what can be done to bring the 207 bus service up the standard at which it should be?

**Mr. Bottomley:** My hon. Friend is one of those who supported the movement for LRT to have greater independene from local government control. The matter that he raises relates to operational management and I suggest that he takes takes it up with the management. I join him in paying tribute to the remarkably improved performance of LRT since it left the hands of County Hall.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Pontius Pilate.

**Mr. Greenway:** The pot is calling the kettle black.

### Channel Tunnel

4. **Mr. Waller** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates he has of increases in the amount of freight carried by rail which will result from the Channel tunnel project.

**Mr. Moore:** British Rail estimates that, with the Channel tunnel, rail freight traffic between this country and the continent will treble, and that there will be 1,000 fewer heavy lorries a day on our roads as a result.

**Mr. Waller:** Does not the north of England have particular benefits to gain, in that the long-haul routes will be particularly able to attract traffic from our heavily congested roads? Does my right hon. Friend agree that the north, in particular, can look forward to many new jobs resulting from the construction of this valuable project?

**Mr. Moore:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. The economics of freight movement make freight transport much more attractive for distances over 200 miles. I gather that the advantages for those areas, particularly the midlands,, are that the movement time may well be reduced by between 24 and 48 hours. There will also be savings in terms of the costs of transshipment on to ships. Clearly, there are benefits in freight transport for the north, Scotland, north Wales and areas north of the midlands, and jobs will result from the benefits that will flow from manufacturing orders from areas north of Birmingham.

**Mr. Raynsford:** How does the Secretary of State reconcile the remark that he has just made about a substantial increase in freight volume with the comments of his hon. Friend the Minister of State, who in Committee opposed amendments to the Channel Tunnel Bill involving additional expenditure estimated at £8 million on rail improvements between Cheriton and Ashford on the ground that it would make the freight operation of British Rail and the tunnel not viable?

**Mr. Moore:** The hon. Gentleman, not for the first time, has taken a fact entirely out of context. I had the benefit of reading the details of the Committee and I appreciated some of the hon. Gentleman's contributions. My hon. Friend the Minister of State and those committed to the successful development of the Channel tunnel for the benefit of freight movement will be aware that British Rail has had the Government's support in seeking to advance its arguments in this area.

**Mr. Adley:** One recognises that, for a variety of reasons, there will be opponents and dismal Jimmies about the Bill, but does my right hon. Friend accept that the regional argument is important and that many responsible people in the north of England and Scotland welcome the tunnel? In the interests of promoting the regional use of the rail link, will my right hon. Friend reconsider the full electrification of the line from Tonbridge round to Reading, which was orginally built for the very purpose of the Channel tunnel?

**Mr. Moore:** I confirm my hon. Friend's comments. I find it quite astonishing, as do those who have studied the matter, especially British Rail, that those who seek to represent parts of the country north of Birmingham are not aware of the enormous advantages, in terms of freight movement, to areas in the north of England.

**Mr. Donald Stewart:** And Scotland.

**Mr. Moore:** And Scotland, of course. To that extent, I shall make sure that my hon. Friend the Minister of State draws British Rail's attention to the comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Christchurch (Mr. Adley) about that specific electrification.

**Mr. Snape:** What facilities will the Secretary of State arrange for British Rail to provide to meet the projected increase in freight traffic prior to the tunnel opening in 1993?

**Mr. Moore:** As the hon. Gentleman knows full well, British Rail is discussing with us the development of the handling of international freight at inland depots and additional areas for clearance. We are co-operating in every way with British Rail to ensure that it will benefit from the unique opportunities offered to freight movement by the development of the Channel tunnel.

**Mr. Aitken:** As the boardroom of Eurotunnel is in well-publicised turmoil, with the chairman, Lord Pennock, reported to be wanting to quit, Sir Nigel Broackes reported as being disenchanted, and just about everyone else being disenchanted because of the fear of being swamped by the French, will my right hon. Friend be cautious in peddling the kind of pie in the sky optimism that he is giving forth from the Dispatch Box this afternoon and reflect on the fact that the tunnel project might not raise the missing 96 per cent. of the funds or be built at all?

**Mr. Moore:** The boardroom of Eurotunnel, as my hon. Friend knows, has nothing to do with the Government or the House of Commons, but the specific question relates to British Rail's freight estimates. Those estimates project a tripling from £2 million to £6 million. Those are relatively modest estimates, but it is for British Rail —[HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."]—to judge them in the context of the 220 million tonnes of European freight traffic that currently comes from the United Kingdom. Her Majesty's Government are not here to answer questions regarding the board of Eurotunnel.

### Drink-Drive Offences

5. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what further proposals he has to deal with drink-drive offences.

**Mr. Moore:** We must go on working to change public attitudes so that drinking and driving comes to be seen by everyone as something that is simply wrong. I am heartened by the support that we are getting from outside bodies and the public.

**Mr. Dormand:** As more than a thousand people are killed every year as a result of drinking and driving, when will the Government realise that publicity campaigns and existing penalties are simply inadequate to deter drivers from drinking? In addition to introducing heavier penalties, will the Secretary of State bring in measures that will substanitally increase the possibility of detection? Does he agree that such measures would represent improved deterrents?

**Mr. Moore:** The hon. Gentleman has long supported this issue and I respect his comments. We share the same commitment to reduce the awful slaughter that we witness. the question is how to do so.

The police and most of those who seek to enforce the law regard the key as being compliance with the existing law rather than additional and higher penalties. The road traffic law review is studying the matter and considering whether tougher penalties for drinking and driving would be effective. I would not deny for one moment the importance of publicity. Such publicity has helped to change attitudes, and such attitudes are critical when 95 per cent. of accidents in this country involve drinking and driving. I hope that I have the hon. Gentleman's support for such publicity as well as considering tougher penalties.

**Mr. Hickmet:** My right hon. Friend will know that different chief constables instruct their forces to enforce the law more or less rigidly. Is he aware that it is not satisfactory for different chief constables to adopt different standards in different parts of the country? May I particularly draw his attention to the behaviour of the chief constable of Nottinghamshire over the Christmas period? It seems from press reports that he considered himself to be a law unto himself.

**Mr. Moore:** I know that my hon. Friend will bring his remarks about particular chief constables to the attention of our right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. I was addressing myself to the powers that the police have, as opposed to the enforcement that we would all seek. The police and the Government regard the powers as adequate, but we require compliance with the law and a change in people's attitudes towards that law.

**Mr. Boyes:** Does the Minister agree that as 100,000 people lose their licences every year through drinking and one quarter of all road deaths are drink-related, that means that there are 100,000 potential killers on the road each year? I agree with the Minister that we need to change attitudes, as the Under-Secretary said on 26 September, but the introduction of stiffer sentences and a reduction in the permitted blood-alcohol level would make a positive contribution to ending the drink-drive problem.

**Mr. Moore:** We all have the same attitude to the problem: the only question is how we can achieve success. I said to the hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand) that the North review will examine whether we should tighten penalties, but the clear view of those who seek to enforce the law is that they have adequate powers. We need to ensure compliance with the law and a change in the attitudes of those who break the law.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels:** My right hon. Friend and his Department, together with the Association of Chief Police Officers, are to be congratulated on a hard-hitting campaign, but does my right hon. Friend agree that too many drivers are still drinking? I notice from a written answer that 4,280 positive breath tests were taken during the Christmas period from 19 December 1986 to 1 January this year. Should not my right hon. Friend be encouraging the police to introduce random breath testing to ensure that people are not tempted to drink and then go out driving and kill someone?

**Mr. Moore:** I readily respect and understand the emotions that most of us bring to this subject, but I remind the House again that the police regard their existing powers as adequate. They have power to test if they have reasonable cause to suspect a motorist of driving, attempting to drive or having driven with alcohol in his body. They have powers to test if a moving traffic offence has been committed and if a driver has been involved in an accident. The police, who seek to enforce the law for us, regard those powers as adequate.

**Mr. Robert Hughes:** There is undoubtedly unanimity in the House that we should have the strongest possible enforcement of the drink-driving laws in view of the tremendous damage caused by people who drink and drive, but do not drivers believe that they cannot be tested merely because drink can be smelt on their breath when they are stopped because, say, an indicator is not working? That view adds to the belief of a number of motorists that they can get away with drinking and driving. Does the Secretary of State agree that it is time to examine more carefully the possibility of random testing?

**Mr. Moore:** I said that we were reviewing the law, and obviously that is important. The hon. Gentleman is saying that people are not aware of the degree of testing that is currently available to the police. If possible, I shall seek to get that point across, because the Government are not arguing for random breath tests.

### Minibus Services

6. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what estimates he has for the number of minibus services now in operation.

**The Minister of State, Department of Transport (Mr. David Mitchell):** I estimate that there are more than 150 towns and cities with minibus services, and the number is growing.

**Mr. Howarth:** Does my hon. Friend agree that it is thanks to the Government's legislation that impetus has been given to the introduction of these new services, which are nowhere better illustrated than in Cannock, where Midland Red (North) has not only introduced a service but created more jobs? Can my hon. Friend tell us whether British coachbuilders have been able to benefit from the new policy?

**Mr. Mitchell:** The Transport Act 1985 undoubtedly unlocked enterprise and innovation that had been smothered by over-heavy regulation. On the second part of my hon. Friend's question, most minibuses have United Kingdom-built bodies on a variety of United Kingdom and overseas chassis. Metro-Cammell Weymann and Optare have introduced completely new vehicles.

**Mr. David Marshall:** In view of the increasing popularity of minibus travel, does the Minister agree that passengers should expect and have the right to the same form of protection in the event of an accident as with other forms of transport? Will the Minister conduct research into safety standards with a view to introducing regulations to enforce rear seat belts on all seats and anti-burst catches on rear locks?

**Mr. Mitchell:** If there was any reason to believe that that would make a significant contribution to extra safety for passengers on minibuses we would look at it, but so far we have not had any reason to believe that there is a problem.

**Sir Fergus Montgomery:** Is my hon. Friend aware that a commercial operator is introducing a service with more than 200 minibuses to run new services in the Manchester area? Will he confirm that that boon to residents in the Manchester area is because of the Transport Act 1985?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Not only do I confirm that my hon. Friend is right, but I find it significant that the minibus operator concerned has chosen to go to Manchester. He is obviously picking on areas which are least efficient in their existing operations.

### Freightliner Network

7. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, when he next meets the chairman of British Rail, he will raise with him the proposed cutbacks in the freightliner network; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** British Rail and its subsidiary, Freightliner Limited, decided to rationalise their business in the light of a careful assessment of Freightliner's long-term prospects. I deeply regret any consequent loss of jos.

**Mr. Hughes:** Why is British Rail always on the retreat, and why is it again putting Wales last in the queue for electrification? Why is it persisting in closing the Severn tunnel junction facilities, which are some of the best in the country and would be invaluable as a link-up with the proposed Channel tunnel project?

**Mr. Mitchell:** British Rail is not always on the retreat, as is well demonstrated by the Channel tunnel and the aggressive and commercial approach that British Rail has adopted to it. The House ought to commend Freightliner for coming to grips with a difficult problem and for taking the essential steps to protect the future of its business.

**Mr. Anderson:** Will the Minister undertake to look again at the case for closing the Freightliner depots in Wales, particularly in Swansea, as it smacks of short-termism at its worst and runs counter to regional policy and to preparing for the challenges of the Channel tunnel?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Since 1978 Freightliner has been required to pursue a commercial remit and it would not be right to expect it to do something that is not in the commercial interest of its business. Therefore, I have to decline the hon. Gentleman's request.

**Mr. Robert Hughes:** How can British Rail be planning to increase international freight traffic from the Channel tunnel by closing eight Freightliner depots, including the one in my constituency? Is there not some inconsistency in that?

**Mr. Mitchell:** The pattern of the Freightliner depots is not necessarily the pattern of the inland clearance depots, which will be the key part of its international traffic with the Channel tunnel. I have to say that we are seven years away from the tunnel, and those are loss-making areas that British Rail and Freightliner must ensure are operating in an economic way.

### Guisborough Bypass

8. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Transport by what date it is anticipated that financing will be available for work to commence on the Guisborough bypass.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** This is a matter for Cleveland county council. We are providing transport supplementary grant towards schemes costing £28 million, which also help the economic regeneration of Cleveland. Acceptance of Guisborough for TSG in the future depends on the priority given to the scheme by the county and its merits relative to the TSG criteria and competing programmes, within the resources available.

**Mr. Holt:** I thank my hon. Friend for that answer and recognise that the responsibility lies with Cleveland county council, but does he recognise that the people of Guisborough, Skelton, Loftus and Brotton are being denied vital bypass roads because of the iniquitous attitude of Cleveland county council to any area where there is Conservative representation? Is my hon. Friend aware that that is bad for the region because it stops tourism and because the only potash mine in England is dependent upon the roads in that area? We need the bypass urgently. Will my hon. Friend see what action can be taken to direct Cleveland county council?

**Mr. Bottomley:** I do not envy Cleveland county council's job. I recognise that the Cleveland Initiative is of advantage in the county. Relief of communities from heavy through traffic is one of the criteria for the distribution of TSG. If Cleveland submits a bid for TSG to start work in 1988-89, we would hope to consider the scheme for supplementary grant in that year.

### Roads (Construction and Repair)

9. **Dr. Twinn** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what measures have been taken to improve efficiency in road construction and repair.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We have taken a wide range of measures to provide better roads at lower costs, including increased competition, improved designs, and lane rental.

**Dr. Twinn:** I thank my hon. Friend for his answer. His Department's achievement is easy to see. Motorists now find it easier to travel on roads that are not being repaired, whereas just a few years ago it was difficult to find a road that was not being repaired. What savings have been achieved from the introduction of the lane rental system?

**Mr. Bottomley:** The main saving is 38 per cent. in time. We reckon that we have saved 500 person days—if I may use that expression—in traffic jams. In terms of increased competition, we think that we have saved a good £16 million on the roads programme in one year alone. The intangible benefits of having a roads programme that is not cut, as it was year after year between 1974 and 1979, are of great benefit to the economic regeneration of this country.

**Mr. Freud:** Why are there more lane closures on British motorways that there are on any motorway in any other European country?

**Mr. Bottomley:** I suspect that, in part, the answer lies with the Lib-Lab pact, when much road reconstruction did not take place between 1977 and 1979. As the hon. Gentleman would realise if he had listened to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State speaking at the Conservative party conference last year, we aim to get rid of that backlog, and then we can feel that we can forget about the Lib-Lab pact.

**Mr. Rowe:** I represent a constituency where my constituents still find it impossible to find roads that are not closed most of the time, so can my hon. Friend do something about the early warning of predictable road works? For example, this morning when I was travelling up the M20 police moved us all off the motorway into Bromley and Chislehurst, giving no indication to the large number of people who had come across the Channel and who did not happen to know the byways of those pleasant areas how they would get out again.

**Mr. Bottomley:** Yes, Sir.

### Pension Rights

10. **Mr. David Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any intention to make regulations regarding any diminution of emoluments or pension rights under section 84 of the Transport Act 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I have no plans to make such regulations.

**Mr. Marshall:** The Minister's answer is just not good enough — *[Laughter]* Does he not realise — seriously, because it is not a laughing matter — that the emoluments and conditions of many bus workers are being eroded as a result of the Act? Transfers to inferior pension schemes and loss of travel concessions are only two examples. If that is all the result of privatisation of the bus industry, does the Minister agree that it is only right, fair and just that regulations awarding compensation should be introduced as soon as possible?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Section 84 regulations relate only to charge directly associated with transfer. I know of none where that could be applicable as directly associated with transfer. In some cases there were changes before transfer and there have been changes for new recruits. Perhaps that is what the hon. Gentleman has in mind, but section 84 does not apply in those cases.

### Regional Airports

11. **Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the total level of investment in regional airports in the north of England since 1979.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Michael Spicer):** Since 1979, total capital investment at airports in the north of England has been more than £150 million. That compares with a total capital investment at all regional airports in England under the last Labour Administration of less than £16 million.

**Sir Fergus Montgomery:** That is very good news, but will my hon. Friend give us more detail about the amount of money that has been allocated to Manchester international airport? Does he not agree that the strike there today, caused by the firemen, is likely to do a great deal of harm to the long-term future of the airport?

**Mr. Spicer:** Since 1979 over £80 million has been spent on Manchester airport, and that investment has allowed passenger throughput to expand by 75 per cent. since 1979. In fact, it has grown by 25 per cent. in the last year alone. The House will have noted what my hon. Friend said about the firemen's strike, especially as the airport authority has offered to introduce the services of an independent technical assessor to help settle the dispute.

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** The Minister has kindly agreed to meet the chairman of Manchester airport, together with the hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Silvester) and myself, to discuss the Bermuda 2 negotiations as they concern Manchester. Is there any word that the Minister can say this afternoon about our interest in increasing flights between Manchester and the United States?

**Mr. Spicer:** I am looking forward to meeting the right hon. Gentleman and discovering exactly the basis of his case. As Manchester is a gateway, it is open to foreign airlines to apply to come into Manchester. Perhaps we can discuss that matter in detail when we meet.

**Mr. Sackville:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the growth of Manchester airport has been magnificent over the past few years, that the airport is vital to the regeneration of employment and industry in the north-west and that the current strike is economic suicide for the region?

**Mr. Spicer:** Yes, I agree with my hon. Friend's comments.

**Mr. Carter-Jones:** Does the Minister accept that it would be a considerable help to Manchester and the regions if he was to have a word with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and order the A340 Airbus, to allow regions such as Manchester to provide aircraft for the long, narrow routes?

**Mr. Spicer:** The hon. Gentleman is quite right. This is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. No doubt my right hon. Friend will have noted what the hon. Gentleman has said.

**Mr. Favell:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the astonishing increase in passenger transport at Manchester airport shows that the north-west is not on its uppers as the Labour party would have us believe?

**Mr. Spicer:** Manchester airport's achievements have been remarkable. It is now one of the major airports, not only in this country, but in Europe.

**Mr. Dormand:** Does the Minister realise that there are other airports in the northern region besides Manchester, and that the greatest needs are at Newcastle and Teesside?

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours:** And Carlisle.

**Mr. Dormand:** And Carlisle, as my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) said. If the Government are serious about narrowing the north-south divide, or eliminating it, will the Minister give priority to those three airports?

**Mr. Spicer:** Newcastle airport, which is closest to the constituency of the hon. Member for Easington (Mr. Dormand), is very successful. Indeed, since 1981 it has received capital allocations of £13 million.

### Speed Limits

12. **Mr. Bidwell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider introducing a campaign for the strict observance by the public of road speed law.

**Mr. Moore:** I shall continue to campaign for better road safety. Strict observance of speed limits is not necessarily enough. Within the legal limit drivers need to keep to a safe speed for the road conditions.

**Mr. Bidwell:** Would the Secretary of State and other Ministers agree that there is a dangerous and wanton disregard of existing legal speed limitations? Is it not high time that a campaign was undertaken to make changes? Motorists who try to observe speed limits often feel that they are in a dangerous position with the flow of traffic, which is far too excessive at present. At the same time, it is wrong that there should occasionally be punitive police action. There should be a national campaign, and pretty soon.

**Mr. Moore:** I cannot disagree with the emotion and attitude expressed by the hon. Gentleman. The regular enforcement of the law is obviously a matter for my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, and I will draw his attention to the hon. Gentleman's remarks. Clearly, strict observance is a key factor in maintaining the level of quality of safety that we would expect on our roads.

**Mr. Higgins:** May I again press my right hon. Friend to erect 70 mph signs on an experimental basis on some motorways, especially the M25, so that drivers are constantly reminded of the speed limit?

**Mr. Moore:** Since my right hon. Friend raised this point, I have examined it and am prepared to consider the idea. At this stage we are testing the "Keep your distance" signs and we want to consider their effect. However, I am prepared to consider my right hon. Friend's point and I am examining it now.

### Channel Tunnel

13. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the security provisions being planned for the Channel tunnel.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** This subject is being taken very seriously by the two Governments and the concessionaires. However, for obvious reasons, I cannot make the details public.

**Mr. Taylor:** Is the Minister aware of the immense public concern at the possibility that the tunnel will be an open invitation for those appalling terrorist groups which seek to draw attention to themselves by committing outrages? How will it be possible for every vehicle to be inspected and X-rayed when, according to the chairman — still — of the Eurotunnel Lord Pennock, such a machine has not yet been invented?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Eurotunnel has been proposing various arrangements to the Government, but it will be for the Government to examine those arrangements and to decide whether they are satisfactory.

**Mr. Donald Stewart:** Does the Minister accept that security should include the safety of the public and that there is much disquiet about the fact that drivers will have to remain with their vehicles and that the tunnel might turn out to be the longest crematorium in the world?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Safety, is, of course, a prime question. There is long experience in Switzerland of drivers remaining wth their vehicles and there being no serious incidents such as the right hon. Gentleman fears.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Wright Case

39. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Attorney-General when he first became aware that Sir Robert Armstrong had offered inaccurate evidence in the Wright case in Australia concerning the Attorney-General's alleged role in deciding whether to proceed against Mr. Chapman Pincher's book "Their Trade is Treachery"; and if he will make a statement.

40. **Mr. Winnick** asked the Attorney-General if he will make a statement on the latest position regarding the Wright case in Australia.

44. **Mr. Nicholas Brown** asked the Attorney-General if he will now make a statement on the Government's handling of the Wright case.

**The Attorney-General (Sir Michael Havers):** This is a matter at issue in the proceedings in Australia. I must remind the House again that I am the plaintiff in that case and cannot, therefore, comment on it. I have to be careful to avoid the risk of prejudicing the case or, at worst, being in contempt of court in New South Wales. When the proceedings are over, then will be the time to deal with any matters that are outstanding, in the light of the usual customs and conventions. We are awaiting judgment, for which no date has yet been fixed.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Would it be unkind to the Attorney-General to suggest that it was only after questions were asked and a fuss was made in the House, especially by the Leader of the Opposition on 27 November, at column 426, that he took steps to correct a perjury in the Australian court? Nothwithstanding the general issues to which he understandably referred, why did this correction take so long?

**The Attorney-General:** I think it is right to say that there was no question of perjury, which requires an intentional deception of the court. As for other matters, I am bound by the attitude which the Government have adopted on this.

**Mr. Winnick:** Does the Attorney-General recognise that an important lesson of the Wright case is that civil liberties should not be undermined by the Administration of the day? Does it not appear that that lesson has not been learnt by the Government, bearing in mind the KGB-like operation against the Glasgow office of the BBC? Does the Attorney-General recognise that this matter——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman's question must relate to the main question.

**The Attorney-General:** I am afraid that I was unable to hear the hon. Gentleman's last few words.

**Mr. Winnick:** Does the Attorney-General recognise that the importance of the Wright case is that civil liberties should not be undermined by the Government? We need an explanation of what occurred at the weekend, bearing in mind the KGB-like operation against the BBC in Glasgow.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. There will be other opportunities to raise that matter. The Attorney-General may answer the first part of the question.

**The Attorney-General:** On the first part, I should have thought that the hon. Gentleman would have realised by now the principle which the Government are trying to uphold in the court in New South Wales. The second part of the question cannot possibly arise from the main question.

**Mr. Nicholas Brown:** It would help the House enormously if the Attorney-General would give a clear and unambiguous commitment to make a statement on the Government's conduct of the Wright case as soon as the judgment is announced.

**The Attorney-General:** There is a problem — I am taking advice on it—as to whether I could comment if the case went to the Court of Appeal. All that I can tell the hon. Gentleman is that I am longing for the opportunity to make a statement to the House.

**Mr. Stokes:** Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that although the people of Walsall, North and Newcastle upon Tyne, East may be waiting with bated breath for the news of the Wright case from Australia, no one in my constituency has written to me about it or even mentioned the subject?

**The Attorney-General:** I thought that I was tempting providence when, in answer to questions three weeks ago, I said that some 70 hon. Members had informed me that they had received no letter. I got no letters from any hon. Member saying that that statement was inaccurate.

**Mr. Adley:** Has my right hon. and learned Friend noticed that, whether it be obsessive, old MI5 buffoons in Australia, or fellow travelling journalists in Britain seeking to undermine national security, there is never any shortage of Opposition Members jumping up to defend them, regardless of the circumstances?

**The Attorney-General:** It has struck me as curious that, while the Leader of the Opposition has agreed that this could be a serious breach of national security, so many of his hon. Friends take a completely different view.

**Mr. Alex Carlile:** Does the Attorney-General recognise that, when one puts aside all the personal and political criticism that has arisen from it, the Wright case and other more recent events have given rise to severe public anxiety about the attitude of Government, of whatever colour, to secrecy. Will the Attorney-General recommend to his right hon. Friend the Prime Minister that the time has come for a thoroughgoing and fresh inquiry into the whole subject of secrecy and secrecy legislation?

**The Attorney-General:** No, I will not. The ordinary British public believe that when somebody working in one of the security services makes a promise to keep the secrets that he learns in the course of his duties secret for the rest of his life, that promise should be honoured.

**Mr. Hickmet:** Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that much of the evidence that was given in camera in the case in Australia came into the possession of Opposition Members? Will he confirm further that it was used in the House and that the effect was to undermine the Crown's case in Australia? Is he aware of the arrangements that existed between the Leader of the Opposition and his office and Mr. Turnbull, the lawyer acting for Mr. Peter Wright? What effect did the presence of Mr. Paul Greengrass in court in Australia have upon the presentation of the Crown's case and the manner in which it was presented to the court?

**The Attorney-General:** It would be quite wrong for me to comment on any proceedings that took place in camera. Perhaps it will be of some consolation to my hon. Friend to know that, in the end, the facts will speak for themselves.

**Mr. John Morris:** In the Attorney-General's anxiety to make a statement to the House, do I understand his answer to mean that he clearly and unequivocally is telling the House that, provided he can get over any legal difficulties that may remain after judgment is delivered at first instance in Australia, he will not be thwarted by even the Prime Minister and will make a statement to the House?

**The Attorney-General:** Yes.

### Diplock Courts

41. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Attorney-General what views he has exchanged with the Attorney-General of the Republic of Ireland, within the framework

of the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, and also elsewhere, on the constitution and working of the Diplock courts.

**The Attorney-General:** I am not prepared to disclose the details of matters that I have discussed in confidence with the Attorney-General for the Republic of Ireland.

**Sir John Biggs-Davison:** In the interests of Anglo-Irish relations, can my right hon. and learned Friend deny that Irish politicians, whom I should not name because of the general election in the Republic, wanted to make the ratification and implementation of the European convention on the suppression of terrorism conditional upon changes in the Diplock courts, which is a matter only for the United Kingdom?

**The Attorney-General:** I am sorry to have to say to my hon. Friend that it is not a matter for me. I remind him that, in the Second Reading debate, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland said:

> "After the most careful consideration, the Government are not presently persuaded that this——"

that is, the three-judge court—

> "would be an appropriate change".—[*Official Report*, 16 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 1081.]

**Mr. Heffer:** Has the right hon. and learned Gentleman had any discussions with his counterpart in the Republic of Ireland about the book which was published there and which is not allowed to come to this country, entitled "One Girl's War"? Has he seen a copy of the book and read it? It is absolutely ludicrous. Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that, at one stage, they actually entered Mr. Palme-Dutt's house, looked into the great secret under his bed and discovered that it was his marriage lines?

**The Attorney-General:** I have had no discussion about the book with my opposite number in the Republic. The other matters to which the hon. Gentleman referred are news to me.

### High Court Cases

42. **Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Attorney-General if he has any plans to seek to change the speed with which cases come to trial in the Queen's Bench division of the High Court.

**The Solicitor-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew):** In February 1985 the Lord Chancellor set up a major review of civil justice in England and Wales with the object of bringing about reforms which would reduce the delays in and complexity of civil litigation. The review is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

**Mr. Hamilton:** I thank my right hon. and learned Friend for his reply. Although the law's delay is a cliché which has been with us for hundreds of years, is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that cases in the Queen's Bench division now seem to take quite insupportable periods of time before they reach court? In my case against the BBC not so long ago we set down the action for trial in November 1984 and we came to court in October 1986. That can hardly be regarded as satisfactory.

**The Solicitor-General:** I am, indeed, aware, as is my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor, of the very undesirable length of time that is taken for many cases in London to come to court after having been set down. In the provinces there is a much more favourable picture. Cases that are estimated to take a long time to try take longer to come to court. My hon. Friend's case was estimated as a six weeks' trial. In the event it was settled after six days, in circumstances that we remember.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### Southern Africa (Front-line States)

47. **Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he intends to increase aid to the front line states which are members of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference; and if he will make a statement.

**The Minister for Overseas Development (Mr. Chris Patten):** We are already giving substantial bilateral aid to the front-line states which are members of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference. This amounted to £86 million in the last financial year. We have pledged £25 million so far to SADCC for regional projects. I shall make a statement on our future aid to SADCC at the organisation's annual meeting later this week.

**Mr. Holland:** We understand that the Minister is going to Mozambique. We hope that he will be able to come back and make commitments to provide assistance to Mozambique, granted the key role that it plays among the SADCC countries. Will he also accept the invitation to the Government from Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to join India and other developing countries in financing the Africa fund for the front line states as a short term emergency complement to SADCC's longer term programme? India has pledged $50 million over three years to the Africa fund. How much will the Minister pledge?

**Mr. Patten:** We think that we can best help both through our bilateral programme, which will be increased for the region in the next financial year, and through our commitments to SADCC—an existing institution which works particularly well. I too, hope that I shall return and that when I am in Mozambique I shall be able to make additional commitments to our aid programme to that country.

**Sir Ian Lloyd:** Is it not almost as ludicrous to suggest that Sub-Saharan African economies can be developed without proper recognition of the enormous role played by South Africa as it would be to suggest that the continent of North America could be developed without proper recognition of the place of the United States in its development? If, as my hon. Friend doubtless wishes to say, we intend properly to pursue the twin goals of multiracialism and economic development throughout sub-Saharan Africa, should not those twin goals be supported by western European and North American resources, wherever they may be found, instead of being confined in some extraordinary and ludicrous way to what is almost indefinable—that is, the boundary of the so-called front-line states?

**Mr. Patten:** I agree with my hon. Friend that the region would develop best if it were able to do so in peace.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** While the Minister is considering what assistance to give to the front-line states, will he assure the House that he understands that Commonwealth countries such as Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland are potentially in the front line of economic difficulties if economic sanctions are eventually applied against South Africa? Is his Department giving serious consideration to developing contingency plans in that event?

**Mr. Patten:** Our aim is to strengthen the economies of the countries in the region so as to reduce their dependence on South Africa. That is why we have invested so much in transport and infrastructure projects.

### Afghan Refugees

48. **Mr. Key** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the level and type of British assistance to Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Since the Soviet invasion in 1979 we have given over £40 million. For the current financial year, I announced an allocation of £3·5 million in Pakistan last November, and I expect total expenditure in 1986-87 to be £4·8 million. Most of our assistance is channelled through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, although various British charities have received smaller amounts. The assistance includes food and medical supplies as well as support for health and income-generating projects.

**Mr. Key:** I congratulate my hon. Friend on that effort, which is much appreciated, but what future is there for our aid programme in Pakistan for Afghan refugees? Does he foresee that it will continue for a number of years, bearing in mind the fluid situation that now exists in that sad country?

**Mr. Patten:** I wish that it were not necessary for it to continue for several years, because, like the rest of the House, and at least like my side, I hope that the Soviet forces will withdraw from Afghanistan, enabling the refugees to return to their own country. As for the existing help that we give to refugees, I assure my hon. Friend that, subject to parliamentary approval, the amount of money that we make available to them will be increased next year.

**Mr. Tom Clarke:** Notwithstanding our welcome of the contribution which the Minister has outlined, does he accept that in view of the potential conflict in that region resources should be used for development and not on armaments?

**Mr. Patten:** The money that we are providing is for development — for food aid and primary health care. That is where the money is going.

### India (Gujarat)

49. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the level of aid being directed to Gujarat in India.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** We have provided £43 million for fertiliser plants at Hazira in Gujarat and we are providing £2 million for the integrated rural development project in Anand. In addition, under the joint funding scheme, we are supporting about 30 voluntary agency projects in Gujarat, most of which are concerned with primary health care.

**Mr. Spencer:** Is my hon. Friend aware that many thousands of my constituents have relatives and friends in Gujarat and that their main concern is for the severe drought there, the effects of which I saw when I visited Gujarat in December? Can my hon. Friend assure the House that he will take that natural disaster fully into account when assessing the level of our aid to India?

**Mr. Patten:** I know how concerned and knowledgeable my hon. and learned Friend is about Gujarat. I am also, of course, aware of the two-year drought which has affected part of that state. We hope that the worst is now over. We have made over £100,000 available to Oxfam's programme for drought relief in Gujarat and Rajasthan. I congratulate the Indian Government on their efforts to deal with these severe problems.

**Mr. Janner:** I associate myself with what the hon. and learned Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Spencer) said, because on my many visits to India I have seen enormous hardship and suffering. What are the Minister's plans for increasing aid to a part of the world which is still suffering so badly?

**Mr. Patten:** Our aid programme is agreed with the Indian Government, not with individual states.

### International Debts

50. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will discuss with the World Bank methods of ensuring that developing countries are able to repay their international debts on reasonable terms.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** I did so when I visited the World Bank on 21 January.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** Does the Minister acknowledge that many developing countries have contributed to extinguishing their national debt by restricting imports? Does he think that that gives them a fair chance of achieving the growth necessary to get them out of long-term trouble? How does he think restricting developing countries' imports will help United Kingdom exports?

**Mr. Patten:** If the hon. Gentleman was asking whether I thought that protectionism was the best way to assist the debt problem, my answer would be emphatically no. We have played a central role in writing off official aid debts, as the hon. Gentleman knows. I am equally determined that we should play a central role in sustaining the process of structural adjustment and policy reform which would lead to the growth which the hon. Gentleman and I want to see.

**Mr. Yeo:** Will my hon. Friend consider encouraging the development of a secondary market in developing countries' debt, because that would provide an opportunity for the central banks of those countries to buy in their own debts at advantageous prices and thereby reduce their indebtedness?

**Mr. Patten:** I think that, happily, such a market is developing itself without any assistance from me, but I shall certainly bear in mind what my hon. Friend said.

**Mr. Deakins:** Does the Minister agree that the best way of helping poor countries repay their international debts is to help increase their incomes? In that connection, will the Minister turn his mind to backing and improving the United Nations' integrated programme for commodities?

Does he agree that it has been the fall in real commodity prices in the past 20 years that has led to difficulties which many poor countries face today?

**Mr. Patten:** That is at least part of the problem. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that we shall be putting more support into structural adjustment over the next year. More of our aid programme will be used in support of policy reform, which I hope will provide the sustained economic growth which these countries need.

## UNICEF

52. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his visit to UNICEF.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** I met Dr. Jolly, UNICEF's deputy executive director, on 20 January and discussed UNICEF's operations, particularly its global immunisation programme. I have now made a new grant of £5 million for UNICEF's immunisation, essential drugs and child health programmes in China and Africa.

**Mr. Chapman:** Is my hon. Friend aware that it is a matter of pride to both sides of the House that the United Kingdom is in the vanguard once again in supporting an invaluable programme — the global immunisation programme — which is designed to rid all children throughout the world of the six preventable diseases? Will he continue closely to monitor the UNICEF programme? Finally, will he accept the congratulations of many people in all countries throughout the world?

**Mr. Patten:** I accept what my hon. Friend said, and I am delighted that over the past year our contributions to UNICEF have been at their highest ever level. We shall continue to support its programmes and to give more support in general to the development of primary health care in developing countries.

## BBC (Special Branch Raid)

3.30 pm

**Mr. Donald Dewar** (Glasgow, Garscadden) *(by private notice)* asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the special branch raid on the premises of the BBC in Scotland and the seizure of material from those offices.

**The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind):** I am informed by the Crown Office that on Thursday 29 January 1987 the procurator fiscal at Glasgow was informed of a request by the Metropolitan police for assistance with a criminal investigation which they were making in connection with an article by the journalist Duncan Campbell in the *New Statesman* of 23 January 1987. The request was for a search for material relevant to that investigation to be made of the BBC premises at Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow, where it was believed that Campbell had worked in the course of preparing a series of programmes entitled "The Secret Society"; a search was also requested of a flat at 27 Hamilton Drive, Glasgow which had been occupied by Campbell—[HON. MEMBERS: "Mr. Campbell."]—while he had worked at the BBC.

I understand that on 30 January the procurator fiscal, with the authority of my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate, presented petitions to a sheriff at Glasgow to take the oath of an officer of the Metropolitan police and to grant warrants to an officer of Strathclyde police with such assistance as would be necessary to search the premises occupied by the BBC at Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow and the house at 27 Hamilton Drive, Glasgow. After hearing the Metropolitan police officer, the sheriff granted the warrants to search.

At 8 am on 31 January officers of Strathclyde police and other police officers visited the BBC premises to execute the warrant. The commencement of the search was delayed while senior management of the BBC obtained legal advice. As a consequence of that advice, a Bill of Suspension was presented to the High Court of Justiciary later that day on behalf of the BBC. The Bill was heard on Saturday evening by a High Court judge, Lord Clyde, who, after hearing counsel for the BBC, and Crown counsel, made an order suspending the warrant ad interim.

By the time the warrant was suspended, a quantity of material had been removed from the premises of the BBC and taken to a police office. This material was then returned to the BBC. A further warrant was obtained to search the premises of the BBC after an officer of the Metropolitan police had taken an oath before a sheriff. This warrant was then executed and a quantity of material removed from the premises of the BBC.

A report will be submitted to the procurator fiscal by the police regarding their examination of that material.

**Mr. Dewar:** Is it not clear from what the Secretary of State has said that this extraordinary and damaging chapter of accidents was stage-managed by the Crown Office, with ministerial authority? Why were all three warrants drafted in such a way as to allow what appears to have been a general trawl and the seizure of records and material relating to the specific programme about the spy satellite and to five other programmes that can have had only the most tenuous connection with any matter of national security?

Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept that the overwhelming impression that is left is that the aim was intimidation, and that the police operation was meant as a warning and a form of intimidation, to inhibit and curtail the proper curiosity of journalists, on which a healthy press depends?

Does the Minister accept that the reputation of the police is an important public asset which has been damaged by this bizarre and incompetent performance? Does he accept also that warrants should not be used as a crude catch-all device, but should be precise, measured and drawn with a careful regard for civil liberties and essential freedoms? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman accept those criteria were not met on this occasion and that public opinion is properly outraged and wants the most complete assurance that this dangerous nonsense will not be repeated on any future occasion?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The hon. Gentleman has chosen to table his question for answer by the Secretary of State for Scotland. I have to inform him that neither I nor the Government have any responsibility for requests made by the Metropolitan police for search warrants. *[Interruption]*. The hon. Gentleman is responsible for the question tabled in his name. I have to say to him that neither I nor the Government are responsible for requests by the Metropolitan police for search warrants, nor am I responsible for the conduct of the fiscal service, nor am I or the Government in any way responsible for decisions taken by a sheriff in Glasgow as to the appropriateness of granting such a warrant.

The hon. Gentleman should be the first to appreciate, given his local background, that police inquiries and questions whether search warrants should be granted are not matters for me or for the Government as a whole.

**Sir Alex Fletcher** (Edinburgh, Central): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree, without prejudice to the outcome of this investigation, that the BBC Scotland staff are loyal and hard working? The worst outcome that I would expect is that we shall find that one or two of them have been badly led astray by someone who enjoys embarrassing the Government and the Opposition alike.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I do not wish to comment on the merits of this matter. Clearly, material has been removed from the BBC offices in Glasgow. If the information justifies any further action, it will be put before the procurator fiscal.

**Mr. Roy Jenkins** (Glasgow, Hillhead): Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman not understand that the Government must take responsibility for the investigation of a matter concerning Government secrets in which the Government have embroiled themselves deliberately and closely? Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman tell us who is politically responsible for this operation, which he has been put up to answer? Is it the Home Secretary? Is it the Attorney-General? Is it the Prime Minister? *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a very serious matter. I ask the House to listen.

**Mr. Jenkins:** What is the supreme objective for which the Government are prepared to look as though they were running a second-rate police state, infused equally with illiberalism and incompetence?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am answering this question because the spokesman for the Opposition chose to put a request to me. The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins), as a former distinguished Home Secretary, should be the last person to suggest that Ministers are responsible for requests by the Metropolitan police for search warrants or for decisions by sheriffs as to whether such applications should be granted.

**Mr. Barry Henderson** (Fife, North-East): Does my right hon. and learned Friend accept that the vast majority of honest and patriotic people who pay their licence dues to the BBC expect the Government — and, indeed this House—to support those whose duty it is to protect this country's national security? Does he agree that it would surprise many of those licence holders to find that the BBC, instead of doing its level best to discover whether treachery is within its organisation, is seeking to defend those whose trade is treachery?

**Mr. Rifkind:** Naturally, if the police had any reason to believe that criminal offences had been committed, the general public would expect them to take appropriate action to determine whether such a view was justified.

**Mr. Michael Foot** (Blaenau Gwent): The right hon. and learned Gentleman says that he has no responsibility in the matter. Is he saying that he has no interest in the way in which the police carry out their duties? Can he tell us whether, during the raid in Scotland, the police presumed that they could do what they did at the offices of the *New Statesman*, that is, not only to investigate the particular matter in which they were supposed to intervene, but generally to search through files?

Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman not care whether files in newspaper offices in Scotland are ransacked in this way? Does he not have any regard for protecting the freedom of the people of this country?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I have a general responsibility for the police service in Scotland. I do not have a responsibility, nor does my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, for the Metropolitan police, or, indeed, for the Scottish police, deciding that on the information they have it is appropriate to apply for a search warrant.

Opposition Members know perfectly well that they are embarking upon a wholly new constitutional path in suggesting that the Home Secretary or the Secretary of State for Scotland either has, or should have, any responsibility for whether the police should or should not decide that a search warrant is appropriate or whether a judge should grant such a warrant. If that is the view of the Opposition, they are behaving in an even more irresponsible way than I would have expected of them.

**Mr. Michael Mates** (Hampshire, East): Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that in matters involving national security it is the duty of everyone to put the national interest before their personal interests? Is he entirely satisfied that during the past weekend the BBC has put the national interest before its interests?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I prefer not to comment on the BBC. However, I certainly agree that the national interest clearly must be of supreme importance. I must emphasise that the decision of the police to apply for a search warrant, and the decision of a judge to grant it, was not initiated by any Minister.

**Mr. Donald Stewart** (Western Isles): Does the Secretary of State accept that the plea of national security has often been found to be an impudent bluff, intended to save the Government from embarrassment, and nothing else?

Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that the Prime Minister's satisfaction when answering a question last week, when she said that she had managed to stop the BBC programme, simply meant that it did not matter what the Russians knew, provided that the information was kept from the people of the United Kingdom?

Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that the raid in Scotland is regarded as a dangerous attack on free speech in this country?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The right hon. Gentleman should realise that the decision to search the BBC's premises was taken by the police and granted by a Scottish judge. If he has any criticisms, he knows perfectly well in what direction they should be made.

**Mr. Ray Whitney** (Wycombe): While recognising my right hon. and learned Friend's jurisdiction, may I ask whether he agrees that this affair, with all its disturbing implications — which some Opposition Members are seeking to exploit — has arisen from the extraordinarily irresponsible decision of the BBC to entrust a television series about secrecy to a man with a record of breaches of national security, namely, Mr. Duncan Campbell? Is that not rather like entrusting Myra Hindley with charge of a children's home?

**Mr. Rifkind:** Those who have been involved in the matter in the way described by my hon. Friend will clearly have to answer for the exercise of their discretion.

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that his statement today will not be believed by millions of people, because they know very well that it has nothing to do with law and order or national security, but with the fact that the Prime Minister thinks that she has a divine right to rule and that anybody, whether elected local authorities, trade unions, journalists, broadcasters or Members of Parliament, who stands in the way of the Prime Minister's wishes is to be denounced, intimidated and crushed, and that the Home Secretary, who is responsible for the police service, the prison service, MI5, the special branch and the BBC, is an agent for introducing a police state, which is the greatest threat to parliamentary democracy since Hitler's defeat in 1945?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The right hon. Gentleman is well known for his occasional fits of paranoia. However, I advise him that even if, under a system of which he approved, it was right and proper for Government Ministers to determine whether search warrants should be applied for or granted, under the system that exists in the United Kingdom today, as the right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well, these matters are not decided by Government Ministers, nor will they ever be so long as the present Government are in office.

**Sir David Price** (Eastleigh): I should like to ask my right hon. and learned Friend a simple question. Can he tell the House when we will know the merit of the material that was discovered by the police, because until we know that we cannot decide whether the search was a great invasion of journalistic freedom or a proper security measure by the

Secretary of State? Does he agree that the journalists of this country do not enjoy a unique benefit of clergy separate from the general law of the land?

**Mr. Rifkind:** My hon. Friend has asked a very wise question, and he is absolutely right to say that we should all await consideration of the material that was removed from the BBC's headquarters. In due course the wisdom, or lack of wisdom, of that action will become well perceived by the community as a whole.

**Mr. David Steel** (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): As the Home Secretary is the Minister responsible for the Metropolitan police and for broadcasting, will the Secretary of State find out from him when the five master tapes belonging to the BBC on programmes which have nothing to do with national security will be returned to the BBC? Will he also confirm that in the course of the raids the BBC technicians were brought from their beds in the middle of the night to help sort out the tapes? Is the knock on the door in the middle of the night to become a part of our society?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The right hon. Gentleman can put questions direct to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary if he so wishes. I understand that the BBC technicians were asked whether they would be willing to come in to assist those taking part, and that they voluntarily chose to do so because they were aware of their public responsibilities.

**Mr. Ian Gow** (Eastbourne): Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that the consent of no Minister, either in the Scottish Office or elsewhere, was required before the search warrant was issued? Will he also confirm that there was no obligation whatsoever on those who applied for the warrant to inform any Minister? Is it not clear from the attitude of the Labour party that it would allow political interference with decisions of this kind?

**Mr. Rifkind:** As I said in my initial statement, the procurator fiscal acted with the authority of my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord-Advocate in presenting a petition to a sheriff to see whether a warrant could be obtained. My hon. Friend is absolutely correct to say that the decision to apply for a search warrant was taken at the request of the Metropolitan police, who consulted the Strathclyde police, and that the decision to authorise the warrant was the responsibility of the sheriff.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): As a fellow Scot, will the Secretary of State take it from me that some serious, decent, senior police officers in Scotland are absolutely appalled at what they and their colleagues were asked to do? Does he accept that those police officers would not initiate or undertake such an operation if it was not clear that they had serious ministerial authority, because they were being asked to cock a snook—in their view, cock the proverbial five fingers — at the High Court? The Secretary of State chose his words carefully when he said that no Minister initiated the search. Can he give us an undertaking that Mr. Bernard Ingham—*[Interruption.]* —and Mr. Bernard Sheldon—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Will the hon. Gentleman come to the point please?

**Mr. Dalyell:** Mr. Bernard Ingham gave a freely available press conference this morning. Are we sure that Mr. Bernard Ingham and Mr. Bernard Sheldon were in no way consulted about the operation?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The hon. Gentleman has grievously insulted both the Strathclyde police and the sheriff who granted the warrant by implying that they were acting in anything other than the normal, proper way in the exercise of their responsibilities. He has produced not one shred of evidence and seeks to create the maximum disturbance in the mind of the public in a grievously irresponsible way. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that when the Strathclyde police received a request from the Metropolitan police for their co-operation they were perfectly entitled, if they saw fit, to decline to provide that co-operation. They did not decline to provide it. They decided that they wished to assist the Metropolitan police and to seek a warrant from the sheriff. If the hon. Gentleman has the slightest iota of evidence to the contrary, he should provide it. If he has not, he should remain totally and unambiguously silent.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind the House that this is an extension of Question Time. I shall allow one more question from each side.

**Mr. Roger Gale** (Thanet, North): Does my right hon and learned Friend agree that the over-hasty condemnation of police action, taken in the national interest, by the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), both from the stage of the Barbican yesterday and on Radio 4 this morning, demonstrates his party's low priority for defence and security and its complete unfitness to hold any form of power?

**Mr. Rifkind:** No one will have been surprised at the attempts of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) to seek party political advantage at the expense of the police and court officials carrying out their proper public responsibilities.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose* ——

**Mr. Speaker:** I call Mr. Eric Heffer.

**Mr. Norman Buchan** (Paisley, South): What about us?

**Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** (Fife, Central): What about us?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I again call Mr. Heffer.

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): Is the Secretary of State aware that over the years many Members of the House of Commons have been critical of what happened in Nazi Germany and have attacked what has happened in eastern Europe, Chile, South Africa and many other countries—*[Interruption.]* It is your responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to keep hon. Members quiet.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I must have regard to the business that follows. Come to the point please.

**Mr. Heffer:** I shall raise it afterwards on a point of order.

It is clear that if we genuinely believe in the democratic principles of free speech, free institutions and free discussion, it is also clear that what has happened in Scotland, at the BBC and to Mr. Campbell is an outrage. Is it not time that the people of this country understood the situation that has been created by the Government and the disgraceful attitude adopted—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I called the hon. Gentleman to ask a question, not to make a speech. *[Interruption.]* Order. I appreciate that this matter raises high passions in the House, but we have an obligation to set an example.

**Mr. Heffer:** Tell that to Conservative Members.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The hon. Gentleman, if he is devoted to free speech, democracy and the rule of law, should appreciate that it is crucial and essential that Ministers, such as myself, are not involved, and should not be deemed to be involved, in decisions by the police in pursuit of their responsibilities. The hon. Gentleman should make up his mind. If he wishes to preserve the rule of law, he should acknowledge that Government Ministers do not involve themselves in police decisions regarding the accumulation of evidence, nor via court decisions as to whether warrants should be granted.

*Later*——

**Mr. Heffer:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have been very generous to the hon. Gentleman, but I will take it.

**Mr. Heffer:** I am not asking for generosity. I have been an hon. Member for 22 years and in all those years I have seen successive Speakers protect the rights of Back Benchers when they are making points in the House. Of late, we have seen exhibitions, primarily from Conservative Members. Whenever there is something that they do not like, they act like a bunch of lunatics. *[Interruption.]* It is happening now and no effort is being made to keep them quiet.

I am asking you, Mr. Speaker, to use your authority so that when hon. Members raise matters of the greatest importance, in the interests of the democratic processes, they are protected and not shouted down by Conservative Members. It is time that that stopped and that we got back to the situation that existed when I was first elected, when hon. Members could make statements and were heard out, even if other hon. Members disagreed with what was said.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think that it would be true to say that noise comes only from one side of the House. The hon. Gentleman might see, when he looks at *Hansard* tomorrow, that perhaps the cause of the noise was the length of his question.

## Special Branch Activities

3.56 pm

**Mr. Gerald Kaufman** (Manchester, Gorton): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely

> "Special branch activities in England and Scotland following the Attorney-General's request for the initiation of inquiries into possible breaches of the Official Secrets Act."

This matter is specific because raids have taken place on the home of a journalist, Mr. Duncan Campbell, the offices of the periodical the *New Statesman* and the Glasgow headquarters of the BBC.

It is important because the raids involved the use of sections 2 and 9 of the Official Secrets Act in a manner that many people believe has serious implications for the freedom of the press and freedom of speech.

The matter should have urgent consideration because there are profound misgivings about the future of civil liberties in our society and fears that Britain may be going down the road already travelled in such places as eastern Europe and South Africa *[Interruption.]* Those misgivings require, in what is still a free Parliament, to be aired in this House without delay.

**Mr. Speaker:** The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely

> "The activities of special branch in England and Scotland following the Attorney-General's request for the initiation of inquiries into possible breaches of the Official Secrets Act."

I am satisfied that the matter that has been raised by the right hon. Gentleman is proper to be discussed under Standing Order No. 20. Has the right hon. Gentleman the leave of the House?

*The pleasure of the House having been signified, the motion stood over under Standing Order No. 20 (Adjournment on specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration), until the commencement of public business tomorrow.*

## Ministerial Responsibility

4.1 pm

**Mr. Norman Buchan** (Paisley, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. This has relevance to my position as a Back Bencher, if you recall the events of last week.

Two important matters have emerged today and they require answers. First, may I have explained to me the nature of ministerial responsibility? Last week, when the Attorney-General was asked to speak about the English end of this shoddy affair, the reply was given by the Solicitor-General. Today, a question was put down to the Secretary of State for Scotland to deal with the Scottish end. I understand that it is within the Government's remit to transfer such a question to the Solicitor-General for Scotland. They chose not to do that and, therefore, the Secretary of State was able to rest on the silly, minor legalities of his position.

The second aspect of ministerial responsibility, which seems crucial in this affair, is, "Who now speaks on behalf of the broadcaster and freedom of the press?"

**Hon. Members:** The hon. Gentleman does not.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Will the hon. Gentleman please come to the point?

**Mr. Buchan:** Who now speaks on behalf of the broadcaster and freedom of the press? We are told that the Home Office's official functions include freedom of the press, the right to reply and the freedom of the broadcaster. Clearly the Home Secretary, who launches the cavalry at Wapping, and whose special branch in the Metropolitan police launches an assault on the *New Statesman*, no longer speaks in defence, or on behalf, of broadcasting or the freedom of the press.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. If the hon. Gentleman is fortunate enough to catch my eye tomorrow, which is quite possible, he could raise these matters then. I do not think that I can deal with them today. It is not a matter for me who answers from the Government Front Bench. I allowed the private notice question to be asked and it was answered by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

## BILL PRESENTED

### ANONYMITY OF RAPE VICTIMS

Mr. Harry Greenway presented a Bill to secure the total anonymity of victims of rape: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time on Friday 13 February and to be printed. [Bill 60.]

## MINORS' CONTRACTS BILL *[Lords]*

*Ordered,*

That the Minors' Contracts Bill *[Lords]* be referred to a Second Reading Committee.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

## RECOGNITION OF TRUSTS BILL *[Lords]*

*Ordered,*

That the Recognition of Trusts Bill *[Lords]* be referred to a Second Reading Committee.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

## REVERTER OF SITES BILL *[Lords]*

*Ordered,*

That the Reverter of Sites Bill *[Lords]* be referred to a Second Reading Committee.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

*Ordered,*

That the draft Merchant Shipping (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Order 1987 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

# The Royal Navy

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Portillo.]*

4.4 pm

**The Minister of State for the Armed Forces (Mr. John Stanley):** The period since our last Navy debate almost exactly a year ago has been an exceptionally active one for the Royal Navy. In 1986, Royal Navy ships and submarines visited 86 different countries and sailed more than 3·5 million miles. They performed operational tasks in the Atlantic, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, the Gulf, the Indian ocean and in the vicinity of Hong Kong. They carried out the first round-the-world deployment for 10 years and the first out-of-area amphibious exercise since the Falklands conflict.

The year also saw new ship orders to the huge value of nearly £2,000 million — including the first Trident submarine, the seventh Trafalgar class SSN, three type 23 frigates, three Upholder class conventional submarines and the first auxiliary oiler replenishment ship.

To the £2 billion-worth of new ship orders placed last year should be added a further £1 billion worth of other naval equipment orders placed last year, which represent a further substantial improvement to the Navy's operational capabilities.

If the Opposition try to criticise our level of expenditure on the Royal Navy, I think they will be most unwise. The reality is that in every one of the eight years that we have been in office we have spent more in real terms on the Royal Navy than was spent in any of the Labour and Lib-Lab pact years of 1974 to 1979.

In the current year we shall be spending over £1,000 million more on the Navy in real terms than was being spent in 1978-79. Over the last eight years we have spent, excluding Falklands expenditure, over £4,500 million more on the Navy in real terms than would have been spent if expenditure had been left at the level that we inherited in 1979, and at the end of the public expenditure White Paper period, 1989-90, we still expect to be spending significantly more on the Navy in real terms than was spent in 1978-79.

I suggest that instead of criticising the present Government, the Opposition should be reflecting on their own hugely inferior performance when they were in office.

A total of 55 major ships and submarines have been ordered by the present Government, representing orders worth more than £5,000 million. Those orders have included the start of no less than seven new classes of vessel — the Trident SSBN, the Upholder conventional submarine, the Type-23 frigate, the Sandown class single role minehunter, the River class minesweeper, the Castle class offshore patrol vessel and the new AOR royal fleet auxiliary.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): May I suggest that it would be helpful to the House if the hon. Gentleman's speech could include some reference to what allegedly happened in the Barents sea with the towed array sonar, so that we can discuss the matter on the basis of information rather than newspaper reports?

**Mr. Stanley:** We follow the practice of all previous Governments and there is no way that we could be drawn into commenting on submarine operations.

**Mr. Martin J. O'Neill** (Clackmannan): I hope that the Minister will not prevent us from getting replies on matters involving submarine operations on which the Government have already commented and on whether newspaper reports stand up to close examination. We should like to explore those matters and I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will give us some answers.

**Mr. Stanley:** The hon. Gentleman is obviously free to pursue his inquiries in his own way.

Opposition Members will no doubt seek to dwell on ship numbers. Numbers are misleading because the acid test of the Royal Navy's well-being is not simply numbers, but its overall capability. Numbers are only one element, and not necessarily even the most important element, in capability. It is self-evident that we could have a Navy double its present size, but significantly less capable than the Navy that we have today. However, on the numbers issue, it is worth pointing out that there are more SSNs in the fleet than at any time previously and that that number will rise further.

It is also worth pointing out that, as a result of the significant improvements that we have made in ship utilisation, we have achieved a very marked increase in the proportion of the fleet — particularly destroyers and frigates—that are actually available for operations.

Defining availability as ships either at sea, or able to be at sea in under 48 hours, in 1979 the proportion of our destroyers and frigates that were available was on average about 72 per cent. of those in the running fleet. That figure has risen to about 84 per cent.

What is incontrovertible is that, although the Navy is now numerically somewhat smaller than it was in 1979, it is hugely more capable than it was eight years ago. One has only to compare the capabilities of the Navy's new ships and weapons with those that are going out of service.

The type 22 frigates are vastly more capable than the type 12 frigates and the gun Leanders that they are replacing. The Hunt class mine countermeasures ships are in a quite different league from the Ton class minesweepers, that they are succeeding.

Seawolf is a quantum jump on Seacat; so is the Lynx helicopter on the Wasp; and so is the Sea Skua anti-ship missile on the AS12 and SS11 that it replaces. The Trafalgar class submarines are much more advanced than our Valiant class SSNs, and our Upholder class conventional submarines are a leap ahead of the Porpoise and Oberon boats that they are replacing.

In the eight years the Navy's capability has made enormous strides—strides way beyond what would have been achieved if defence had continued to be given the relatively low priority that it had under our predecessors. If, in this debate, the Opposition want to compare our record with theirs, frankly they do not have a leg to stand on.

**Mr. Keith Speed** (Ashford): My hon. Friend is right to draw attention to the increased capability of the ships of the Royal Navy. Will he tell the House, bearing in mind the number of ships that at any time have to be refitted, what he considers to be the minimum number of frigates and destroyers required to meet our force goals in NATO, to meet the Armilla patrol, to meet what is required in the Falklands—recently announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence—the Belize guardship and the other duties that our frigates and destroyers have to do? There must be a minimum number that is required to discharge all those capabilities.

**Mr. Stanley:** As my hon. Friend well knows from his experience, we have carefully assessed our requirements in relation to our commitments. We have decided that a destroyer and frigate force of about 50 enables us to meet those commitments.

Even in peacetime the Royal Navy is first and foremost an operational force. Throughout 1986 a constant watch was kept on Warsaw pact naval ships and submarines and on their intelligence-gathering assets at sea. The Royal Navy continued to maintain the integrity of the 150-mile protection zone around the Falkland Islands—often in very severe weather conditions. In weather conditions sometimes no less severe, the Royal Navy's patrol ships maintained the important naval contribution to combating terrorist infiltration into Northern Ireland by sea. It also carried out essential fishery protection tasks in home waters. Our Armilla patrol ships have continued to maintain their presence in the vicinity of the Gulf and as the House will be aware, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently announced in Oman greater Royal Navy support for British merchant shipping transiting the Gulf.

Throughout the past year the Royal Navy has also maintained our strategic deterrent at constant readiness as it has done every day of every year since 1969. Whatever the views of Opposition Members about the future of our strategic deterrent, I hope that on both sides of the House there will be an appreciation of those in the Royal Navy who discharge this key national defence responsibility. For those men while on patrol there are no port visits, no change of company, no change of scene, and no natural light or air. The officers and men of the deterrent patrols do a vital job in demanding conditions and for nearly 20 years they have done it outstandingly well.

**Mr. Dick Douglas** (Dunfermline, West): Will the Minister give some indication of the rules of engagement in relation to the Armilla patrol? What instructions are offered to the commanders of the vessels in relation to escorting through the straits either way British registered and manned vessels and vessels on which there are British personnel?

**Mr. Stanley:** As the hon. Gentleman will be aware, we do not, for obvious reasons, particularly in an area where there is a potential threat, go into the details of our rules of engagement. However, those rules of engagement are appropriate and satisfactory for the defensive task that our Royal Navy ships have.

**Mr. Ted Garrett** (Wallsend): I agree with the Minister's remarks about the devotion to service of the men serving in such a vital area of operation. However, in case it is not mentioned in the opening statement or in the reply to the debate, there are many people who are leaving and applying to leave from all ranks. Is that not an indication that there is something lacking in the quality of life? The quality of life is an important factor in the services and it is important if the high degree of loyalty is to be maintained. I warn the Minister, if nothing is done about that, he is heading for trouble with personnel.

**Mr. Stanley:** The rates for premature voluntary retirement, either for officers or men in the Royal Navy, are nowhere near those at the time of the previous Labour Government in 1978-79.

In addition to actual operations, Royal Navy ships have played a major role in the past year in a number of important exercises with our NATO allies, most notably Exercise Northern Wedding in which some 150 ships and submarines, 400 aircraft, and 35,000 men from 10 countries took part.

The Royal Marines, too, have continued to employ their specialist amphibious skills in major exercises in Norway, Denmark, northern Germany and out of area in Exercise Saif Sareea in Oman.

As the House knows, my right hon. Friend in his statement on 9 December 1986 made clear the Government's commitment to the maintenance of our amphibious capability and the modernisation of our amphibious shipping. As well as maintaining the high professional skills that would be required in war, those activities constitute an important element of deterrence by leaving no doubt about the determination and cohesion of the NATO Alliance.

**Mr. Keith Best** (Ynys Mon): My right hon. Friend will know that I have tabled several parliamentary questions about this matter. I understand that the evaluation as to the extension of life of Fearless and Intrepid should be available some time this summer. However, an evaluation of whether there should be a replacement of Fearless and Intrepid will not be known for much longer thereafter. Does that mean that, inevitably, we shall see an extension of life for Fearless and Intrepid rather than the question of replacement?

**Mr. Stanley:** At present, those two alternatives are open. That is the object of the parallel feasibility studies that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has announced.

**Mr. Denzil Davies** (Llanelli): While the Minister is dealing with Norway and the northern approaches, will he confirm — this is not just a Navy matter — that the Government are negotiating to end our commitment to Denmark in respect of the Baltic approaches, and say what effect that would have on the Navy?

**Mr. Stanley:** The right hon. Gentleman knows that that is certainly not the case. He will know from the answer that I gave on 20 January that we have made it clear that there is no question of any unilateral withdrawal of the United Kingdom mobile force.

As I said earlier, last year saw the first round-the-world deployment by the Royal Navy for 10 years. A carrier, three destroyers and frigates, an SSN and three RFAs took part in the GLOBAL 86 deployment which took Royal Navy ships to five continents and to over 20 different countries. Those included the first visit to Mozambique since independence, and the first visit to the People's Republic of China since 1980.

Those deployments are not simply exercises in "showing the flag" though the value of showing the flag should not be underestimated in areas such as the south Pacific, south-east Asia, and the Indian sub-continent.

GLOBAL 86 also enabled the Royal Navy to carry out valuable exercises with friendly navies in the Pacific with the United States, Australian, Canadian and Japanese

*[Mr. Stanley]*

navies, in the south China sea with our five-power defence arrangement partners, and with 5 Brigade and 3 Commando Brigade off Oman. The exercise benefits of GLOBAL 86 will be of lasting value. The defence sales element of the deployment will also certainly prove to be of real value.

The opportunity was taken to demonstrate to 17 different foreign navies and their Governments the capabilities of British warships and a wide range of their equipment. The companies concerned are in no doubt that the deployment was a great help to their sale efforts, improving several major sales prospects and attracting inquiries from previously untapped markets.

More than 100,000 people have jobs dependent to a greater or lesser extent on our defence exports. If the Labour party was to implement its policy of achieving a major reduction in Britain's defence sales, a significant proportion of those people would find their job security threatened.

Some 2,500 RN and RFA personnel took part in GLOBAL 86 at sea, whilst many others planned and supported the deployment at home. Over the entire nine months of that highly successful deployment, our sailors were acknowledged as superb ambassadors for our country and there was not a single untoward incident. Our congratulations go to all concerned with that deployment.

Our regular and volunteer reserves have an important part to play in our wartime capability. On 1 April last year we introduced a system of annual reporting for the Royal Fleet Reserve. It already shows encouraging signs of helping to improve contact with the regular reservists, thereby enabling the Navy to make better use of the skills and experience available within the Royal Fleet Reserve.

The expansion of the Royal Naval Reserve and the Royal Marine Reserve is continuing to go well. All 11 Royal Naval Reserve sea training centres are now equipped with the new River class of minesweeper—the first time that the RNR has been given responsibility for operating an entire class of ships in the fleet. We are most grateful to our RNR and RMR reservists for their commitment of time, enthusiasm and expertise to the Royal Navy.

A centrepiece of our future naval programme is Trident, which is making very good progress, as was reflected in the latest recosting announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last week, which, even after allowing for the effects of inflation and exchange rate variations, showed a real reduction in costs of £546 million over last year's estimate. I was sorry, but not surprised, to see that welcome announcement being greeted with unalloyed gloom from Opposition Benches. To add to their good cheer, I can tell the House that we expect to place the contract for our second Trident submarine later this year.

In the naval area, as for the other two services, the Opposition are committed to implementing a non-nuclear policy. I find their catch-phrase to justify their policy quite extraordinary. They say:

> "The choice is effective defence; or reliance on a nuclear delusion."

I fail to see what can possibly be illusory about the 40 years of peace with freedom that we have enjoyed, secured by combined nuclear and conventional defence. If the Opposition really want to claim that non-nuclear defences alone will guarantee our independence in the future, I suggest that they might start by asking the peoples of eastern Europe and Afghanistan.

**Mr. Best:** My right hon. Friend will know that when the Leader of the Opposition went to the United States, he found there no support whatsoever for a unilateral nuclear disarmament policy. He will also know that a large number of NATO countries have openly condemned it. Is he further aware that only recently we heard from Moscow that even the Soviet Union is not in favour of the Labour party's policy on disarmament?

**Mr. Stanley:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend. I have read the reports to which he refers.

The consequences of a non-nuclear policy in the naval area would be wide-ranging and immensely damaging. It would mean the end of Britain's strategic deterrent and the loss of the British people's ultimate insurance against nuclear blackmail. It would mean Britain unilaterally resiling from its NATO tactical nulcear roles at sea, thereby weakening deterrence at a time when the Soviet navy and the Soviet naval air force are steadily expanding their ability to use tactical nuclear weapons against NATO surface ships and submarines.

In Scotland, Labour's non-nuclear policy would mean the closure of Holy Loch, the loss of up to 2,500 jobs being created by the Trident construction programme at Faslane and Coulport, and the immediate loss of the entire SSBN refitting cycle on which over 2,000 jobs at Rosyth are currently dependent.

The Labour party's commitment is, of course, not merely to scrap Trident, but to do away with Polaris. That Polaris commitment is absolutely senseless. Polaris, thanks to its secret modernisation with Chevaline, ironically by the previous Labour Government, is still viable as our deterrent and in relative terms it costs very little indeed to run.

The commitment of the Labour party to scrap Trident is seriously mistaken and highly irresponsible. The commitment to scrap Polaris is pure political vandalism. In the maritime sphere, a British non-nuclear policy is opposed by NATO, has been condemned across the political spectrum in the United States, and is profoundly destructive of Britain's own defence interests. I am confident that such a policy will be roundly rejected by the British people.

We welcome the commitment of the Liberal and Social Democratic parties to the continuation of Britain's strategic nuclear deterrent notwithstanding the reluctance of the split Liberal party to give such a commitment. We are sorry not to see any of the Liberals in their place. What is disappointing, however, is that although the Liberal and Social Democratic parties have got their policy objective right, they have got their means of achieving it sadly wrong.

In opening the Liberal Supply day debate on defence on 3 December, the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel), when speaking of the options for replacing Trident, said:

> "the precise weapon systems are the ones that should be made and chosen by the Government in office at the right time. It is not for Opposition parties to decide, clouded as they are with conflicting advice and denied information available to Government. I am glad to see the Secretary of State nod agreement".—[*Official Report*, 3 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. 990.]

Of course we nod agreement to the sensible recognition by the right hon. Gentleman that only the Government of the day, with the information that they alone have are in a position to decide what is the most cost-effective means of maintaining a credible minimum deterrent for Britain. The right hon. Gentleman then went on to spell out no fewer than six separate Liberal options for the replacement of Polaris. We shall be interested to see whether the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) will be offering six options today, and whether they will be the same options as those of the right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale. But none of the Liberal options included Trident; indeed, extraordinarily, the right hon. Gentleman made it clear that the one option that he ruled out was Trident.

The Liberal and Social Democratic parties are therefore in the totally contradictory situation of being completely uncertain as to which option for the replacement of Polaris they will support, yet totally certain that it will not be Trident. It is an absurd and unsustainable position. All it confirms is what we have known all along—that the Liberal-SDP position on the key national issue of the future of Britain's deterrent has been determined not by a rational, objective and dispassionate assessment of the facts, but by prejudice, horse-trading and fudge. The stated Liberal and SDP reasons for ruling out the Trident option vary, like most of their policies, week by week, month by month, constituency by constituency and leader by leader. But there are three strands of anti-Trident argument that they generally advance—that Trident is too big, that Trident is too expensive and that Trident is too American. I shall examine each in turn.

First, it is alleged that Trident is too big. In the open government document "Trident and the Alternatives" that we published last week, we made it clear that the number of Trident warheads will, contrary to some of the hugely inflated figures that have been bandied about, be at most —I stress, at most—only some two and a half times greater than Polaris when it first entered service. That has to be seen against the fivefold increase in Soviet strategic warheads since 1970 and steadily improving Soviet defences, which did not even exist at that time.

It is frankly ludicrous for the Liberal and Social Democratic parties simply to ignore the inconvenient fact of life that Soviet defences are improving significantly. Yet that is what they did in their relaunch for the nth time last week, when they committed themselves to freezing our strategic nuclear capability

> "at a level no greater than that of the Polaris system."

There is no justification for simply turning a blind eye to improvements in Soviet anti-ballistic defences. If Opposition Members want to back a cruise system, there is even less justification for turning a blind eye to improvements in Soviet anti-cruise defences when those improvements are totally unconstrained by the ABM treaty.

We have made it clear repeatedly, and I stress it again today, that Trident continues to represent only a minimum deterrent for the United Kingdom. I also respectfully suggest to the House that if there is one aspect of this sensitive area on which the Government of the day, and the Government of the day alone, are best able to make the correct judgment, it is as to what constitutes the minimum deterrent for Britain.

However, if right hon. and hon. Members of the Opposition wish to back their judgment of what constitutes a minimum deterrent for Britain against that of the Government, that is still no justification whatever for ruling out the Trident option. Trident is not a fixed capability. It is a flexible capability. The number of missiles and the number of warheads can be varied. If one wants to vary one's minimum deterrent assessment, one can do so, and that is why the Liberal-SDP argument for ruling out Trident on the grounds that it is too big holds absolutely no water.

The next argument is that Trident is too expensive. We do not hear too much these days from the Liberal-SDP Benches about their alternatives to Trident being a lot cheaper, and I understand why. For instance, I noted that the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) in his recent New York speech said of his French alternative:

> "I have already frankly admitted that such a French purchase is unlikely to be cheaper than Trident".

Nearly £3,000 million of Trident expenditure is now contractually committed, of which nearly £1,000 million has been spent. So to the costs of any alternative to Trident must now be added the money down the drain that the cancellation of Trident will necessarily involve. In the "Trident and the Alternatives" open government document, we thought it right to update the cost implications of switching to alternatives to Trident at this stage. As is shown in the paper, a switch to a French ballistic system has all the potential to cost the United Kingdom considerably more than the procurement of Trident D5 while a United Kingdom minimum deterrent based on either sea-launched or air-launched cruise missiles would be likely to be about double the cost of Trident. The Liberal-SDP alternatives to Trident, far from being cheaper, will be significantly more expensive. The alliance has no case therefore for ruling out Trident on cost grounds. Indeed, costs positively add to the case for maintaining the Trident programme.

**Sir Geoffrey Johnson-Smith** (Wealden): Can my right hon. Friend confirm to the House whether there is any intention by the present French Government seriously to consider an Anglo-French nuclear deterrent?

**Mr. Stanley**: That is a matter to which the French Government would have to respond. As we have made clear in our open government document, there are extremely important issues of timetabling and we are wholly satisfied that, whatever the merits of a French system, that is simply not compatible with our requirement to replace the Polaris system in the mid-1990s.

Finally, as the arguments about Trident being too big and too costly have been shot through, the argument about Trident being too American has, in a certain desperation I feel, been played more stridently not least by the right hon. Member for Devonport, when he was in the United States the week before last.

I was disappointed and somewhat disturbed by the right hon. Gentleman's speech in which he likened the Atlantic relationship to "curdled mayonnaise". I must tell the right hon. Gentleman that, in our view, the Atlantic relationship is most certainly not curdled and that there is no benefit to Britain, certainly not in defence, in knocking our relationship with our most important ally.

**Dr. David Owen** (Plymouth, Devonport): Does the right hon. Gentleman consider a normal relationship between two partners to be one in which the President of

*[Dr. David Owen]*

the United States can go to Reykjavik and commit himself to negotiate abolishing all ballistic missile systems without consultation with his principal allies, France and the United Kingdom, which are at present committed to a system of ballistic missiles?

**Mr. Stanley**: The most telling evidence that the Atlantic relationship between this country and the United States is not curdled is that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister went to Camp David in November and secured an unequivocal assurance and commitment from the American President to honour the Trident commitment.

As far as Britain's Trident programme is concerned, I am disturbed by the doubts that the right hon. Member for Devonport now seems to be casting regularly on the extent to which we can rely on our United States allies to honour their obligations under the Trident arrangements. The argument that he seems to be advancing is that, while our French allies could be relied on to deliver a French contribution to the British nuclear deterrent in all circumstances, our United States allies could not be similarly relied upon. Quite apart from that being a poor reflection on the United States, it flies in the face of all the evidence.

Our strategic deterrent arrangements with the Americans have been well tried and well tested over more than 25 years. Successive United States Administrations have honoured, and honoured in full, the terms of the Nassau agreement between the then Mr. Macmillan and President Kennedy. The present Trident arrangements were made with President Carter and have been continued by President Reagan. As I said a moment ago, only last November at Camp David my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister received an unequivocal and unqualified assurance from President Reagan of his full support for the arrangements made to modernise Britain's independent nuclear deterrent with Trident.

There is therefore no valid basis for the Liberal-SDP parties to rule out Trident on the grounds that it is too American, any more than on the grounds it is too big or too costly. The fact is that, where the nuclear threat is concerned, the Liberal and SDP parties are offering inadequate defence while the official Opposition are offering no defence at all. Neither meets the defence needs of the British people.

The Royal Navy enters 1987 with expenditure at record levels in recent times, with seven new classes of ship and submarine ordered, and with abundant evidence of very high levels of skill being achieved under the sea, on the surface and in the air. We are grateful to all those men and women serving in the Royal Navy for contributing to the high esteem in which it is held around the world—and most deservedly so.

4.36 pm

**Mr. Martin J. O'Neill** (Clackmannan): Any debate on a one-line Whip on a Monday is unlikely to secure a packed Chamber. Regular participants in service debates are members of a fairly small and exclusive club. The Minister of State and his advisers know their audience and over the years speeches have tended to follow the same format: there is a tour d'horizon of the Navy's role and praise for the undoubted professionalism of the men; a nod in the direction of the United States allies; a reiteration of the case for the independent deterrent; castigation of the SDP-Liberal alliance for its current attitudes; an overblown assessment of the Soviet threat; usually a thinly veiled attack on the Labour party for its lack of patriotism; and finally, the MOD speech-writing word processor's version of "Land of Hope and Glory".

I wrote those words before the Minister of State spoke and I am relieved to see that my powers of prescience have not been diminshed in any sense. Cynics may say that the only real variants in these debates are the contributions from the Social Democrats and the Liberals, so the real specialists in these matters are those who can discern whether the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) is inching closer to the sea-launched cruise option, whether he will come out in favour of rejecting Trident regardless of the date of the election or whether he accepts the cancellation charge argument. I do not know whether we are to be spared a speech from the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport, but I imagine that the predicament of the alliance spokesman today will be evident for all to see.

Recent events have highlighted certain questions that require clear answers from the Government. The House is entitled to know what HMS Splendid was doing in the Barents sea. It is entitled to know the terms of the Trident cancellation clauses and the significance of the worthwhile and welcomed announcement of the £500 million savings in the Trident programme. The House is also entitled to know in this, the last of the three service debates, the significance in defence procurement terms—I understand that the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement will be replying to the debate—of the story that appeared in yesterday's *Daily Mail* about the fate of the Zircon project. We all know the limitations on questions about such topics, but as it is a sensitive issue and Ministers are always at pains not to blur issues by answering questions too succinctly, perhaps the Minister in his characteristically obfuscatory manner can give us some idea of what is happening with the Zircon project.

The Minister mentioned operations in the Gulf and the world trip that took place last year. We recognise the necessary evil of having men and ships in the Gulf to protect our merchant fleet, and we recognise the courage and commitment of our troops in that area and the help that they give to merchantmen in great difficulty.

**Dr. Alan Glyn** (Windsor and Maidenhead): How can we get British ships flying foreign flags back into commission if there is a crisis?

**Mr. O'Neill:** I shall deal with that a good deal later in my speech. The hon. Gentleman may care to wait until then.

In 1983 SACLANT said that NATO forces were in danger of being outgunned in the Atlantic. The Government must give us a clearer justification for the exercises in the Indian ocean and the round-the-world trips. It is misleading for the Royal Navy to go into those waters and to suggest that we can support those people in times of difficulty when the supreme commander of the NATO Alliance says that we could not release craft from the eastern Atlantic to fulfil that role.

In *The Independent* on 21 November, Christopher Coker said:

> "The exercise in the Gulf is not about out of area security at all. It is really a debate about the still uncertain future of

the surface fleet. Sailing to foreign climes is a dramatic way not only of restoring service morale, but persuading the public that large surface ships are still invaluable in the modern era."

The honouring of such commitments to other countries would require a Navy far in excess of the 50 warships that were mentioned this afternoon. It would certainly require a Navy far larger than the one which the rate of ordering would provide. The rate would probably have to be doubled, which would imply a trebling of the rate of commissioning of naval escorts that has prevailed since 1979.

As important as the craft which the Navy has at its disposal is the problem, mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett), of men leaving the services. In his book "British Warships and Auxiliaries", Michael Critchley said:

> "More and more experienced men are leaving the Royal Navy because of too long separations from wives and families."

Since warships are now refitted at Devonport or Rosyth, many men live considerable distances from the yards. The book states that many people live some distance away, but not far enough — 200 miles — to qualify for travel warrants. It is causing considerable difficulty for family stability. The book also states that between April and December 1985 leaving increased by about 20 per cent. over the figure for the previous year.

The failure to replace older ships means that ships such as Fearless, Intrepid and those in the Leander class, which require larger crews, are being kept in service. That will get worse. More than 30 per cent. of our frigates and destroyers will be more than 25 years old by 1990.

**Mr. Speed:** Knowing the Labour party's hostility to nuclear power plants and to the proposed pressurised water reactor at Sizewell, may I ask the hon. Gentleman whether, if the Labour party came to power, it would continue nuclear-powered submarines which have pressurised water reactors as their main propulsion power?

**Mr. O'Neill:** Yes, we would continue them.

Because of the time that it takes to refit older ships, sailors will be at sea for far longer periods. At present, they are at sea for about 19 to 24 months. The present outflow of men is far more serious than was the outflow in the 1970s, when there were problems with pay. At that time, there was a pay restraint problem for everyone in the public sector.

The Navy is losing its most valuable and experienced trained personnel. Some ships have only half their complement of seamen officers. On 10 frigates, there is only one principal warfare officer running the nerve centre of the operation. The Navy is short of 85 of those men, who control all the missiles, guns, torpedoes, radar, sonars and decoy systems. The Fleet Air Arm is 30 per cent. short of Sea Hunter Harrier pilots. Overall, the Navy is about 10 per cent. short of officers in all branches, especially pilots, observers and engineers. The position is very different from that in the 1970s. Unemployment was far lower than it is now and we are led to believe that there are now no difficulties with service pay. If there are, they will no doubt be corrected at the expense of other parts of the defence budget.

The problems of morale are created by the unsatisfactory working conditions to which the Minister referred and because the Government will not put adequate resources behind the men to give them the support to which they believe they are entitled. The impact of Trident more than anything else is restraining expenditure on new equipment. The Government must accept that the cost of Trident will vary over the next decade, that it will reach its peak in 1989-90, that spending on new equipment will fall by 30 per cent. in real terms between 1984-85 and 1989-90 and that by 1989-90 Trident will account for about 24 per cent. or 25 per cent. of expenditure on new equipment. It is not enough to say that we should divide the cost of the programme over the entire development period and obtain an average. The continuing and consistent crisis of funding in the Royal Navy has been created in large measure by the Government's commitment to Trident.

We welcome any reduction in the cost of the Trident programme, but I hope that the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement will be a little more specific about where those cost reductions will be made and how long he expects the figures to stand up. Although the contract is not open-ended, it has so many different parts and there could be difficulties. It would be misleading to seize on short-term savings when there might be longer-term costs about which we have not been told. We want to know which parts of the programme have benefited from the savings and where those savings will be transferred in the general budget.

If the Government continue to tell us about the impact of cancellation, we must have answers to those questions. We know that savings may well be brought about by concellation, but the Government have chosen to obscure the issue. We know that by March 1986 about £680 million had been spent and that between £1,400 million and £1,700 million will probably have been spent by June this year. This leaves about £8 billion which might be saved if there is a June general election with the return of a Government committed to ending Trident.

If that saving of £8 billion can be achieved we shall be able, if we wish, to purchase about 30 type 23 frigates and pay their running costs for 20 years. That sum would cover manpower, spares, repairs, fuel, refitting, and so on. It would allow an increase of about 15 per cent. in the size of the United Kingdom fleet of destroyers and an increase of about 20 per cent. in the NATO maritime forces in the eastern Atlantic. I quote those figures merely as an example—the Labour party is not committing itself to using all the resources in that area. As this is a Navy debate, I have given an example of what could be achieved by savings in this area. It is considerably more than the figures that were thrown about by the Government when they have talked of limited areas of savings and limited uses of funds.

The amount of money that appears to be spent on reimbursing Vickers can take a variety of forms. Indeed, it is strange that, before Vickers was privatised, the local management were confident that they could switch quite easily to other work. Indeed, they were so confident that they stated in the company's prospectus that they were satisfied with the assurances given by the Labour party that a future Labour Government would sustain employment and went out of their way to mention it when they were trying to win support in the City at the time of privatisation.

When Conservative Members express concern about the fate of Barrow, one wonders whether they have heard of any of the other parts of the country that have suffered as a result of the Government's defence policy, whether it relates to the naval dockyards in Rosyth, Devonport, on

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the Tyne or on the Clyde. I know that Labour Members wish to raise these matters, not least the problems relating to the Swan Hunter dockyard whose staff have been given repeated promises that something will happen in the long run. As we all know, in the long run men are retired or are made unemployed, never to be able to get back to work again.

We hope that the Minister will tell us a little more about the command and control systems for the type 23s, and the problems that seem to confront the Ministry in deciding which system is the most satisfactory, the state of competitive tendering and whether it will delay bringing into service the first of class that we know is being built at Yarrow's. From the signs that we get from the Government, the more time that passes the more the towpath papers of last September begin to look like a Defence White Paper.

We recognise that if the Government are not prepared to order any more frigates there are opportunities available to sell frigates to the Australian Navy. We hope that the greatest effort will be made by the Government to realise prospects outlined in the 15 January edition of *The Times*, which stated clearly that there is a tremendous opportunity for a frigate based on the type 23 to be built in our shipyards for the Australian Navy. There will be tough competition, and we shall have to take account of it. Assistance and support of every kind must be provided so that British yards can respond to perhaps the biggest challenge of the second half of this decade in terms of foreign orders.

It is perfectly right and proper for the warship building and defence industries to go out into the world and sell their products. We make one qualification, which relates to the customers to whom the products are sold. The thrust of Labour party policy on defence sales is that we do not believe that the criterion to be applied to the sale of arms is whether the purchasers are enemies of those whom we regard as our enemies. The ability of the purchaser to pay for the arms and to use them to exacerbate local difficulties and repression must also be taken fully into account, but successive Governments have not done so.

The Labour party document, which the Minister frequently chooses to attack, is consistent and correct. We in no way seek to undermine the British defence industry. We should like it to be backed in every possible way in the area that I have mentioned so that if orders are open the project arises for the sale of frigates to Australia. That opportunity should be seized and backed not only by the Ministry of Defence but by the Department of Trade and Industry.

We cannot afford to ignore the significance of the maintenance of the fleet, its refitting and repair, which has been a source of national pride over the years. Everyone has recognised the tremendous contribution that the naval dockyards have made to the strength and capability of our fleet. It is depressing and sad that those yards are to be not only contractorised but cut back, with substantial redundancies.

Perhaps the greatest insult of all is the handing over of responsibility for the lead in the Devonport contractorisation to an American-led consortium. It seems that no organisation anywhere in British industry is capable of undertaking this type of work. The only firm prepared to assume responsibility for it is thus one that is prepared to find most of its resources working for the Libyan Government. Indeed, I am led to believe that when the Minister was asked last week about the significance of Libyan business he told trade unionists that he would be quite happy for Libyan work to be done in Devonport dockyard. Perhaps he will confirm that statement. I merely report a conversation that was referred to me.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Archie Hamilton):** We are concerned about getting extra work into the dockyards. If work were to come from a Libyan irrigation plant, I should think that the people in Devonport dockyard would be delighted.

**Mr. O'Neill:** We know that one of the least attractive features of Devonport dockyard is its extensive nature. It might be possible to hide irrigation work in one part of the yard, but there would be security problems and local people would be outraged if people from Libya went into the yard and intruded on their work. That would be regarded as extremely offensive. Certainly, with all the other aspects of contractorisation, it would undermine the good relations that have been the hallmark of industrial relations in the yards. We shall return to this tomorrow. Doubtless, however, other matters relating to financial advantage will be raised. The only frank statement from the Government or their agents was made to the Select Committee by the hapless civil servant who said that, at best, the strategy was a high-risk one. Many hon. Members are not convinced about the economic and financial arguments that have been advanced to justify contractorisation.

Many of us are anxious and worried, and not only about the shipbuilding and repairs industry at present. Today, many hon. Members received communications from Westland. We have read reports in *The Independent* and other newspapers expressing grave doubts about the parlous state of Westland. The delay in ordering the EH101 is most unfortunate. Of all three services, the Navy has used the helicopter to the greatest effect. The United Kingdom-Netherlands amphibious force consists of 7,600 British Marines and 2,900 Dutch marines. It is entitled to expect to be provided with something better than the 30-year-old Wessex and the Sea King.

As for our responsibilities in Norway, we must speed up the endless feasibility studies on the replacements for Fearless and Intrepid. Serious problems will arise if we adopt the refit option. The major problem is that amphibious craft take a long time to refit, and far larger crews are required than are needed in modern replacements. Furthermore, the refit option would result in putting off for a considerable period the real decision that has to be taken. Converted commercial ships are not the answer. We need two purpose-built amphibious vessels capable of offloading a heavy tonnage of equipment in as short a time as possible. They will be reinforcing an area that is only 80 miles from Murmansk in the Soviet Union. Amphibious vessels are vulnerable and speed is of the essence. It is quite wrong that our crack troops should have to depend on second best when, with a bit of guts and courage, the Government could find the money to produce something that really meets their needs.

**Mr. Best:** The hon. Gentleman will know of the view of Sir Steuart Pringle about the need to provide a 300-man initial lift by helicopter. Is he committing his party to aviation support ships?

**Mr. O'Neill:** We are anxious that the Royal Marines should be given the best possible support as early as possible, but the Government are delaying making the choices that we believe are necessary. The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that I cannot give assurances on an order amounting to about £1 billion, but the Labour party would accelerate the decision-making process and not hide behind feasibility studies. If we felt that we could not do it, we would not do it. I do not speak for the rest of my hon. Friends on the Front Bench, but I believe that it is a disgrace that the Royal Marines are not being given the kind of backing that they deserve and that their major strategic role requires. That is a widely held view in my party, but it is not a view to which I wish to commit the party. A decision should be taken urgently by whichever Government wins the next general election. If there is an early general election, I hope that the decision will be made by a Labour Minister by this time next year at the very latest.

The Minister ought to have referred to other types of equipment. It would have been helpful if the Minister could have been a little more forthcoming in his opening speech. It would have led to a more constructive debate. We should like to hear about the light gun replacements. The order for light guns has been reduced from 50 to 25, which will greatly inhibit the capability of British ships in harbour to protect themselves. They have to depend on guns such as the Bofors gun, which for older hon. Members will bring back memories of the second world war.

It is surprising that in a debate on the Navy the Minister did not refer to the controversial subject of torpedoes. There have been reports that Spearfish is now being handled in a manner that will lead to the best value for money in the shortest possible time, but responsibility for the control and development of Spearfish still seems to be in the hands of five different heads of department in the Ministry of Defence. The same difficulties as applied to Tigerfish seem to apply now to Spearfish. I hope that the Ministry of Defence has not forgotten the tragic experience with the Tigerfish torpedo and that the Minister's news about torpedoes will be better than many hon. Members expect.

I have concentrated on the men and ships in the Navy, but I wish to refer also to an essential but, sadly, often unsung sector of our fleet—the Merchant Navy. Again it is inconceivable that a Minister should make a speech about the Navy but say nothing about the Merchant Navy. It is not good enough to transfer responsibility for it to the Secretary of State for Transport. As our share of world trade, the number of ships flying the British flag and the number of British seafarers decline, this Government must be castigated for their complacency. The balance of trade may be miraculously saved by the City of London, but the bitter irony is that London's docklands are inhabited no longer by the dockers, the seamen and the plethora of traders who built up our commercial and industrial strength, but by the get-rich-quick brigade who have sold Britain short and seem not to understand how desperately we need the backing of a Merchant Navy. It is ridiculous that those great warehouses should have been turned into ritzy apartments for people who turned a blind eye to the requirements of Britain's trade and manufacturing industry.

Like the seafarers' unions—the National Union of Seamen and the National Union of Marine Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers — and the right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann), who expressed himself so fiercely in a recent Bow Group paper—we believe that far more must be done than the feeble gestures announced by the Secretary of State for Transport just before Christmas. We shall observe carefully the impact that the Merchant Navy Reserve, the training assistance and the repatriation have on the service. We do not believe that it will help very much.

I do not wish to be churlish and say that we do not want these things from the Government, because anything is better than what they have provided in the past six or seven years. It is not a party political controversy. The only people out of step are the Government. Sadly, on many other issues, too, the Government are out of step with the rest of the population. Nobody has a monopoly of concern, but in this twilight zone between the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Defence the Government seem completely indifferent to our national needs. There is no shortage of advice, prescriptions, or consensus, but the Government choose to ignore them, as the Minister showed in his failure to address the issue.

Another area in which there is a fair amount of consensus on both sides of the House is our concern for the services. We do not doubt the intention and desire of all parties to defend our country, but we question the methods that should be used to defend it. I realise that this evening there will be no satisfactory response to the recent reports about lost sonar equipment—it may or may not be significant, and it may or may not be in the Soviet Union's possession—but it is important that we hear today what HMS Splendid was doing in the Barents sea. All that we have to go on at present are statements in Defence Estimates and the information currently available to us.

In 1981, under the heading,

> "Provision of Anti-Submarine Support for the NATO Strike Fleet",

we were told:

> "The United Kingdom makes a major contribution to the anti-submarine defence of the NATO Strike Fleet Atlantic, allowing the United States strike carriers to concentrate on their air defence and strike/attack roles, which are of key importance on NATO's Northern Flank."

That appeared on page 25 in the chapter "Conventional Forces". Under the heading

> "Protection of United Kingdom and NATO Merchant Shipping",

it continued:

> "In tension or in war most of our surface vessels and all our submarines and maritime aircraft would be committed to the Alliance."

Paragraph 332 states:

> "Our maritime forces are primarily designed for anti-submarine warfare, as the most dangerous threat is from Soviet submarines."

In 1984, in paragraph 429 under the heading,

> "Maritime Tasks: The Eastern Atlantic and Channel",

we were told:

> "NATO maintains a substantial maritime presence in the Eastern Atlantic and Channel areas. Given our geographic position at the focus of the busiest sea-lanes in the world and close to the main route for Soviet naval forces deploying to

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the Atlantic, it is appropriate that we should make a major contribution to that presence. The United Kingdom provides 70 per cent. of the forces involved."

In the time available, that was all that I could find out about the deployment of forces in the north Atlantic.

The proceedings of the United States naval college 1986, however, carries an article entitled

"Maritime Strategy from the Deckplates"

by Vice Admiral Henry C. Mustin of the United States Navy. He states:

"We restructured both the national and NATO fleet command organisations, to improve the inter-command relationships necessary to fight a NATO war in the Norwegian Sea. This has involved — among a number of other arrangements for improved co-ordination with NATO area commanders — the creation of a new Striking Fleet organisation, which elevates a Royal Navy Antisubmarine Warfare Commander in the Fleet to the status of a Principal Subordinate Commander in NATO, and which re-emphasises the roles of the United States Marines and the combined United Kingdom-Netherlands landing forces."

The language is oblique, but it is clear that there has been a shift in the British contribution to NATO maritime strategy. Traditionally, the main function of the SSNs has been to protect the sea lanes and to watch over the Greenland-Iceland-Norway gap. It has never been clear that we should be locked into United States navy offensive strategies as part of our naval role.

We provide about 70 per cent. of naval forces in the eastern Atlantic under the control of SACLANT. We know that the Soviet navy regards its two main roles as being to protect the shores of what it chooses to call the motherland, and to maintain and protect the SSBNs — its principal means of second strike. If the United Kingdom — and, I presume, the United States — have a presence in the Barents sea, that will surely threaten the security of the Soviet Union's SSBNs, increase the threat of a Soviet first strike and thus threaten crisis stability. In terms of NATO-Soviet relations at such a sensitive time, when we are supposed to be close to reaching an accommodation with the Soviet Union — there has already been the prefacing of the Prime Minister's visit to Moscow — it is foolhardy to be blundering around in the Barents sea.

There seems to have been a major change. Until now we have not been aware of British boats being involved around the Kola peninsula. It is difficult to distinguish between SSNs and SSBNs. There are always problems with sensitive submarines. The Minister is far less forthcoming than his NATO allies on the other side of the Atlantic would be in similar circumstances. It is necessary for the Government to admit that there has been a change in British involvement in the NATO strategy. There would be problems if any of our SSBNs — the Polaris fleet — were in that area. There are problems with the command and control system. Plans are afoot for the trial of the extremely low frequency radio systems.

The Government must be more forthcoming about these issues. The Government's over-secrecy and paranoia on so many issues pollutes and distorts the very basis of discussion on defence matters. We have to look to the Americans not only for our next generation of nuclear weapons, our early warning system and the control of our dockyards, but for vital information about the deployment of our own troops and resources.

We recognise that there is a role for all partners in NATO. The Labour party is committed to what is known as our non-nuclear role. That will still enable us to contribute 70 per cent. of the eastern Atlantic fleet and to work in tandem with the United States and with other countries in continental Europe. The Government's commitment to the Trident missile system, with its drain on our resources, and their failure to appreciate the need to replace and restore the ships and the morale of our Navy, jeopardises that commitment. Instead of having a Navy of which we can be proud, we have to fight for that Navy against a Government whose interests do not seem to be in line with those of the Navy or of any of our armed services.

The Government take a narrow and distorted view of what a nuclear war might involve, and they are taking steps which, as in their activities in the Barents sea, rather than seeking to avoid nuclear war, actually exacerbate the possibility and bring it closer. The Government have not been clear and effective in terms of the Navy's future or in their support for the men and women who contribute to our defence.

5.20 pm

**Sir Edward du Cann** (Taunton): I am sure that the House is grateful to the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) for giving such prominence to the merchant fleet in his speech. As he so rightly said, anxiety about the fleet goes across party lines and is felt deeply in all quarters of the House. I am grateful to him for the kindly personal reference that he made to me.

It is traditional that we devote three days a year to debates on Britain's defence services, but I believe that it is time for us to come up to date with our proceedings. It would be more appropriate to provide five days for the debates, with three days for the armed services as at present, the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force, and the fourth and fifth days devoted to other aspects of the nation's defences that are no less significant in the general scheme of things than the armed services of the Crown, such as the merchant marine and civil defence. Both these issues are shockingly neglected at present. We shall continue to neglect them at our peril. We discuss them too rarely and it is time for the House to sound the alarm bell in respect of both.

The merchant marine is the fourth arm of Britain's defence. My right hon. Friend the Minister of State, to whom we listened with such interest earlier this afternoon, spelt out the merchant marine's duties in wartime in the evidence that he gave to the Select Committee on Defence during the 1984-85 Session, a few months ago.

To put it shortly, he said that its duties would be to provide transport across the Channel, transatlantic reinforcement resupply to the continent of Europe and support for the Royal Navy. It follows that if the Merchant Navy is weak, our country's defence strategy cannot be credible, and weak it most certainly is. Let it not be forgotten that if there is a reduced Merchant Navy, a question mark must arise over the raison d'etre of the Royal Navy, one of its primary duties being to protect our merchant fleet.

Let us consider the number of ships on the British register. I think that the figures are well known to every hon. Member. The merchant fleet's tonnage has fallen by 78 per cent. since 1975 and by 70 per cent. since 1980. It fell by 12 per cent. in August 1986 alone. The size of the fleet has halved in only two and a half years. There are 66 per cent. fewer vessels now than in 1975. The number of ships has fallen by 52 per cent. since 1980 and the fleet has halved in size during the past five years. Similarly, there has been a huge decline in the number of seafarers. The number of men at sea in August 1986 was well below 30,000. I learned these figures from an answer to a question that I tabled a few days ago. The number of seafarers has fallen by 63 per cent. since 1975, by 52 per cent. since 1980 and by 10 per cent. in the first eight months of 1986.

It is suggested too often that we should attend to the defence of our national interests only during emergencies. I assert that defence should be as much an issue in peacetime as ever it is in wartime. Our struggle to defend Britain's interests must continue in peacetime and must be maintained with the same strength as that which applies in wartime.

We have seen a huge decline in the United Kingdom's share of seaborne trade carried in United Kingdom flag ships. The volume of United Kingdom seaborne trade has grown by 20 per cent. in the past decade, but the United Kingdom's flag share has fallen from more than 33 per cent. to less than 25 per cent. The risk is that Britain in peacetime could be held to ransom by its enemies if they set their minds to it. Another example: fewer than half the ships servicing our offshore oil installations fly the red ensign. The dangers are obvious. As I have said, it is no less important to defend Britain's interests in peacetime than in times of emergency.

To put the matter at its mildest, there must be doubts whether the British merchant fleet is adequate to fulfil the roles that Ministers foresee for it in time of conflict as they define them. I emphasise "as they define them" because it seems that my right hon. Friend's catalogue is incomplete. The ships for all the purposes for which the Navy would need them in an emergency do not exist, nor do we have the trained personnel to man them. In wartime, and even in an emergency less than a state of full conflict, many ships would be needed for vital tasks additional to those that my right hon. Friend quoted. For example, in addition to supplementing the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, we would need a huge number of ships to act as force multipliers, such as minesweepers, mine countermeasure vessels, harbour protection vessels and patrol vessels. There would be 100 other tasks in augmentation of the Royal Navy.

There are hon. Members present in the Chamber who served, as I did, in the Royal Navy—in the war. I spent only a short and undistinguished time in the service—and it amazes me that memories are so short. I remember the substantial numbers of vessels that were drafted into service in various roles—to act as aircraft carriers, for example. The port of Great Yarmouth alone had over 100 trawlers acting as minesweepers and that was duplicated along the coast at ports such as Aberdeen, Grimsby, Immingham, Lowestoft, Felixstowe and the Thames boundary. Thousands of ships were needed for the many purposes to which I have referred.

**Mr. Garrett:** What about South Shields?

**Sir Edward du Cann:** Of course. I apologise to the hon. Gentleman for omitting that important port from my list.

Any idea that we have enough ships to fulfil the ordinary purposes of augmentation of the Royal Navy in wartime is ludicrous, and besides supporting the Royal Navy and augmenting it, we would have to supply and resupply the civilian population. We need to have enough ships besides to cope with local conflicts. I have said in the House on previous occasions, and I shall say again now, that at the time of the Falklands conflict, a few short years ago, we requisitioned 54 ships. It was a marvellous tale of improvisation, hard work and determination. It was a splendid success, but any account of those days makes it clear how narrow was the margin between success and failure. There were only a few ships left that could have been requisitioned, and of the 54 ships that were used at that time, more than half have now been sold. If we wanted to mount another Falklands operation today, it would be impossible to do so.

I have recited some sombre statistics, but it is suggested by my right hon. and hon. Friends at the Ministry of Defence, whom I respect so much, that there is a hidden reserve. It is suggested that large reserves of ships are available to Her Majesty's Government in times of emergency that are currently sailing under flags of convenience but are United Kingdom-owned. Whether Her Majesty's Government have the necessary powers to requisition them promptly is uncertain. It is even uncertain whether Her Majesty's Government have the powers to requisition them at all. Even if they were to prove available —I do not believe that they would be—we can be sure that the foreign nationals who are now acting as their crews would not be available. The reserve is nothing more than a mythical armada.

Fortunately, there is a more widespread recognition of the dangers than hitherto. The Select Committee on Defence is taking an increased interest in these matters, and it is valuable to reflect on the report that appeared in Session 1984-85. What it had to say was prescient. Paragraph 47 states:

> "we believe the Government should show greater awareness of the risk to national security inherent in loss of independence in the carriage of seaborne commerce. Effective deterrence requires that no would-be aggressor is tempted by vulnerability."

We talk a great deal about a nuclear deterrence and conventional forces, but if we do not have an adequate merchant marine our posture will be such that our deterrence will not be credible.

The Committee continued:

> "Present trends seem to be setting in this dangerous direction. The striking contrast between British, and indeed Allied, maritime resources and those of the Warsaw Pact countries, in inverse proportion to the relative dependence of each alliance on sea communication, is extremely disturbing."

The Select Committee was giving a clear warning. What has been done to acknowledge that? Nothing. The Soviets have overtaken the British and the Americans as merchant shipping powers. In the early 1970s we had about twice as much merchant shipping as the Soviet Union. By the 1990s the Soviet fleet will be twice that of the United Kingdom, at the very least, and, I suggest, every one will be an auxiliary to the Soviet navy.

The comments of the Select Committee on Defence in its report on the 1986 defence statement demand an answer during this debate, and I hope that my right hon. Friend the Minister of State will be good enough to give it. Paragraph 104 states:

> "At this stage we observe that there appears still to be no check on the genuine availability of merchant ships for defence purposes".

The Committee continued:

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"the statistics in SDE 86 take no account of the UK requirement for economic shipping, carrying essential civil supplies in a time of tension or war."

Paragraph 105 states:

"There appears to be little regard in the formation of Government policy as a whole for the implications, in terms of our national freedom of action, of dependence on other nations for merchant shipping."

Happily, there appears to be growing recognition of the worries about those implications. I am glad that the Leader of the Opposition raised this matter during business questions a week ago. A number of us have tried in speeches, questions, letters and pamphlets to make certain that the House, and thereby the country, is made better aware of the dangers. A motion on this subject is on the Order Paper. It has been signed by 24 right hon. and hon. Members and, I dare say, will be signed by 10 times that number during this Parliament's lifetime.

The establishment of the all-party parliamentary maritime group is evidence of the serious concern in the House. It is good that the Select Committee on Transport accepted the maritime group's recommendations and is inquiring into the subject. So, over the years, growing anxiety has been clearly expressed in the House, yet the apparent complacency of my right hon. and hon. Friends is remarkable. Witness the assertion by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in reply to my question at the end of November 1986:

"There are sufficient vessels to meet Ministry of Defence requirements."—[*Official Report*, 25 November 1986; Vol. 106, c. 158.]

But that is demonstrably untrue. Who on earth gives my right hon. Friend such misleading advice?

The 1986 "Statement on the Defence Estimates" said:

"Because the United Kingdom's merchant fleet is of great importance for defence needs, the scale of its recent decline has caused some concern."

Elsewhere, great concern is the order of the day. My hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price), in a letter a few days ago to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister, quoted the minute written by the chief of naval staff after the conference at Greenwich. The right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) chaired one of the sessions. The deep interest that he continues to take in these maritime matters is appreciated by the whole House. The chief of naval staff wrote:

"the Conference concluded that the United Kingdom could no longer take a sizeable Merchant Fleet for granted and that this has severe implications from a defence viewpoint".

He continued:

"the mood of the Conference was sombre".

An unclassified document issued by NATO, a communiqué following the 38th plenary meeting of the planning board for ocean shipping held at the end of September and beginning of October 1986 in Washington, stated:

"The Board was seriously concerned at the continuing decline in the number of ships registered under the flags of members of the Alliance . . . The Board concluded that for certain categories of ships the situation is already critical".

That is surely sufficient evidence.

I state as a fact that the present attenuated size of the British merchant fleet and of NATO fleets now puts our country's defence strategy and that of the NATO Alliance at serious risk. Ministers who have allowed this to occur or who have connived at its continuance merit the censure of the House and the nation's complaint.

Let us be frank about the situation. There is a crisis. It is no good pretending that it does not exist. It will not go away. The shortage of ships in the merchant marine in Britain and in the NATO countries has grave implications from the defence viewpoint. I know that many right hon. and hon. Members are also very worried about the economic implications in Britain of this decline in the British Merchant Navy from the point of view of employment, shipbuilding and ship repairing, finance, insurance and markets generally, engineering, and so on. There is no argument about the causes—they are well understood and have been clearly defined—nor is there much doubt about what could be done by way of remedy, internationally, within the European community and domestically. It is to be hoped that my right hon. Friend the Chancellor will give attention to the early-day motion on the Order Paper.

Many other people apart from me have proposed remedies. This is perhaps not the occasion to discuss them in detail or to argue the merits of one against another. It is, however, right to say for the House as a whole and for the nation that it is urgent that the Government formulate a clear policy of support for the British Merchant Navy. If anything, that is overdue. It must be right that policies should be co-ordinated in Government. It must be recognised that differences of interest within Government —some 16 Departments of State have responsibility, in one way or another, for the Merchant Navy—inevitably lead to lack of leadership, as now. Without any doubt, the key is, first, to develop a profitable shipowning capacity and secondly, the co-ordination of international policies in the free world, especially the European Community.

The weakness of our Merchant Navy and of merchant fleets in Europe and in NATO is the Achilles heel of our defence. We can boast all we like about expenditure, about building new ships and about getting better weapons, but none of that matters if there is this particular weakness in the Merchant Navy, because the Royal Navy by itself is not credible.

**Viscount Cranborne** (Dorset, South): I apologise for interrupting. As my right hon. Friend knows, I am strongly sympathetic to his viewpoint. Does he agree that it would be sensible to urge on our right hon. Friends in the Ministry of Defence that any support that they can give the Merchant Navy should come not from the defence budget but from tax incentives or other Votes? The Ministry of Defence will be under considerable pressure in the coming years.

**Sir Edward du Cann:** I entirely agree. There is no question but that this nation, if it cared to give the leadership that it should give both within Europe and internationally, could fundamentally alter the whole climate within which the world merchant fleets are trading. I do not argue for subsidy or that money should be poured in; I do not argue that the service spend should be mitigated in any way; I am simply begging my right hon. and hon. Friends—who are my friends, and whom I trust and admire—to recognise that this is a most serious problem about which something must be done. Indeed, action is overdue.

I look to my right hon Friends, with the competence that they have, to decide that, from this moment on, they will take action, and to ensure that such action is effective.

5.40 pm

**Mr. James Callaghan** (Cardiff, South and Penarth): It is a very great honour to introduce the Navy Estimates. Although the form of the debate today is not what it was previously, anyone who has the privilege of introducing the Estimates is to be congratulated. Indeed, I congratulate the Minister of State for the Armed Forces on the post that he occupies. Any of us who has had any connection with the Royal Navy, either through serving in it or through the Board of Admiralty, has a lifelong affection that is never lost. It might sometimes cloud our judgment, although it will not cloud mine this afternoon. Whatever future post may be offered to the right hon. Gentleman, I am sure that he will always look back on his present post as one that has given him very great enjoyment.

As I look at the empty Benches in the Chamber, I cannot help but contrast that with the year—36 years ago—when I first had the privilege of introducing the Navy Estimates. The First Lord of the Admiralty was then in another place, but the debate was graced not only with the presence of the Prime Minister, but with that of Sir Winston Churchill, who sat on the Opposition Benches. They came to listen to the Parliamentary Secretary, and the Benches, if not full, were at least much more fully occupied than they are today. It is, perhaps, a sign of the decay that we have allowed to overtake our concept of our national role and responsibility that, today, there is a group of hon. Members talking to each other rather than to the House as a whole. Nevertheless, we must continue to make these speeches.

I want to follow the remarkable speech of the right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) and focus upon the unprecedented decline in the size, strength and manpower of Britain's Merchant Navy, and the serious consequences of that for our long-term security and national well-being.

Ministers sit on the Treasury Bench, and it appears to many of us that our arguments bounce off them. We can only hope that if that is the case—it is not a matter for humour, but a serious issue—we can at least alert public opinion to what is happening. Never in this century has our country had a smaller merchant fleet than it has today; never have we had fewer seafarers that we have today. Britain's shipping is suffering from a haemorrhage, with no signs of it being staunched. The actual disaster that is overtaking us is much worse than the forecasts that are made from time to time. Never has anyone been over-pessimistic about the problem.

Some 10 years ago—I make no apology for repeating the figures, which must be drummed in even though that means repeating speeches — Britain owned more than 1,600 ships of more than 500 gross tonnes. Twelve months ago, the figure had shrunk to 640; six months ago, it had shrunk to 552; and today, it is probably no more than 480. That is a loss of 25 per cent. of our shrunken fleet within the past 12 months.

Even so, we have not touched bottom. The director general of the General Council of British Shipping, Mr. Peter le Cheminant, has warned the Chancellor of the Exchequer that unless the current trend is reversed, the size of the mainland British fleet may be no larger than 100 ships within the next decade—shrunk from 1,600 to 480 in the past decade, and from 480 to 100 in the next.

Mr. le Cheminant is no wild lobbyist; he is a prudent and cautious man who formerly occupied a senior position in the Cabinet secretariat. His figures would send a shudder through any Government who were less complacent than this Government are showing themselves to be. The consequence is that British ships are today carrying only 23 per cent. of British trade by weight and 36 per cent. by value. That, as the right hon. Member for Taunton said, has resulted in the employment of British seafarers declining from 74,000 10 years ago to less than 30,000 today, while Britain's sea transport account has deteriorated from a positive surplus of £141 million in 1980 to an enormous deficit of £1,157 million in 1985—a decline of some £1,000 million.

Most of the figures are not new. Right hon. and hon. Members, on both sides of the House, frequently led by the right hon. Member for Taunton, have dinned the facts into the deaf ears of Ministers month after month. I especially pay my respects to the right hon. Gentleman and the parliamentary maritime group for the manner and determination with which they have stuck to their task.

The right hon. Gentleman said that the alarm bells should sound. What about Drake's drum? If we cannot get that to sound the alarm, perhaps the next best thing would be to have Rudyard Kipling living at this time, writing an up-to-date version of his poem "Big Steamers", with its repeated last lines about their cargoes:

> "Brought to you daily by all us big steamers,
> And if anyone hinders our coming, you'll starve."

Kipling's words were right then, and they are right today.

If nothing else touches Ministers, they should be touched by the dreadful deficit in sea transport of more than £1 billion. But no, the Chancellor has ignored it because of his uncovenanted benefit of being able to float on a huge barrel of oil and the revenue that it has provided. That will not last. When his successor turns again to British shipping to make good a balance of payments deficit—as has been done in the past—he will find that the fleet has disappeared, sunk through complacency and inaction.

It is not enough for Ministers to excuse themselves on the ground that it is a worldwide affliction. Certainly Britain is not alone, but I would have expected a British Government, with their particular responsibility — as more than 90 per cent. of our trade depends upon shipping in a way that is unequalled in any other continental country—and with our island dependence on the sea, to have been in the forefront in demanding international action and in proposing remedies, both national and worldwide.

As the right hon. Member for Taunton said, many proposals exist. Some have been put to the Government; others are lying around waiting to be picked up, if only the Government would do so. Yet all that is dismissed in one complacent paragraph in the Defence Estimates White Paper, which states that the scale of decline of merchant shipping "has caused some concern"—at least there is some feeling in the body corporate — and that in conjunction with the Department of Transport defence Ministers will

> "continue to monitor the situation closely."

That is a wonderful field of action into which the galvanised, dynamic Treasury Bench can leap. It is a disgrace if Ministers comment on that in only one out of 700 paragraphs in the defence statement.

Incidentally, where is the Secretary of State for Transport this afternoon? I know that Ministers are always trying to pass the buck, and the Ministry of

*[Mr. James Callaghan]*

Defence shows little desire to pick up this hot potato. The Secretary of State for Transport gave a rather lame statement to the House before Christmas. He should be here to listen to the debate.

I should like to repeat what the right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) said. What is missing in our scale of national priorities today is any sense of understanding that in maritime policy as a whole the Merchant Navy and the Royal Navy exist to serve and support each other.

A long time ago I suggested—it was dismissed—that the Prime Minister should take the chair at a Cabinet committee to co-ordinate our total maritime interests. I very much regret that that proposal has not been taken up. When I was Prime Minister I did not chair such a committee myself but asked Lord Peart to assume the chair of a committee for the direct purpose of such co-ordination. I advise the Minister that because of the terrible decline in our Merchant Navy the situation today is far more serious than it was seven or eight years ago.

Although Ministers seem to have some intellectual comprehension of the consequences of the expansion of the Soviet fleet, they show no signs of translating their apprehension into action, especially in relation to submarine strength. There will probably be little argument in the House that the most significant strategic development that has occurred since the second world war of 1939 to 1945 was when the Soviet Union reached parity with the United States in its strategic nuclear missile capacity. However, that being so, in my judgment, and I believe in the judgment of all hon. Members who study these matters, second only in strategic importance has been the enormous expansion of modern Soviet maritime capacity in total, with its ability to threaten allied reinforcements by its submarine fleet and to conduct amphibious operations in support of its land forces. In face of that, I confess the greatest concern at the inertia of the Secretary of State for Defence and the Secretary of State for Transport as they watch the collapse of our merchant fleet.

I am sorry to have to utter such platitudes yet again, but I repeat that the Merchant Navy has always been an essential element in Britain's defences. It has historically supplied the ships for carrying the food and materials that we need in time of war. In addition, many of its ships have been converted to become part of the fighting navy when needed. We should note that almost every major Soviet cargo ship today has the facilities for swift and easy conversion built into it when it is built and launched.

The Merchant Navy has supplied trained and hardy men who know the ways of the sea and who are skilled navigators and seamen. Those men were ready to shed their Merchant Navy uniform and to don the insignia of the Royal Navy when they were needed.

On any one day in a conventional war, 300 merchant ships would load and unload in British ports. To keep up the supply of our reinforcements would require 1,500 shiploads a month from across the Atlantic. Where will the ships and the experienced men be found if they are needed in future? The right hon. Member for Taunton has already given the answer and I cannot dissent from it. The ships and the men will not be there. As the right hon. Gentleman asked, even if we got ships from abroad, would their foreign crews be willing to sail them?

The number of qualified British seagoing officers serving in the Merchant Navy is one third of what it was 10 years ago. It is now 14,300 as against the previous figure of over 40,000. New recruits are not being taken in because of the absence of ships, nor are they being trained, so the future reservoir does not exist. The Estimates give the number of Merchant Navy cadets as 1,016, which is one fifth of what it was only four years ago. Then there were 5,000 young men, but now there are only 1,000. Nautical schools and training establishments have closed down. In my city of Cardiff, some excellent training facilities have been disbanded, the instructors have been dispersed, and the equipment is rusting.

Taking a ship to sea today is a highly skilled profession that requires technically trained deck, radio and engineer officers. The inherited skill and experience that enables Britain to produce some of the best seamen in the world is being lost. I warn the Government that once that skill is lost it cannot be recaptured in a period of months, because it must be passed on from generation to generation.

We have had some halfhearted talk from the Secretary of State for Transport about the possibility of establishing a Merchant Navy reserve to counter the severe shortage of qualified seafarers. However, there has been no word so far of whether the Government are prepared to establish the training facilities, to recompense the volunteers and to supply the administrative structure that would be needed. I have no wish to discourage the notion — I hope that it can be implemented — but the Government should be aware that those who study such matters warn that the rate of technological change in practice is such that officers soon get out of date when they leave the service and would need intensive and regular periods of training.

Of course, we would not face the task of supplying ourselves on our own. However, the Government should not draw too much comfort from the existence of a pool of NATO ships upon which they could call. I have already referred to the fact that the downward trend in shipping is worldwide, and the French, German, American, Dutch and Norwegian merchant navies all display declines in tonnage and men. However, there is a major difference. Our downward slide has been more precipitious and more disastrous than theirs—it is the biggest of the lot.

There is one gleam of light to which the right hon. Member for Taunton referred. The NATO planning board for ocean shipping has begun to take note of the matter. However, it has only begun to take note and I have not been able to see any action so far. At its meeting in September 1986, it expressed serious concern at the decline in the number of ships that would be available in time of war. As the right hon. Member for Taunton said, the board went further and, as a result of its study so far, it concluded—I repeat that it has done so slowly—that for certain types of ships the situation is already critical. Even worse, it went on to state that the situation is likely to deteriorate further unless steps are taken to reverse the decline. At its meeting, the NATO planning board called upon member states to formulate national shipping polices, and stressed the importance of the strategic value of national flag fleets.

How have the Government responded, or how do they intend to respond, to the alarm that has been sounded? So far, we have heard nothing. Hon. Members on both sides of the House will demand that the Minister who concludes the debate gives some indication of the Government's policy, and of any action that they may have in mind or that they may try to cough up between now and 9.30. We have insufficient ships, inadequate numbers of men, dismantled training facilities and deserted shipyards, but there is no national policy to safeguard our security on the high seas.

I conclude by commenting on the importance of security. I regret that the argument about Trident has come to represent the difference on this issue, because I regard what has happened to the merchant fleet as being even more important. Although Trident is important—I have my own views on that—I do not wish to divert attention from what I am saying now by discussing it, because its day will come. *[Interruption.]* That day may come and some Conservative Members may be less interested in my analysis of that position than in scoring some party advantage.

We have heard a great deal from the Government about the importance of national security in other areas. It has led them to ban the unions at GCHQ and to raid the BBC in Scotland. The Prime Minister in an act of folly even despatched the Cabinet Secretary to the Antipodes to waste a month sitting in an Australian court in an attempt to ban Mr. Wright's book of memoirs—all high profile actions, costing nothing in hard cash. Yet, at the same time, the British ships and men that are vital for the real protection and security of our people and commerce in peace and war are disappearing from the oceans of the world. The ships are rusting and the men rotting.

By the time the Zircon satellite gets into the stratosphere there will hardly be any British ships for it to watch. What sense of proportion is that? Whatever may be thought of the activities of Mr. Duncan Campbell, who is not my favourite journalist, history may well record that the inertia and indifference of Ministers to the decline of British Merchant Navy did much more serious permanent damage to the security and safety of the British people than a journalist's premature disclosure of the existence of a spy satellite.

6 pm

**Sir Patrick Wall** (Beverley): It is a privilege to follow the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), whom I have admired and respected for many years for his contributions, not only to the House and the country, but to the Navy and Merchant Navy. I agree with every word that he said about the Merchant Navy.

Two senior Privy Councillors from both sides of the House have made their view clear, as they have been doing for the past three years: the Government have apparently done absolutely nothing. I hope that what has been said today will enter the heads of my right hon. Friends and that we will insist that action is taken. We are an island nation, although we are trying to build a Channel tunnel. That will not come for a long time, and it may be better to spend the money that is to be spent on it on refitting our Merchant Navy.

I wish that we could return to the old type of debate. In the old days we had a White Paper, a two-day debate on defence, followed by a debate on the Navy, Army and Air Force and we knew where we were. In February we cannot debate a White Paper which will be published in the next month or two because we do not know what it will include, so presumably we are debating a White Paper which is a year old. That is nonsense.

The hon. Member for Sheffield, Attercliffe (Mr. Duffy) and I have just returned from discussing procurement with the Armed Services Committee of the Congress in Washington. The comparison between the way they discuss defence with the details that they go into and what we do reflects shamefully on us. At least we could get the sequence right, otherwise we are being asked to discuss matters in a vacuum.

I made my maiden speech on Navy Estimates 33 years ago, and as I shall be leaving the House at the general election this may be my last opportunity to speak on the Navy. As the House probably expects, I shall start with the Royal Marines. In my mind they are the best force in the world; factually, they are the most cost effective. They are part of the Royal Navy, and any idea of splitting from the Royal Navy would involve the abolition of the Royal Marines. I believe that they would far rather be abolished than turned into soldiers. In my time, two thirds of the corps were at sea, but now they are in commandos. The use to this nation of that maritime capability was proved only too clearly in the Falkland Islands.

I have just read a couple of books about the Falkland Islands campaign, and the morale boost of the commando forces' band was apparently enormous in RMS Canberra on the outward and return journeys. Moreover, the bandsmen served as stretcher bearers during the battles. I hope that the Royal Naval school of music will be kept separate from the other forces' schools, as I know they also wish it to be. I hope that this nonsensical business of putting three bands together in the same school has now been dropped.

Has action been taken on some of the minor but important lessons that we learnt from the Falkland Islands operation? I am thinking, first, of kits and boots. Both the Army and Royal Marines still march on their boots, but apparently 98 per cent. of the marines who returned from the Falkland Islands had damaged their feet. Most have recovered by now, but the boots were highly unsatisfactory as they let in water. The webbing equipment froze as the weather was so bad. Yet equipment borrowed from other nations, such as Norway, did not do so. There were no nightscopes for Milan, which proved itself in those operations. Has Milan, both in the Royal Marines and in the Army, now been fitted with proper nightscopes? Do the Royal Marines now have a Rapier battery attached, and has it been fitted with Blindfire, which it was not in the Falkland Islands? Those matters are raised time and again if one reads books on the operations in the Falklands. Have those lessons been learnt, and is action being taken?

The Royal Marines' primary role is amphibious warfare and they are dedicated more or less to the northern flank. The northern flank is of great importance, because the Russians would like elbow room from Murmansk, one of their bases on the Kola peninsula. If, in years to come, NATO appears to be weak, or the leadership in the United States, Great Britain, France and Germany was weaker than it is today, it is possible that the Soviet Union may attempt to take over northern Norway and then sit back and wait to see what happens. NATO commits each nation to the defence of the other. If, in those circumstances, the Norwegians were not helped, it would be the end of NATO.

*[Sir Patrick Wall]*

That emphasises the importance of the northern flank and of Fearless and Intrepid. They are not only launch landing craft, and carry a couple of helicopters, but exercise command and control. We cannot build a merchant ship hull and expect it to exercise command and control off a hostile coast under air bombardment, as Fearless did in San Carlos water. They must be rebuilt or replaced by similar warships, rather than built from converted merchant ships.

I am glad that the losses from the Falklands have now been made up. However, I must emphasise, as I have already done through questions, that aircraft support ships are absolutely vital. Fearless and Intrepid can carry two or three Sea Kings, but an aircraft carrier is needed for an assault. We do not have any available. Recently I asked a question and was told that our three aircraft carriers were rarely used now for our marine forces. We need at least two aircraft support ships. They could be built from a merchant ship hull and, indeed, would probably have to be for cheapness. They would carry the helicopters from which an initial assault could be made.

**Mr. Garrett:** The hon. Gentleman has obviously not heard of Atlantic Conveyor, which was built on Tyneside, and which is primarily designed for the purpose that he is advocating. He should advocate that we build more of these ships.

**Sir Patrick Wall:** I have heard of the replacement for the old Atlantic Conveyor and I believe that it is far better than some of the existing Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships today. However, the ships that I am speaking about must be designed to carry several helicopters and their crews with briefing rooms, adequate maintenance facilities and so on. That cannot be duplicated with the logistics supply role, which is the main role of the Atlantic Conveyor.

I now turn to NATO and some of the naval problems facing NATO, that were discussed recently at the NATO Assembly. I have already mentioned the importance of the northern flank and the fact that a large number of the Soviet submarines that operate from Kola—numbering about 180—are nuclear propelled. These submarines are guided missile submarines—that is, anti-ship submarines — as well as ballistic missile and ordinary torpedo-carrying submarines. One should remember that the new commander-in-chief of the Soviet navy is a submariner, and we should recall what a change came over the German navy when Admiral Raeder, a submariner, took over. With the larger concentration of submarines, and with so few merchant ships, how will we defend the shipping lanes against real submarines rather than the German U-boats which have to resurface to recharge their batteries?

The Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic has told us, time and time again, that he is some 50 per cent. short of escorts. Escorts must be provided for the strike fleets, battle groups and the convoys, and SACLANT needs far more ships than we have at present. That is why some of us are so concerned about the type 23 destroyers. If my right hon. Friend the Minister is to keep his promise to give us 50 frigates and destroyers, three type 23s must be ordered each year. However, such orders will only replace the older ships. My hon. Friends and I are rather worried when we hear the word "about". Previously, the promise was 50, but now my right hon. Friend promises "about" 50. I appreciate that Ministers must have some leeway, but this is a serious matter. I am aware that SACLANT is pressing hard for these orders and I hope that my right hon. Friend will see that they are placed, presumably immediately after the publication of the White Paper.

We are also short of maritime patrol aircraft. Some 250 of such aircraft are available to NATO, but three to five of them are needed for any submarine that gets beyond the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom gap and into the Atlantic. NATO is short of some 100 of these aircraft.

In the past 18 months the Soviets have shown us that they can deploy 50 per cent. of their northern fleet in three days. They can put a submarine barrier across the GIUK gap in three days. That shows us how important the use of warning time must be to get our forces into position and reinforce those positions before the balloon goes up. Once the GIUK gap is breached the convoys will not get through. We need more escorts, helicopters and maritime aircraft if the Soviets are to be checked. If the gap is penetrated the war will be a short one because there will be no food or ammunition to supply the forces and the people of Europe.

In the annual discussions that the North Atlantic Assembly — NATO's Parliament — has with NATO's three main commanders-in-chief, we are told that the balance is swinging against NATO, especially at sea, but little is done. How long will the balance go on swinging, year after year, before it tips over? I have a shrewd suspicion that it will not be much longer.

Why is there such an imbalance? The combined gross national product of NATO is 2·5 per cent. greater than that of the Warsaw pact. The combined population of NATO is one and a half times that of the USSR. If we were spending anything like the Russians spend on defence, all our fears of being suddenly attacked and wiped out would disappear. Why is it? We spend too much on ourselves. We spend too much on social security and other matters that we cannot afford. If war took place—I do not think it will—all such spending would go for a burton anyway.

I had intended to refer to the Merchant Navy, but having heard the excellent speeches of my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) and the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth I shall not do so. I, will, however quote two sets of figures. There would be 600 ships a day in the Atlantic on any one day in wartime. British figures of our presence in the Atlantic have been quoted, and instead I shall quote some NATO figures. Between 1980 and 1985, Norwegian shipping went down from 12 million to 7 million gross registered tonnes; Greek shipping went down from 11 million tonnes to 9 million tonnes; French shipping went down from 8 million tonnes to 4 million tonnes; Spanish shipping from 5 million tonnes to 3 million tonnes; Danish shipping from 3 million tonnes to 2 million tonnes; West German shipping from 3 million tonnes to 1·5 million tonnes; and Dutch shipping from 2·3 million tonnes to 1 million tonnes. American shipping remained more or less static, although much of its shipping went under flags of convenience. However, it is the only nation in NATO that maintains a large merchant navy reserve of both ships and men. It is suggested that we should follow that practice.

The hon. Member for Attercliffe and myself have recently had discussions with the Armed Services Committee in America. I assure the House that the Americans realise that co-operation and standardisation are as essential for them as they are for us. The United States Administration, as well as United States industry, will try to increase this co-operation and standardisation. The trouble lies with the American services. They do not want their weapons systems or ammunitions to be built anywhere except in America.

Torpedoes highlight the problem. The Select Committe on Defence and the North Atlantic Assembly have struggled for years to get a NATO torpedo. We have the best detection system in the world, at the front end, in our two new torpedoes, the heavyweight and the lightweight. The Americans have the best propulsion system—ours is too slow—and the obvious answer is to marry the two systems. That way we would have a NATO torpedo. However, the American navy said no. Now we have two new British torpedoes—Sting Ray and Spearfish—two American torpedoes—one heavy weight and one light weight—a French one, a German one and an Italian one. One can appreciate the confusion that has been caused and the money that has been wasted.

Recently I visited Garretts in Phoenix, Arizona where experiments are being held regarding lithium-fuelled stored chemical energy propulsion — SCEPS. The experiments relate to the development of a closed thermal engine. Are we considering such experiments, which seem the answer for the future propulsion of torpedoes? We should surely consider those developments carefully.

With regard to air defence, I am glad that we have Goalkeeper in the carriers, but it will take three years to get it fitted. What about the type 42 and type 23s? Will they be armed with Goalkeeper, or will they rely on Phalanx, a 20mm short-range weapon? This weapon is being upgraded by the Americans as it is not much use against today's modern aircraft. The lesson of the Falklands is that point defence is vital, and point defence must be at a reasonable range with a heavier shell.

In the next decade I believe that if we keep up our guard there will be no war—nuclear or conventional. I believe that Mr. Gorbachev is much more interested in the economy of the Soviet Union and trying to improve it than in attacking Europe. There is always a danger that if the men in the Kremlin are faced with the choice of the disintegration of the Soviet empire or aggression, they will choose the latter. The other danger that we face all the time is subversion. Such subversion is carried on by Soviet agents or people unknowingly helping those agents. That can be extremely dangerous and it is spreading in Europe and in the United States.

Of great importance—I do not wish to end on a controversial note—is the Labour party's defence policy—unilateralism without gaining anything in return. It plans to throw the Yanks out. That appals my colleagues—including many on the Left—in the North Atlantic Assembly. They continually vote against——

**Mr. Garrett:** We would not throw the Yanks out.

**Sir Patrick Wall:** Labour Members do not intend to throw the Yanks out, but will tell them to take their nuclear weapons out, to take the F111s away and shut up Holy Loch. Does the Labour party think that the Americans would then stay here? Of course not, they would go home to America. The Leader of the Opposition was told that when he went to the United States. I believe that he is going there again. I hope that he will, because the Americans are getting quite violent on this subject. Many say that if the Labour party comes to power and implements its policy the Americans will withdraw from Europe, and we shall then come under the Kremlin, without Mr. Gorbachev having to move a soldier or a frigate.

6.20 pm

**Mr. John Cartwright** (Woolwich): It is a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Beverley (Sir P. Wall). He and I have been colleagues in the North Atlantic Assembly since 1976 and he was an extremely effective and energetic president of the assembly for a couple of years.

The hon. Gentleman always brings to these debates expertise and a sense of commitment to British maritime power. I do not always agree with everything that he says, but I recognise and respect the strength of his views and I endorse the action that he has been taking over a long period to generate joint procurement and greater standardisation within NATO.

I understand that an inquiry is being undertaken by the Ministry of Defence to discover how HMS Splendid lost its towed array sonar equipment. We are told that the incident happened between 1 and 15 January this year. There are obvious difficulties about the Government providing details of submarine patrols, but some statement is essential. If we do not get clarification, rumours will continue to abound. I cannot be the only hon. Member who has had suggestions put to him by sources not far distant from members of the crew of that vessel.

It is highly unlikely that the reports in some newspapers are correct. The idea that a Soviet Typhoon submarine would have deliberately severed the towed array sonar equipment is extremely implausible. Even if the equipment could have been recovered—which is a very big "if"—it would have been of limited benefit to the Soviet Union.

It seems much more likely that another suggestion put to me contains the basis of the truth. HMS Splendid may have been operating under the cover of a merchant vessel whose anchor severed the cable of the towed array sonar. Whatever the facts of the matter, it is important that we examine the operations of our attack submarines.

I have had only limited experience of travelling in British and American SSBNs, but I recognise that submariners are very special people indeed, and I endorse the tribute that the Minister paid to those who operate our ballistic missile submarines.

Those in our attack submarines, who have the vital task of tracking Soviet ballistic missile submarines, also carry out an important task on our behalf. It is vital to be sure that we are not asking our submariners to undertake unreasonable risks. It has been suggested to me that the HMS Splendid incident is not an isolated occurrence and that there have been similar incidents involving HMS Spartan and HMS Sceptre. If the inquiry shows a need for a review of procedures and methods of operation, the Minister should not hesitate to say so and to carry out the review.

**Mr. Garrett:** The hon. Gentleman knows much more about the submarine service than I do, and perhaps he can tell me whether the HMS Splendid incident put at risk the lives of the men in the submarine. If it did, that should surely be a major factor in establishing the need for an inquiry.

**Mr. Cartwright:** That is what I was trying to say. Perhaps I was not as clear as I should have been. I was

*[Mr. Cartwright]*

saying that submariners in attack submarines, who are tracking Soviet ballistic missile submarines, have a difficult but essential job. I hope that the Minister will give us an undertaking that if those men are put at risk as a result of what they are being required to do, their procedures and methods of operation will be reviewed. We want that job carried out, but we do not want our submariners taking unreasonable risks on our behalf.

The alliance parties have consistently opposed the Government's obsession with taking the royal dockyards out of Civil Service administration and creating an agency management company to run those vital services. We still believe that if the Government are convinced of the need for change, a trading fund within the Civil Service offers a far better solution. We fear that the interests of the Royal Navy and of our national security may be put at risk if the Government give up control over the repair and refitting of warships.

We hope that even at this late stage it is possible for the trading fund option to be pursued at Devonport, even if it is too late to do that at Rosyth. I understand from my right hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) that with goodwill among the unions and the management they could get around a table to discuss the possiblities.

We hope that such a solution could retain Devonport as a unified industrial enterprise instead of its being divided up, as will happen under the Government's proposals, with the Government owning the assets and private owners being responsible for the management. The Government's proposal will certainly involve problems when new capital investment is needed in the 1990s. There is no guarantee that the Government will provide that capital, and as the private operators have only a seven-year contract, they have little incentive to go in for major capital restructuring.

We believe that Government control of the dockyards should be restored at the earliest opportunity, in the interests of the Navy and the nation. That does not mean that we are committed to renationalisation. We believe that a trading fund option offers the best way of protecting the interests of the work force and the national interests.

An open government document on the alternatives to Trident appeared last week. The timing of its publication is slightly odd. We had an open government document in 1980, setting out the Government's proposals to buy the original Trident system, and in 1982 we had an updating document which committed the Government to purchasing Trident D5. Suddenly and magically, five years later, we get a document on the alternatives to Trident. It is not even a decently printed document. It has all the hallmarks of an extremely rushed job and was perhaps not entirely unconnected with a function that took place at the Barbican on Saturday. It seems to some of us to be a major misuse of public funds. Conservative Members constantly complain, often with great justification, of misuse of ratepayers' money by some Labour councils, but the Government are doing the same thing in introducing this document at this time.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Has the alliance not always said that it has been unable to make a decision on the alternative to Trident because of the lack of information? We have now provided that information and the hon. Gentleman complains about it.

**Mr. Cartwright:** If the Minister had provided the sort of serious information on which a firm decision could be taken, nobody would have been happier than alliance Members, but for him to try to suggest that this paltry, tatty, unconvincing, rushed-out document owes anything to open government is nonsense.

The alliance believes that Trident is not an appropriate replacement for Polaris. We have always said that Trident is not a minumum deterrent. It offers a massive potential increase in firepower. If the full potential is used, 896 warheads could be deployed, compared with the 192 of Polaris.

We know that Trident has vastly greater accuracy and therefore greater potential against hardened military targets. We do not need that from a minimum nuclear deterrent. We know that Trident is a fully MIRVed system, as opposed to the Polaris system, whose warheads are not independently targetable. It is therefore an extremely powerful and sophisticated weapon system which in no way could be described as a minimum deterrent. To be fair, the Government have always said that the full potential of Trident would not be used. That raises the question as to why one wants to buy a weapons system as powerful and sophisticated as Trident if one does not want to use it to the full extent. It is rather like buying a Rolls-Royce to go down to the pub once a week on a Saturday night.

The Secretary of State told us on 3 December that the increase in warhead numbers

"at most would be about two and a half times".—[*Official Report*, 3 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. 998.]

The Minister made the same point earlier today. The so-called open Government document tells us that the number of warheads is classified, so we do not know the actual number, but we know of the suggestion in the open Government document that there will be a maximum of 128 per boat. That gives a maximum of 512 on the four-boat force, compared with the 192 warheads provided for in Polaris. There is no information in the document about the kilotonnage of the warheads and not a shred of evidence about their power and destructive capability. We know that the United States has rated its Trident warheads at 465 kilotonnes — twice the original kilotonnage of Polaris warheads, which was 200 kilotonnes. We know that the Chevaline modernisation has substantially reduced the kilotonnage of the Polaris warheads. There is thus a substantial increase in the number of warheads and each warhead has substantially increased destructive power.

The Government argue that they need that extra capacity because of improved Soviet defences. We are often told by the Government that the Soviets possess the only deployed ABM system in the world, which is true, but that system is deployed around Moscow. One has to ask why we constantly allow ourselves to be obsessed by what has come to be called the "Moscow criterion." If one wanted to do so, it would be perfectly possible to inflict unacceptable damage on the Soviet Union without trying, in the awful jargon, to "take out" Moscow.

There is independent evidence to suggest that the Government are going somewhat over the top in terms of the current modernisation of what they like to call the minimum deterrent. The reputable and widely read American journal *Scientific American* produced in August 1986 a detailed assessment of British and French nuclear systems. It accepts that even on the "Moscow criterion" the Government are going far further than they need in terms of the fire power that Trident will provide. The experts looked at a computer model to estimate the levels of damage that British and French nuclear strategic forces could inflict on the Soviet Union. First, they looked at the existing Polaris system with its Chevaline update. They estimated that

> "potential casualties from a British nuclear attack would range anywhere from six to 21 million dead; concomitant losses in the production base would range from 5 to 15 per cent."

In anybody's terms, that is unacceptable damage to the Soviet Union.

The experts then looked at the problem that seems to worry the Government — the improvements in Soviet ABM systems between now and 1990. They accepted that it would certainly reduce the impact of the existing Polaris Chevaline system. Their assessment was that there would be between 3 million and 8 million fatalities and that about 5 per cent. of the production base would be destroyed. When they examined the potential of Trident 2, however, based on the Government's maximum of 512 warheads, they discovered the potential of Britain's strategic nuclear deterrent:

> "Britain would be able to inflict between 24 and 68 million Soviet fatalities and to incapacitate up to half of the Soviet production base. Given the overwhelming number of warheads in the planned British Trident force, the effectiveness of the Moscow ABM system would have little impact on overall damage levels."

That shows that the Government's Trident proposals have far more fire power than is necessary for an effective independent deterrent.

**Mr. Stanley:** I am listening to the hon. Gentleman develop his case against Trident. Does he recall the interview given in "This Week, Next Week" by his right hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) on 16 November, in which his right hon. Friend said that one of the options that he was considering was a very much reduced Trident missile with reduced deployment? Is that still one of the Social Democratic party options?

**Mr. Cartwright:** I shall come to the options later. I notice that the Minister did not quote the words but just gave his general recollection. My general recollection is that my right hon. Friend was talking about options that might be available to the Government if they genuinely wanted a minimum deterrent. The possibility of Trident deployment is not one of the options considered by the alliance.

I shall now deal with the details in the open Government document and the alternatives that the Government have examined. The problem is that all the alternatives have been examined on the basis of the fallacy that we need this massive capacity — a capacity to destroy half the Soviet Union's industry and to kill up to 68 million Soviet citizens. We simply do not accept that. We take the view that all the alternatives have been examined from the wrong starting point and from the basis of a false yardstick.

For example, the open government document suggests that to produce the fire power of Trident we would need some 400 sea-launched cruise missiles on 11 dedicated submarines. Since we do not need the fire power of Trident, that argument collapses immediately. I have argued with some strength that we do not need the ability to destroy half the Soviet Union's industry, nor to kill 68 million Soviet people. That is not a minimum deterrent in anybody's language. If we need 400 sea-launched cruise missiles, where does that leave NATO, which needs only 464 ground-launched missiles for the purposes of flexible response? If our aim is a genuine minimum deterrent, we can manage with far fewer sea-launched cruise missiles, if that is the option which finally meets our needs.

The Government argue that cruise is somehow vulnerable in the face of improving Soviet defences. The Government document mentions the look-down, shoot-down fighters, the surface-to-air missiles and the rest of the Soviet defensive capability, which is certainly improving. But if cruise is as vulnerable as the Government suggest, why are they so keen to rest NATO's flexible response on ground-launched cruise missiles which are still being deployed? The deployment is not yet complete. Why is the Prime Minister so nervous about the removal of cruise from Europe if it is such an ineffective weapon against improving Soviet defences?

Why is the United States investing so massively in cruise missile systems? By January 1986, 21 Los Angeles submarines had cruise Tomahawks fitted, as did some surface ships. By the mid-1990s, all 101 American attack submarines will have Tomahawks fitted, as will 82 surface ships. The United States air force will be deploying air-launched cruise missiles on B52s. By 1990 about 180 B52s will be equipped. The United States is investing massively in cruise missiles for the future but the Government tell us that if we were to do the same we would have a weapon system uniquely vulnerable to Soviet defences.

The Government apparently know little or nothing, and care even less, about the American advanced cruise missile project. They refer in passing to the application of stealth technology. The advanced cruise missile project involves not only the incorporation of stealth technology but an extended range for the cruise missile — between 3,200 km and 6,000 km compared with the 2,400 km at present. It involves the possibility of adding electronic counter-measures and an improved guidance system to increase the accuracy of cruise. It must be an effective weapon system or the United States would hardly be investing in it so heavily.

The Government's problem is that they have all their eggs in the Trident basket. The Minister took my right hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) to task earlier in the debate for suggesting that the present friendly relationship between the Prime Minister and the United States President may not guarantee that any future United States Administration would deliver the Trident missile. It is worth bearing in mind that Trident has only just had its first trials and is not due to be in service in the United States until 1989.

There are others who have doubts about whether it is sensible to depend on the total commitment of future Administrations in the United States to provide Trident. For instance, on 24 January doubts were raised by the defence correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, which is not known for its unswerving support of the alliance parties. He raised the spectre of what he called "enforced nuclear

*[Mr. Cartwright]*

disarmament". He went on to talk of cruise as a sensible option to explore. In his conclusion, he came out more strongly in favour of Anglo-French co-operation, saying:

> "To work towards the creation of what would be a genuinely independent Anglo-French deterrent would be the best of our available choices."

The choice is basically between a cruise missile system and Anglo-French co-operation. That decision will have to be taken swiftly after an election, but it has to be taken in the light of the important and available facts. Those facts include the progress of arms control, the development of ballistic missile defences, the advice of the chiefs of staff, and detailed assessments of those parts of the Trident programme that can be modified for use with a different system. When we have all that essential information, we shall make our final choice, but the choice of system is not so important as the objective. Our objective is clear — that the alliance will maintain an effective minimum deterrent until it can be negotiated away in return for worthwhile concessions from the Soviet Union. Those worthwhile concessions would have to enhance British security, and, indeed, the security of our European partners. That, in my view, and in the view of the alliance, is the effective dual track approach that the British people want — sound defence and sensible disarmament.

**Several hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The House knows that I have no authority to limit the length of speeches between 7 and 9 o'clock, but if hon. Members were to limit their speeches to 12 minutes between now and the winding-up speeches, everyone who has been present during the debate would be able to speak.

6.42 pm

**Mr. Neville Trotter** (Tynemouth): For the life of me, I cannot understand how an Anglo-French missile would be truly independent. It seems to me that it would be wholly reliant on the French. I should have thought that that was an unwise move. The Americans are investing in cruise missiles for the present generation. We are investing in a system that must remain viable in 20 years time. That is an important factor in the decision that we have to make.

I shall not follow the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) down that road, because I should like to reinforce the excellent speeches by my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) and the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) about the serious decline in the Western merchant navies. It is a problem not just for our own Merchant Navy, as has been said by my right hon. Friend and the right hon. Gentleman; all the NATO merchant navies are facing the same disastrous decline. At the Sealink conference in the United States last year it was noticeable that ever-increasing concern was expressed from both sides of the Atlantic about the reduction in this vital part of our defence strength.

It is all very well to talk about a pool of NATO ships. The pool is rapidly disappearing. There may have been enough ships even quite recently, but the decline is continuing at a rapid rate. It is high time that all the NATO countries paid more attention to this serious weakness. The problem is the fact that our shipowners are running commercial firms in very difficult industrial circumstances. The general freight rates are no higher now than they were nine or 10 years ago. It is not surprising that, against such a background, the low-cost Third world crews are enabling their owners to obtain cargoes which Western shipowners cannot afford to carry.

The shippers and freight forwarders of the Western world will go for what is cheapest in deciding who will carry their cargoes. They have no regard to a crisis in NATO or to the need for war reserves of merchant ships. The House must press on the Government the need for action to be taken to help to prevent the further decline of our Merchant Navy. The specialist vessels are disappearing, such as the ships that would be needed for minesweeping, the tankers that would be required in a crisis for replenishing Navy vessels, and so are the cargo ships that would bring the war reinforcements across the Atlantic and provide the vital supplies for our civilian population. Economic forces are rapidly achieving what the U-boats failed to achieve in two wars.

I welcome the plans proposed by the Secretary of State for Transport for a Merchant Navy reserve of trained manpower and his suggestion of contributions to the extra costs of United Kingdom manning compared with ships manned with Third-world crews. However, I impress most strongly on the House the need for the Chancellor to give financial help to the British shipowners. There is no suggestion of funds being found by the Ministry of Defence to help to save our Merchant Navy, but the Chancellor can play his part. He must give the modest help, for which the General Council of British Shipping is looking in investment assistance to our Merchant Navy owners, to help to halt the decline, which is now reaching such serious proportions.

I should now like to concentrate on the ship ordering programe. The House is well aware of my long-standing interest and involvement in the shipbuilding and marine equipment industries. I pay tribute to the Ministry of Defence at Bath and the Royal Corps of Naval Constructors. That body, about which little is heard in the Chamber, is a world leader in many directions. It has led the world in GRP — glass reinforced plastic — mine countermeasure vessels. It has distinguished itself with new propulsion systems, and above all in the creation of our nuclear hunter-killer submarines. Even now, a new engine is being developed for the new class of SSN which we shall see in a few years' time. One cannot stress too strongly the importance to the Navy of the 18 hunter-killer nuclear-powered submarines that we shall possess when the present programme is completed. Only the two superpowers have ships of equal ability — indeed, they are magnificent vessels of great capability.

On the frigate programme, previous speakers have referred to their worry about lack of orders. I should like to re-emphasise that concern. How many frigates the Navy needs each year must depend on the lifespan of the frigates in service, and that depends on the extent to which they are given a major refit during their lives. I understand that it is becoming easier to reprogramme the weapon systems on modern frigates compared with old ones, so to some extent refits are more practical than they were some years ago, but at the end of the day the Navy must not be saddled with too many older ships. The age profile for the future will not be right unless we order a programme of frigates in the near future.

I am sure that we need to order at least two and half frigates a year—preferably three, but at least two and half. Regard should be paid to the full life cost, because capital costs now on warship building will result in operating savings in the future. The new ships are more economical than the old ones, especially in that they have a substantially smaller crew. In the long run that will lead to a saving over the cost of the life of the ship.

I should like to refer to the need to replace the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships. The House knows of the battle last year over the order for the auxiliary oiler replenishment vessel. She is to be a massive vessel—one and a half times the size of the carrier Ark Royal. It has long been understood that there is a need for six of these vessels for the Navy. So far, one has been ordered, and I believe that Swan Hunter will obtain the order for the second in the not too distant future. However, we must go beyond those two. The Government should commit themselves now to a programme of six AORs, which are essential for the upkeep of the Navy in the years ahead.

I welcome the decision that has been taken to retain our amphibious cabability and to renew our amphibious ships. Swan Hunter is engaged on the design contract for a possible major refit of the two landing platform docks, Fearless and Intrepid. I hope that the Minister can assure us that shortly there will also be a study into the possible replacement of those ships as an alternative to their long-term refit. Those ships need to be modernised or replaced by the mid-1990s. We must make steady progress with our plans if this time scale is to be met.

I now turn to consider our landing ships logistics. The Sir Galahad was recently launched at Swan to replace the vessel that was tragically lost in the Falklands. What of the other landing ships? Will the existing ships be given a mid-life refit, or will they be replaced by new build? If they are to be refitted, I suggest that this should be done in series. It would be more sensible and economical for all four ships to be refitted at the same yard one after the other. However, I believe that it would be better to replace them with new ships which would be better and more capable. The new Sir Galahad has much more capability than the old vessel that it replaced. There is thus a possible need for a future programme for four new landing ships logistics.

The main need for new construction at the moment is for the ASS or aviation support ships. These acronyms do not convey adequately the nature of the ship that we are discussing. With regard to the ASS, we are considering a carrier, a very large major capital ship for the Navy. I am sure that this is the most important naval requirement at the moment. Only a carrier of this nature operating helicopters can offer the necessary capability to the Royal Marines for either an assault landing or, as would be more likely, for a landing in the north of Norway, in most inhospitable territory in the Arctic, where no port facilities are available.

The Government have wisely recognised the need to retain an amphibious capability. If that is the case, that need can be properly provided for only by ordering an ASS helicopter carrier. She would be a specialist ship of great importance to the Navy and could be provided either by building new or by converting a second-hand container ship. I believe that better value would be obtained from building a new ship. Such a ship would be a major and very necessary addition to the strength of the Royal Navy, and I cannot stress too strongly to Ministers the need to build such a vessel.

I referred earlier to the need to consider the through-life cost of a ship, the initial capital cost against the lower running costs of modern vessels. I want also to stress the need to prevent overstretching the manpower strength of the Royal Navy. It is not sensible to provide an artificial limit on the number of people serving. Discretion should be given to those running the Navy to allow them to exceed that figure if that is necessary.

In the long run, the problem will solve itself as new ships with smaller crews come into service. In the meantime, however, there is a danger of the Navy being overstretched. We must not be unfair to those who serve so magnificently in the crews of our vessels. They are ambassadors to the world. In his opening remarks my right hon. Friend the Minister referred to the GLOBAL deployment. That was a wonderful goodwill cruise to 33 ports in 26 countries. I also pay tribute to the way the cruise served as a shop window for the United Kingdom defence equipment industry. I am pleased to say that I have heard many tributes paid by the industry to the excellent efforts made by the admiral and his squadron during their round-the-world voyage.

If through artificial manpower limits we ask too much of our seamen we will be in danger of having an increasing problem with the retention rate. The position is far better now than it was under the previous Labour Government, as my right hon. Friend the Minister explained. However, the problem will exist if we are not careful, and we must ensure that there are enough men in the service to man our ships.

The mixed port crewing of ships has in itself led to considerable pressure on crews. When a ship arrives at its home port, many of the crew are far from their homes. In the old days, each ship was manned entirely from Devonport, Portsmouth or Chatham. That is no longer the case. A ship which has its home port at Rosyth for example, may have a crew most of whom live on the south coast. Even if a ship is home-ported in Portsmouth, many of the crew would live in or near Devonport. This separation and consequent travel puts extra strain on crews and is a further factor which should be borne in mind when deciding the manpower strength.

6.54 pm

**Mr. Dick Douglas** (Dunfermline, West): It is not my policy this evening to follow the comments of the hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter). We have had a very interesting and stimulating debate. The Minister of State in his introductory remarks, painted a glowing picture of ordering performance. However, I want to follow the general theme raised by the right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) about the need for a maritime strategy.

This evening we are examining the various roles of the Royal Navy and the equipment and manpower that it needs to perform its task. As I do not believe that we can examine the Royal Navy on its own, I intend to extend the area of the debate to consider the merchant service and the back-up facilities in the royal dockyards which supply a vital service in keeping the Navy operational.

We are well through the decade of the 1980s and we should therefore be examining what our maritime resources will look like in the 1990s and into the year 2000.

*[Mr. Dick Douglas]*

Reference has already been made to the decline of the merchant marine. The second report of the Select Committee on Defence 1985-86 referred to the fact that the

> "availability of merchant shipping for defence purposes remains a matter for concern."

The Select Committee's concern is given further support by an examination of the views of the General Council of British Shipping and we have already heard allusions to that in the remarks made by the right hon. Member for Taunton and others and from the trade unions involved in shipping.

The president of the General Council of British Shipping is on record as forecasting:

> "on the best case assumptions, the UK fleet would in all probability be reduced to around 500 ships of 10 million tons deadweight by 1990 and to 400 ships of around 8 million tons deadweight by 1995. On a worst case assumption, there would be 400 ships of 11 million tons deadweight in 1990 and 200 ships of around 5 million tons deadweight in 1995."

My right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth has said that there is an even more severe drop in tonnage in prospect. The view has clearly been put by the president of the General Council of British Shipping that the worst case assumption was "the more plausible".

The decline, real and anticipated, is made the more startling if we consider—albeit a peak year—1975 as a base. That showed the British maritime tonnage at 1,614 ships and about 50 million tonnes deadweight. The prospect is therefore that over a period of 20 years we should have lost 90 per cent. of our merchant fleet in tonnage terms. As an island nation dependent on the sea for essential imports, our merchant marine is ceasing to be of any significance.

The startling effect of that has already been referred to in terms of the balance of payments for sea trades which was in slight surplus in 1975, but has now a massive deficit of well over £1 billion. With regard to employment, we have seen a decline. Today those on the General Council of British Shipping register — the main source of manpower to the over-500 tonnes fleet — shows a fall from 74,000 in 1976 to 33,000 by the end of 1985. The right hon. Member for Taunton said that the current figure is 30,000.

The Government's response has been related to calling for reports, suggestions of measures to consider the costs incurred in joining vessels overseas and a proposal to create a Merchant Naval Reserve. These are interesting proposals, but they are in no way adequate to meet the challenge of decline. In my view, they are rather like taking an egg cup to clear the bilges of the QE2.

Before considering the Royal Navy of the future, I want to consider the position of British ships and personnel who are placed in danger by international conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq war. Members of the Select Committee on Defence recently paid a visit to the Gulf of Hormuz and witnessed some of the operations of the Armilla patrol. Great credit is due to the support given to Gulf shipping by the Royal Navy, but I hope that the Minister, when he replies, can say some more about the nature of these operations, even in advance of the investigation by the Select Committee.

I doubt whether the nature of the escort is adequate. Further, surely there should be a great reluctance in accepting that the Omanis, the United States, the French and ourselves should bear the costs of ensuring free, innocent passage of tankers when the major beneficiaries are the Japanese, who make no contribution.

Much reference has been made in the debate to the strategic deterrent. I do not have enough time to go into the details of why the nation chose to embark on the production of nuclear weapons. Many of the reasons relate to how Ministers in Governments of both political colours saw the United Kingdom's international political role and have little to do with strategic defence considerations. I concede that, like drugs, once acquired nuclear weapons are difficult to give up. But we have reached a stage in our international diplomatic and economic relations, which coincides with the growing obsolescence of our Polaris boats, where a decision to continue being a nuclear power would be against our economic interest and our strategic role in the NATO Alliance.

I do not argue that the West as a whole should give up the nuclear deterrent. I am arguing that a so-called United Kingdom independent nuclear deterrent adds little to the West's deterrent posture. On that point, I plead in aid the recent speech of the Foreign Secretary to the International Institute of Strategic Studies. Dealing with the defence that we need, he said:

> "The West is faced by the Soviet Union's vast nuclear arsenal. The West must, therefore, have a nuclear capability of its own . . . the West's nuclear weapons have another function too. They impress on the Soviet Union that the West might respond to an unprovoked attack not merely with conventional weapons but also with nuclear weapons."

All the stress of this section of an interesting speech is on the West as a whole and does not argue the case for a United Kingdom nuclear deterrent. When he comes to that point, the argument is not convincing.

I have a question for the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright), who is very learned in these affairs. In what circumstances can he imagine the United Kingdom using a strategic deterrent, on which the Americans have so much influence, without the agreement of the United States? I leave that question for hon. Members to ponder.

Everyone is familiar with the view that if we abandon a nuclear deterrent and desire to play a full part in NATO by being wholehearted believers in collective security, there will be consequences in relation to our relations in the Alliance. Everyone is familiar with the view that it is in American interests to have troops in Europe. Indeed, only the other day in Denver, Casper Weinberger supported that opinion. But it is not a zero sum game. It is in the interests of the Alliance as a whole to keep a physical American presence in Europe. That is why broad suggestions that the United States is not welcome here are counter-productive.

Advances in weaponry give the United States the option of giving up some bases in the United Kingdom, but it should be a matter for discussion and agreement not just between the United Kingdom and the United States but among the Alliance members. As politicians, we must recognise the burden that is placed on democratically elected politicians in the United States. We cannot accept an American presence in Europe and simultaneously be reluctant to provide the necessary back-up facilities to support that presence, albeit with proper control.

The Government have put their case on the relative cheapness of Trident, but they have not taken on board the criticism of this burden on our conventional Navy and the effect on our NATO commitments. Recently, Vice Admiral Sir Derek Reffell, the Controller of the Navy said:

> "To meet the Government's intention of maintaining a Naval Escort Force of around 50 capable frigates and destroyers means that we need a building rate of nearly three per year, if obsolete ships are not to remain in service."

We are nowhere near that rate of ordering. Between 1979 and 1985, only nine such ships were ordered. Hence the stricture of the Select Committee on Defence that the arrears in the pattern of ordering are

> "bound to mean that the average age of the destroyer/frigate fleet will rise, with implications not only for capability but for manpower demands and maintenance costs."

I believe that to be true, despite the announcement in July 1986 of orders for type 23 frigates.

What was more remarkable about Sir Derek's speech was that, although it dealt with prospects for maritime operations in the 1990s, it contained little to comfort those of us who wish to see definite forward planning by and for the Navy. There were many references to studies, but few real decisions. For example, he said:

> "In the mid 1990s, the UK will need a General Purpose Ship to replace . . . the type 42 destroyers."

We are told that the naval frigate for the 1990s is one of the contenders. The feasibility study report is apparently almost complete and a decision will have to be made soon on United Kingdom participation. But, he continued,

> "if for any reason the NFR 90 project should founder, we shall have to produce a national design."

Perhaps the Minister will tell us at least what our back-up position is.

The concentration by the Ministry of Defence on the strategic deterrent is detrimental to the longer-term interest of the surface fleet especially and to our maritime capability, subsea and surface, as a whole.

I have taken up much of the House's time discussing the royal dockyards. I have no doubt that I and my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) will take up even more time discussing the subject in later debates. I make no apology for that. My view has been clear from the outset and on the main thrust I have been supported by all those who have taken time to study the options.

The Secretary of State has almost concluded arrangements for Rosyth and Babcock Thorn and is in the process of handing Devonport to a group dominated by Brown and Root. I was extremely interested by the remarks of the hon. Member for Woolwich in this regard. As usual, the alliance seems to want to have it both ways. He said that he would not take the dockyard back into the public sector, but that he would want a trading fund. I hope that I am not misquoting him. How in God's name can he have a trading fund in the private sector? The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), interviewed from New York — this is the man who accuses the BBC of bias against the SDP and the alliance —said that he would be willing to have discussions with Brown and Root. I understand that he told the trade unions that he is in favour of a Government-owned public limited company, but the alliance is not in favour of bringing the dockyards back into the public sector. It is not just a question of their voting in different Lobbies at the same time. They have a kaleidoscope of views held simultaneously.

**Dr. Owen:** I am sorry that I was not here for the earlier part of the hon. Gentleman's speech. As soon as I saw his name on the board, I came in to listen to him. I am not in favour of a Government-owned public limited company, but if I must compromise with the Government and if I could obtain an agreement to set up a Government-owned plc, I would much prefer it to the agency management proposal. Anyone who has the interests of the dockyard at heart would go for a Government-owned plc rather than an agency management.

**Mr. Douglas:** The right hon. Gentleman is an adept compromiser. The House will have noted his words, as will his constituents in Devonport and mine in Rosyth.

I condemn the moves to bring in outside contractors. The improvements which the Ministry of Defence sought could have been obtained without the disruption and consequent loss of morale and impairment of production which will ensue from the haste of implementation and the lack of foresight in the Government's proposals.

Looking towards the final decade of this century, the House and the nation are witnessing our island, maritime nation rapidly ceasing to be a maritime power in terms of its merchant and naval marines. We are likely to end with no surface fleet to speak of, no merchant capacity for normal exports and imports, no back-up facilities in terms of dockyards and no shipyards outside the north-west of England. Of course, we might have a strategic deterrent that may give us a seat at some top international table, but our voice will be stifled by our international economic impotence.

7.10 pm

**Miss Janet Fookes** (Plymouth, Drake): Even though your predecessor, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has issued his guidance about the length of speeches, it was my intention to deal with only one subject tonight, and that is the topic with which the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas) dealt, the future of the royal dockyards, particularly Devonport. It is fair to say that the past three years have been a cruel burden for the dockyards to bear. There is nothing worse than uncertainty about the future. Many people will be glad when a final decision is taken, even if it is not necessarily the one that they want.

Last Friday, I met representatives of the non-industrial trade unions in the dockyard. They are agreed — I thought that this was probably true of the industrial unions also — that, above all else, they would prefer a trading fund. I carefully thought about this matter, as they asked me to, over the weekend. I must say openly and fairly that it is not a solution that I favour, and I never have done so. I have not changed my mind. The representatives treated me most courteously and raised several issues that I promised to raise in the debate if I were called. As a precaution, I have already sent a letter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence outlining these points in case it is not possible for me to mention them all in the debate.

The union representatives, as I have said, prefer a trading fund above all else, and they will go on, they say, fighting for it to the last possible moment. They are anxious also to know the results of the COMPEX exercise —that is, the experiment to see which is better, a refit in the private sector or one in the dockyard itself. They have asked why figures have not been released during the consultation period. I am particularly curious about them

*[Miss Janet Fookes]*

as well. I hope that it will be possible, before the consultation period is concluded, for them to be given that information.

The union representatives also expressed grave concern about what will happen in practice under the operational defects procedure when a ship suddenly requires repairs and the extent of the defects are not precisely known. They want to know whether there will be delays while costings are worked out on a commercial basis and, if work goes ahead without being properly costed, what will happen it there is a disagreement between the contractors and the Royal Navy about the precise figure to be charged for the work involved. They also strongly made the point that various deadlines have been put off to meet various requirements. They would like a longer period for consultation than the present vesting date of 6 April. They ask why that date should be sacrosanct when there has been slippage in the arrangements over the past two or three years. They dealt with other matters, but these are some of the ones about which they were most concerned. As I have said, I have put the other matters in a letter to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

Although I may not agree in many respects with the hon. Member for Dunfermline, West, I agree wholeheartedly with his comments about the lack of clarity in the policy now being advanced by the official spokesman for the SDP. I fail to see how one can favour the trading fund arrangement and yet say that one is not committed to renationalisation. I hope that I have interpreted the words correctly. I am sure that that is what I heard, and it seems to me to be a contradiction in terms. A trading fund necessitates operating within the Civil Service, and if that is not renationalisation I should like to know what is. The issue reminds me of the character in "Alice in Wonderland" who, when asked what something meant, said, "It means what I want it to mean." That seems to me to be a good summary of the SDP's position.

As I have said, I have not favoured a trading fund. It was good that the present managing director of the dockyard and his senior management put forward their own team and firm to bid for the contract. I supported that move from the outset, although I think I am probably the only public figure in the Plymouth area to have done so. I must say to my hon. Friends on the Government Front Bench that I am disappointed that that bid was not successful, especially when we were told that the various bids were much of a muchness and that no one was absolutely out in front.

I hope — this will be part of my wish for any proceedings that continue after the debate — that there will be an assimilation of the senior management bid and an opportunity for the managing director and his senior colleagues to be involved in the running of the dockyard. That will give welcome continuity. The employees prefer the devil they know to the devil they don't, putting it at its lowest.

I have had contact not only with David Johnston, who is local, but with Brown and Root. The chairman asked to see me when the preferred bid was announced. I detailed various matters that were of concern to me and, indeed, to all those affected by the decision. The amount of commercial work that can be attracted into the dockyard to even out the troughs in Royal Navy work is one of the key issues. If that work can be attracted, it will be good from the point of view of the numbers employed in the dockyard and the economy of the city.

I can understand that possible contractors wish to be wary about precisely how much they commit themselves to, but I hope that my hon. Friends, in this last period before the decision is made, will be keen to pin them down as much as possible on exactly what they might hope to bring in in the next few years. I hope also that my hon. Friends will encourage them to make space available within the yard perhaps for other enterprises to be brought in, particularly people who were dockyard employees and who may now be independent of the dockyard.

I hope also that particular attention will be paid to the position of what I call the ex-Chatham employees. No doubt the House will recall that, when the naval dockyard at Chatham was closed, some displaced employees were sent down to Plymouth. That was a major upheaval for them. They are now faced with the further upheaval in the future arrangements of the dockyard. Obviously, I am concerned for the native people of Plymouth and what may happen to them. We owe them a special concern.

**Dame Peggy Fenner** (Medway): Hear, hear.

**Miss Fookes:** I note that my hon. Friend said "Hear, hear," and rightly so. The position of the people of Plymouth should be assessed carefully. I hope that they will not suffer any further loss of employment as a result of any changes.

I hope, too, that my hon. Friends will press the winning contractor to make use of local purchasing power as far as possible. Under the old system, many purchases for the dockyard were made under a centralised system that did not benefit one iota local traders or the west country generally. They could buy locally and thus boost the local economy. I get the impression from the Brown and Root consortium that it is willing to do that. Again, the company needs to be pinned down firmly.

Arrangements for apprentices at the training centre have always been close to my heart, and there is considerable concern about the training arrangements under the new setup. At the weekend I was delighted to see that the number of apprentices who are to be taken on in the coming year is very much greater than had been thought. I hope that this is a good omen for the future and that the new contractor and my right hon. Friends will look closely at the possibility of placing any new technical college within the dockyard. It contains an enormous pool of expertise. The new technical college and the dockyard would go very well together.

The uncertainty at the dockyard should be ended, but not at any price. The changeover must be conducted as smoothly as possible, with very real care and concern being shown for those who are employed there. It is very much a family undertaking. Generation after generation have worked in the dockyard. I hope that, as far as possible, enforced redundancies will be avoided. If there have to be redundancies, they ought to be by natural wastage, retirement and voluntary schemes.

7.21 pm

**Mr. Ted Garrett** (Wallsend): Hon. Members must have been impressed by the speeches of the two Privy Councillors, who made an impassioned plea for the future of the Merchant Navy. I think that my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) referred to speeches bouncing off Ministers. The right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) takes some beating when it comes to persistence. I have heard him speak on three occasions on this subject with the same degree of skill, enthusiasm and knowledge. On this occasion he was ably backed by my right hon. Friend. If their speeches bounce off Ministers this time, they must be impervious to anything.

The Ministers and their advisers should take note of the position in which we find ourselves. Last week, in a moment of idleness, I was reading about the evacuation of Dunkirk. One of the myths is that the small ships did most of the work. However, it was the large ships—ships of the Merchant Navy, cross-Channel ferries, coasters and the like—that did most of the work 50 years ago. God forbid that that should happen again, but we live in a volatile world. The ships of Her Majesty's Merchant Navy may be called upon at any time to take preventive action or to take action to defend our interests. There are still many interests for this nation to defend. Therefore, I ask the Ministers to say to the Secretary of State for Transport that this question should be dealt with urgently. The Government must stop running down the maritime training colleges. If more ships enter the Merchant Navy, they will be useless unless they are manned by properly qualified crews.

We have already heard in the debate of the need to order type 23 frigates and other ships of that calibre. I was disturbed to hear that the control room on these vessels is being redesigned. That is the key part of such vessels, and if it is to be redesigned, does it mean that the ordering programme will have to be deferred? If it is deferred, will the Minister assure us that there will not be a row similar to that which broke out over Nimrod and AWACS concerning the best design and instrumentation? If the control room is to be redesigned, let it be dealt with quickly, smartly and with the minimum of delay.

The Minister wasted his half hour when he opened the debate by making political points against the Opposition parties. It was a disappointing performance. I should have liked to hear about the lessons that had been learnt from co-operating with other navies. I should also have liked to hear whether the exercises have been successful, whether the public are getting good value for money, whether any faults have been highlighted and which nations are co-operating well. Enormous sums of money are being spent upon increasing co-operation with other navies, but the Minister told us nothing about that.

The Minister was slightly off target when he laid emphasis on the professionalism of the men in the Royal Navy—and, I might say, in the Royal Marines—and also upon the amount of time that they spend at sea. He said that during the last year there had been no record of any member of the Royal Navy having run into any problems on visits abroad. It stands to reason tha the men will not have run into any problems; they are never off their ships; they are never in port long enough. These young men, full of vigour, never get a chance to see the world. That is another reason why so many of them do not enter into long-service contracts. The quality of life is not there. That applies to all the services. Unless service men are given something other than their commitment to a particular service, they will not remain on a long-term basis.

Swan Hunter, one of the prime contractors, is in my constituency. I do not want to build this up too much, but there is a feeling of alarm among the work force. Five of the ships that are being constructed are nearly completed. Of those, HMS Sheffield is due for delivery in 1988; HMS Coventry is due for delivery in April 1988; HMS Chatham is due for delivery in 1989; and the landing ship, Sir Galahad, which was launched in December 1986, is due for delivery in September 1987.

Within the next two years the Royal Navy will have five ships delivered to it on time. The ships will have been built with great skill and efficiency by a loyal and dedicated work force. However, despite the fact that there have already been 860 redundancies, there will possibly be further redundancies. The steel work on existing contracts is already running out. No steel workers are idle, but if redundancies are to be avoided, a flow of work will have to commence shortly. Therefore, I should like an announcement to be made soon about whether the next type 23 order will come to Tyneside.

I emphasise that there is no immediate threat of redundancy, but serious consideration must be given now to placing the order for the next type 23. The Ministry of Defence is governed by cash budgets, and unless the Treasury provides resources this year for the Ministry of Defence there will be a considerable trough in the steel-working capability of Swan Hunter in 1988.

All is not gloom. The outfit workers are fully loaded, but specific worries will develop in the late summer. The outfitting trade is used to peaks and troughs, but it is essential to keep programmes up to date.

The hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) argued the case for the replacement of vessels rather than feasibility studies on Fearless and Intrepid. The Sir Gallahad is without doubt a fine ship. In the long run it will be value for money. Placing orders for ships to replace Fearless and Intrepid is better than redesigning them and putting them out to jobbing just to keep them going another few years.

The air support ship has been mentioned. The Secretary of State referred to it in his recent statement, but nothing has yet seen the light of day. I hope that the Minister will tell us whether any progress has been made in the placement of that contract.

Tyneside has experienced massive redundancies, but somehow the essential skills have been retained. If the Government pursue a policy of replacing old ships with new, if they honour their commitment to three frigates a year and to consider the redesign of the S90, for example, there should be steady progress. For the unenlightened, the S90 argument involves the choice between the long destroyers and frigates and the small, squat frigates.

If we get a decision on that, among other things, we should be nearer to attaining a well-equipped Navy with a high morale, and above all, a Navy which is able to defend this democracy of ours against any attackers, from wherever they come.

[illegible]2 pm

**Mr. Peter Griffiths** (Portsmouth, North): In such a debate as this, the Government receive little praise and much criticism. I shall say some kind words before criticising them.

I was pleased to hear the Minister of State reaffirm the Government's commitment to maintaining an escort fleet of about 50 vessels. I was interested in his comment about

*[Mr. Peter Griffiths]*

that proportion of the fleet which is available at sea within 48 hours. It is significant that, over about a decade, the proportion of availability has risen from 72 per cent. to 84 per cent. However, 84 per cent. of fewer than 50 is still considerably less than 72 per cent. of what must have been almost 70 when the previous figure was decided upon. The number of ships available in an emergency has been reduced.

It is important that we should have a clear picture of how the fleet is to be maintained. The present ordering rate will not guarantee an escort fleet of about 50 vessels. It cannot. Since we are now moving away from the concept of large-scale, mid-life refits, the danger is that we shall have fewer vessels and that on average they will be older.

I trust that a clear announcement will be made about the Government's commitment, not just on the number of ships in service, but on the ordering programme to make that commitment practical.

The possible expansion of the ordering rate, either to maintain the Government's commitment or because there might be an increase in world tension, will depend on shipyards being capable of meeting the demand for warships. They must be able and willing to build them within existing yards and with existing work forces. That is why I make no apology for reminding the Minister that the Vosper Thornycroft yard on the south coast is capable of building type 23 frigates at the price, to the quality and in the time required. That yard is necessary to maintain the Government's commitment to an escort fleet.

The same yard is the national leader in building glass reinforced plastic vessels. It is important to retain the continuity of that yard for the single role minehunters programme. Those vessels can be built at Vosper Thornycroft on the south coast more cheaply than anywhere else. Its capacity could quickly be lost without continuity of ordering. The sheer cost of putting back together the capacity would result in the programme becoming grossly inflated in price.

The Navy relates closely to the civilian population in a city such as Portsmouth. The Navy has for long been welcomed in Portsmouth. It is liked and wanted. It would be a great boost to the relationship between Portsmouth and the Navy if the same vigour, efficiency and expertise which the Navy shows when it is solving a problem on a social occasion in the city were shown when the Ministry of Defence is undertaking a study.

In Portsmouth the Eastney barracks are wasted. This magnificent building is the perfect place to house the Royal Marines school of music. For years we have waited to learn exactly what is to happen. We have heard all the arguments. A year ago we heard that the argument which favoured Deal was not to be given as much weight as originally suggested. We now need a firm and final decision on service schools of music. In my constituency we need a decision on the Royal Marine school of music, which I think should be housed at Eastney barracks.

A similar decision should be taken on the use of land in a city such as Portsmouth, which is densely populated. Portsmouth has a fine rugby club which is 100 years old this year. It uses rented naval land. Long before I became a Member of Parliament people asked whether the Navy might want to take back the land for some unknown purpose. Since 1979 I have asked successive Ministers whether the Ministry might give up the land and allow the Portsmouth rugby club to take out a longer lease or even purchase the freehold. Only a few weeks ago I received the same answer as that which I received last year and the year before that. I accept that the signature was different but the message remained the same. I was told yet again that the study is continuing. Surely it is not difficult to decide whether the Navy will ever require a piece of open land that is currently laid down for rugby pitches. It does not use the land and what conceivable use will it have for it in the foreseeable future? I ask for a firm and final decision to be made.

The relationship between the Royal Navy and the civilian population is highlighted by the relationship between those who serve in the Navy and their families. One of the ways in which the highly commendable improvement in the availability of ships for service at sea has been achieved is by causing sailors to spend more of their time away from port, or at least away from their home port. This has placed an enormous stress on the marriages of young men in the Navy. I am aware of the problem because of the number of broken marriages that come to my notice during my surgeries. We must understand that, in terms of expanding the Navy in response to an emergency, there is a problem in retaining young men after they have been recruited into the service and have developed the expertise that gives them the greatest value as middle-ranking personnel. Young men will be encouraged to make the Navy a lifetime career if we can ensure that the personal services that are available to Navy families when husbands are away at sea are as efficient and sympathetic as possible.

I am sure that the role of the Royal Navy will continue to be a source of great pride to us all, but it would be of great help if the Ministry of Defence would make decisions as quickly as our sailors are called upon to make them at times of national emergency.

7.42 pm

**Mr. Nicholas Brown** (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): It is a pleasure to be called to contribute to the debate immediately after the conclusion of the remarks of the hon. Member for Portsmouth, North (Mr. Griffiths). I am happy to reinforce his criticisms of the Government, especially those directed to their ordering programme. As my hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) has said, these debates are taking on an increasingly familiar pattern. Members on both sides of the House express their support for the Royal Navy and the merchant marine and express fears about future procurement. Labour Members express these fears in the context of the Trident programme. The Government respond by denying that the Trident programme is affecting the availability of resources for conventional procurement, but they do not announce any warship orders. We have a Minister who is responsible for defence procurement but he has not procured any warships, and he will not announce any warship orders during this debate.

When we last debated these matters we were told that the Government's commitment to a 50-ship surface fleet had become a commitment to a fleet of "about" 50 ships. A more realistic assessment suggests that there will be an aging surface fleet of 41 to 45 ships. Before Christmas I asked the Secretary of State for Defence about the type 23 ordering programme. I asked specifically whether it was true that the programme had been rescheduled so that the type 23-01 would go to Yarrows — that is the lead of class — the 02 to Swan Hunter and the 04 and 05 to Yarrows, and that the 03, 06 and 07 had been effectively dropped from the programme. The Secretary of State did not deny this. Indeed, he did not even confirm that the 06 and 07 are still in the long-term costings. Many of us believe that the Government have no intention of ordering these three frigates or an AOR this year.

I turn to the issue of amphibiosity, which is the word of the Secretary of State for Defence. It is a useful way of describing an issue in a word. The House was promised last year a full statement, and in December the Secretary of State announced the design study of the possibility of refurbishing HMS Fearless and HMS Intrepid. The hon. Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter) and my hon. Friend the Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett) have mentioned the alternative, which is a design study for a replacement vessel. There is the even more welcome possibility of building a replacement vessel.

The landing platform dock, with its floodable dock at the rear for landing craft, has been responded to, at least in part, quite properly by the Government, but that does not bring the debate on amphibiosity to an end. There is a need to renew the defence role formerly carried out by HMS Hermes, which is the provision of seaborne air support for troop landing craft. The concept is described as aviation support ships. The Minister has said nothing so far about this when dealing with amphibiosity.

A separate issue is the future of landing ship logistic vessels. The launch of the Sir Galahad was a great Tyneside shipbuilding occasion; the entire community united and there was a tremendous festival atmosphere. Unfortunately, such occasions are too rare on Tyneside nowadays. The new Sir Galahad is not an exact replica of its predecessor or its sister ships, and the role that it and its sister ships have been designed to undertake is the landing of tanks and other vehicles on beaches. The refurbishment of the sister ships should be on the agenda when it comes to a debate on amphibiosity. Unfortunately, there has been no commitment from the Minister.

The Minister would not expect me to let a debate of this sort pass without mentioning the AOR. Tyneside's grievances are fourfold. There is an almost unanimous view on Tyneside that Harland and Wolff took what is known as a flyer in making its bid. In other words, it priced it and did not cost it. Swan Hunter, being privatised, did not dare do that. Secondly, it is our view on Tyneside that public money is being used to underpin the Harland and Wolff bid. Thirdly, it is our view that the promises of rigorous scrutiny of the cross-subsidisation issue do not stand up to close examination. Fourthly, it is our view that the eventual decision on AOR1 was political and that Tyneside lost, just as it did with the type 24 No. 14 frigate.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton** *rose*——

**Mr. Brown:** I shall develop these issues, but, first, I shall give way to the Minister.

**Mr. Hamilton:** Will the hon. Gentleman accept that the view which he has expressed is not shared by Touche Ross, the consultants who were brought in to consider these matters?

**Mr. Brown:** I shall deal with the "independent consultants" and the relationship between them and the Northern Ireland Office, to which they have to report.

First, there is the question of Harland and Wolff's flyer on its bid. The delay in supplying the drawings to Swan Hunter so that it could bid for the second vessel has led to considerable suspicions in just about everyone's mind. The Government's explanations for the delay have been unconvincing. Their different explanations suggest that they have not succeeded in getting their story straight, let alone providing a real and candid answer. It is my understanding — I am willing to be corrected if I am wrong — that the Harland and Wolff design for the AOR was not model-tested. The tender was based on unapproved drawings, which means that they were not Lloyd's classified and did not have Department of Trade and Industry approval, or did not when the bid was submitted.

I accept that it is not necessarily improper to take that approach as a private sector company that chooses to take a commercial risk, which means the high-risk route rather than the more secure route. A private company will have to bear the financial consequences of so doing, but Harland and Wolff is not in that position and is not subject to that commercial discipline. Swan Hunter decided that it would have to take the more secure route, and that led to one of the edges enjoyed by Harland and Wolff.

The cross-funding issue is an important one, and an illuminating article appeared in the *Belfast Telegraph* of 26 November 1986. It revealed that the Department of Trade and Industry would give £68 million in aid to Harland and Wolff for 1986-87. A number of hon. Members have spoken about their shipbuilding communities' traditional relationships with the Royal Navy, and their communities' employment bases are underpinned by the royal dockyards. None of those communities had £68 million for one financial year invested by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Of the £68 million, £2 million will create, according to the article, Harland and Wolff Enterprises—that will be the day — to help the redundant men at Harland and Wolff obtain different employment. That is a worthy objective and I have no quarrel with that expenditure. I calculate that a further £8 million will be spent on redundancy payments. That seems to be a reasonable supposition. But it is legitimate to ask what will happen to the other £58 million and to expect an answer. Will it increase Harland and Wolff's working capital? If so, what restrictions will it place on the company's borrowing powers? Will Harland and Wolff be able to use this money, for example, to bring forward Ministry of Defence work prior to payment? All the other shipbuilding communities will ask: why should the state underwrite Harland and Wolff's recent operating losses and at the same time push every other shipbuilding community out into the cold?

I thought that the position of the Government, and of the Prime Minister, was that the House of Commons could remain assured that the Harland and Wolff bid was "unsubsidised and comprehensively costed". That was the position at least until last December when I had my tiff with the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement. I now understand that is not quite an accurate portrayal of the Government's position. A more accurate portrayal would be as follows: the independent consultants, to which the Minister of State referred, have assured the Northern Ireland Office, which is a not disinterested party, that the bid is unsubsidised and comprehensively costed, hence the phrase. That assurance was relied upon by the Secretary of State for Defence and

*[Mr. Brown]*

the Prime Minister when they gave their assurances using the same phrase—the Secretary of State for Defence in the House and the Prime Minister in a letter to me.

The Northern Ireland Office—this is the crux—is not independent in this matter. I am not arguing that it should be; but I believe that someone who is really independent and beyond influence or pressure should have scrutinised the Harland and Wolff bid and should be monitoring the cross-subsidy issue and progress on the work. No one on Tyneside has confidence in the current monitoring procedure. It allows the Northern Ireland Office and the consultants which it employs to be judge and jury in their own cause.

The Government's excuses and reassurances do not stand scrutiny. The reason—it underpins everything that has happened—is that the AGR1 placement was a political decision. It would have been legitimate for the Government to admit, "Yes, this is a political decision." Had they done so, they would have had an obligation, having cheated Tyneside of its work, to make good that hurt and to bring forward more shipbuilding orders. Shipbuilding is the sole employer in a part of the area that my hon. Friends the Members for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett) and for Jarrow (Mr. Dixon) represent. The Government have broken the employment base of that community with cynical disregard for the people whom they are putting out of work.

Swan Hunter does not just build warships. It is a mixed yard with a long tradition. Only recent Government policy has forced Swan Hunter to look solely towards shipbuilding. I strongly support the points made by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) and the right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann). As I have said, I hope that I do not do any harm to the cause of the right hon. Member for Taunton by endorsing it. I wanted to make some points of my own on the merchant marine but they would be superfluous after those two excellent speeches. I should like, first, to underscore the importance of the issue about which my right hon. Friend and the right hon. Member for Taunton spoke and, secondly, to add my endorsement to the demands for a full response by the Government.

7.54 pm

**Sir Paul Bryan** (Boothferry): I declare my interest as a deputy chairman of Furness Withy and Company, so hon. Members will perhaps not be surprised if I turn for a few minutes to the speeches of my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) and the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan). They have dealt so effectively, so thoroughly, and so often with this subject that there is nothing further that I can usefully add; except to press my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement to answer some of their points.

I say that, not sarcastically, but because last year my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton made a similar speech, just as effectively, and it was not mentioned by the then Under-Secretary of State. The only comment by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State followed an intervention, when he put the responsibility on my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Transport. In one telling phrase he underlined one of our main complaints—that the responsibility for this important subject is spread over too many Departments.

Over the past 10 years we have followed the decline in our merchant fleet. The House will be relieved to hear that I shall not produce a lot of figures, because they have been vividly produced already. The truth is worse than the figures; for the figures do not convey the drain on our reserves of personnel and on management and the lack of new blood in the industry. Against that declining background, management in the industry has retained its skill and judgment remarkably. It has not suffered from spectacular bankruptcies on United States lines. Because management is able, naturally it has had to diversify into more profitable businesses; so famous shipping names no longer necessarily denote the ownership of many ships.

We should note also that many of the ships now afloat were built pre-1984 and under a far more favourable fiscal regime. It follows—this is the bad news—that there is no reason to expect such ships to be replaced by new investment, whether in new or in secondhand ships, as long as management's capital costs net of fiscal relief and other aids are higher than those of its competitors. No doubt we can discuss those matters in budget debates. I should like to make one point, however, because it is the most immediately serious one, about the adequacy of Merchant Navy support for the Royal Navy. Each year since the Falklands campaign we have been assured that the support is adequate. Each year this sounds less likely.

I return to the quotation used by my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton from the PBOS—the planning board for ocean shipping—communiqué on the future of NATO shipping, which I think has been sent to all hon. Members. It stated:

> "The Board concluded that for certain categories of ships the situation is already critical".

Whatever the situation, it must be clear that, left to the free market, sooner rather than later, the Navy will be short of the support that it needs. Surely, in the end, the Government will have to intervene to ensure that some categories of ships are available and manned. However one disguises this operation, considerable subsidisation must be involved in one form or another. A scheme to this effect should be set up now, because, the longer we delay the less likely will our shipping companies be in a position to co-operate efficiently.

One respect in which I perhaps part ways from my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton is his belief that Government determination and wisdom can achieve our aims without great expenditure. I very much doubt that. In some form or another—it might be called a subsidy or a fiscal stimulation—a great deal of money will have to be spent wisely to achieve the required results.

If we do subsidise some categories of ships, the Government should insist that they are built in British yards. That is against past practice, but as our yards now build only 1 per cent. of world output, and our shipping orders constitute only 1·4 per cent. of world orders, a change in Government policy will not shake the world as it would have done 10 years ago. Indeed, I doubt whether it would provoke any retaliation.

I want to surprise my hon. Friends on the Front Bench by complimenting one of their colleagues. I pay tribute to the speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport to the General Council of British Shipping on 10 December. He clearly takes his new job very seriously. He gave a detailed study of the merchant fleet, the like of which I have not heard from a Minister for a long time. He announced three initiatives, and I shall not brush them aside quite as brusquely as did the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth.

My right hon. Friend, on the question of establishing a Merchant Navy reserve, said:

> "The objective is to provide a pool of experienced seafarers in time of need . . . I intend immediately to invite the General Council of British Shipping and the seafaring unions to give me their views on what the form and duties of such a Reserve might be. My preliminary views, and I emphasise they are preliminary, is that the provisions could be very simple: a declaration of willingness to serve, an address, and an annual bounty".

That was only two months ago, so I do not expect very much to have happened. However, as we have not yet heard anything about that, I hope that the Minister will tell us how far my right hon. Friend has progressed in his discussions with the GCBS and the unions, and what results we can expect.

On my right hon. Friend's second initiative, he said that while he had

> "ruled out incentives to shipping investment and general subventions to operating costs, the Government had decided to discuss with the industry the possibility of assisting with the extra cost of employing UK crews on deep sea vessels."

I want to know exactly what that means. Is it something very big, something that will cost a great deal of money, and something that will mean a great deal to our fleet? Perhaps the Minister could elaborate on that when he replies.

8.2 pm

**Mr. Gordon Brown** (Dunfermline, East): The one certainty in every Navy debate in this Parliament is the ever-increasing concern on both sides of the House about the neglect of the Merchant Navy. That was most eloquently described by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan), the right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) and the hon. Member for Boothferry (Sir P. Bryan). Indeed, there is ever-increasing concern about the under-funding of the Navy itself. The gap between its resources and its commitments has led the Minister, implicitly if not explicitly, to admit that the surplus fleet will be reduced to below 50 within a short time. That has led to speculation, not least in the press comment on the so-called towpath papers, about less research and development on behalf of the Navy, a cut in the auxiliary forces available to it, and even a cut in the number of hunter-killer submarines.

With that gap between the Navy's commitments and its resources, it is incomprehensible that the Government, in their attempt to bridge the gap, have put so much faith in the economics of privatisation. It is an untried and untested option for many parts of the naval services. For the royal dockyards, even the Ministry of Defence concedes that it will cost more rather than less in the next few years. To place all our faith in economy by privatisation, when all the evidence shows that, on the contrary, no real savings will result, is not defence economics. It is not even the economics of the grocer's shop about which we have become accustomed to hearing. Nor is it the economics of good housekeeping. It is more the economics of a betting shop—a huge gamble with our national defences, the recklessness of which is nowhere more apparent than with the royal dockyards.

Let us remember what the Government have done to the royal dockyards in the past few years. We had a defence Minister who could not leave well alone. Just a few months after the dockyards had excelled themselves during the Falklands conflict, he decided that ideology required that something had to be done. We then had a Secretary of State who spurned all the subsequent reports which rejected the option of privatisation and chose an arms salesman with no experience of the dockyards or even of the Navy to advise him on future options for the dockyards.

A few months later, the Government rejected all advice. They rejected the advice of the Select Committee on Defence, at which a Ministry official had described privatisation as a high-risk option for our fleet and for our naval defences. They then rejected the advice of the Public Accounts Committee, which at least showed some concern for the problem of finances, being more concerned with financial reality than with the economic theory that so obsesses the Government. Legislation was then introduced, and the Government had to accept the clear legal obligations to consult the work force about social and economic consequences, especially the consequences for jobs and conditions of service. Yet the Government now refuse to enter into the detailed consultations that are so necessary to the welfare of the work force.

If it is too late to persuade the Government to rescind the Dockyard Services Act 1986, it is not too late to make them face the problems that they are creating. We warned them that the costs of this exercise would far outweigh the benefits and that an exercise which began as one with no risks and the expectation of substantial savings would—and now does—involve substantial risks and no real savings, at least for the next three years. We also warned that hundreds—indeed, thousands—of jobs were being put at risk without any financial benefit to the Navy, the defence budget or the Exchequer. In the past few years, a succession of Ministers have given assurances about who will control the dockyards, about the jobs that will remain and about the money to be saved, but the assurances so freely given in the early stages of the discussion have become the betrayals of 1987.

I wish briefly to mention foreign ownership. When the whole business began in December 1985, the Minister told us that tenders would be sought from British companies, and that if any company won a contract and then became controlled by a foreign shareholding, that company would lose the contract. Now, however, an American company is not only a shareholder but the principal shareholder in the consortium that is to take over Devonport. It is ironic that no American private company, let alone a British one, can control an American dockyard, but an American company can walk in and take control of a British dockyard.

From what we heard earlier from the Under-Secretary of State, who is no longer present, that control will be exercised without any real veto written into the contract as to what additional work can be done and for which foreign powers. In the case of Rosyth that is not an academic question, because it is easy to envisage a situation in which control of Rosyth dockyard, which is apparently to be in the hands of the Babcock International plc consortium, could also move overseas as a result of City takeovers and transfers of control. We already know that Babcock Power has become Babcock Energy for the purpose of the consortium running the dockyard. Babcock

*[Mr. Gordon Brown]*

Energy is subject to interest by GEC and may be subject to the interests of another international company. However, there is nothing in the legislation or in the regulations that we shall discuss later this week, and nothing in the contract as we understand it, to prevent control of Rosyth dockyard from moving abroad under the present proposals.

If there are no proper safeguards against foreign control, there will be no proper safeguards for the jobs of the work force. The dockyard shares several similarities with the Navy. It requires a strategic capability, a minimum reserve, and a mix of skills and expertise if it is to be able to respond to the sort of emergencies that arose during the Falklands war, when dockyard workers were required and prepared to work night and day to get the ships and submarines of our Royal Navy out to sea.

There is nothing in the legislation, the regulations or the contract to protect the strategic minimum number of workers that is required if we are to maintain a fleet, especially in the event of an emergency. At earlier stages, we were assured that something would be written into the contract. However, as I understand it, the Minister now regards it as a virtue of the contract that the only mention of the work force is in terms of the numbers that the Ministry is prepared to fund for redundancy. How ironic that the Ministry is now prepared to fund 1,000 redundancies in the dockyard, without saving a penny in the defence budget or in the running of the royal dockyards.

When we began in 1983, I was told that the numbers employed in Rosyth dockyard would increase. However, by 1985 I was told that they would remain stable. Later we were told that 4,000 jobs would have to go. Now we are told that 1,300 jobs will have to go, but the Government will not save a penny as a result of the loss of those jobs, and we cannot imagine that the Navy will be better serviced as a result.

Time is short, but I should like to make another point. When the exercise got off the ground we were told that some measures would be taken to ensure that any losses in manpower in the dockyards would lead to the Government taking additional measures in the regional aid budget, or elsewhere. In one document, we were told that the Minister of Defence wished to discuss with all concerned how the effects of any unemployment

"might be alleviated through the Government's regonal aid programme and other appropriate measures."

Again, the Ministry of Defence has not discussed with my district council, the regional council or, as I understand it, the Scottish Office, how to alleviate the effects of any redundancies that might take place. That becomes ever more vital when one realises that redundancies in Fife have risen at three times the rate in Scotland during the past year. About 3,000 more people are now unemployed in Fife than a year ago, and it is expected that the redundancies in the coalmines and the electronics industry, as well as in the dockyard, are likely to increase over the next month. In replying to the debate, I hope that the Minister will give an assurance that the Ministry of Defence will take the necessary measures to alleviate any effects of the action that it is about to take.

Finally, no other country in the world with a Navy of comparable size would contemplate the measure that the Government are imposing upon the dockyards. No other Government but this ideologically driven and committed Government would contemplate transferring the dockyards to the private sector in the way in which the Government are doing, and subordinating the national security interest to commercial gain. Even under this Government, Conservative Members serving on the Select Committee on Defence have warned about the consequences of what the Government are doing. If this Government will not reverse this dangerous policy, which is unpatriotic and idiotic, the next Labour Government certainly will.

8.15 pm

**Mr. James Couchman** (Gillingham): I am delighted to be called to speak briefly this evening, and I shall be brief because I wish to raise a matter that is properly a constituency matter and which might have been thought to have been a suitable subject for an Adjournment debate. However, tonight's opportunity was too good to miss so I make no apologies for raising this subject.

My predecessor, Sir Frederic Burden, spent the whole of his long career in the House defending the Royal Navy base and dockyard at Chatham against the depredations of those who would close it. He was ably aided and abetted by my hon. Friend the Member for Medway (Dame Peggy Fenner) who I am pleased to see supporting me this evening. Ultimately, the doughty advocacy of that great establishment was defeated by the defence review of 1981, in which Sir John Nott proposed the closure of Chatham.

It fell to me in my maiden speech of 20 July 1983, *Hansard* column reference 432, to make the final appeal during the debate on the Defence Estimates for the retention of at least the nuclear refuelling and refitting facility. My plea failed and later in that session, during the Royal Navy debate, I made a well-received valedictory speech that marked the end of 450 years of the Royal Navy's presence in my constituency, or perhaps I should say almost the end of the Royal Navy's presence, as I shall explain in a few moments.

Had my plea for the SSNs to continue to be refuelled and refitted at Chatham succeeded, there would be no need for me to speak this evening. When the dockyard finally closed on 31 March 1984, the Ministry of Defence retained a tiny foothold in the dockyard and renamed it MOD Gillingham. That small foothold is the waste management facility for radioactively contaminated components from the refuelling and refitting of the SSNs and the burial site for low-level waste alongside.

As I said, if the SSNs were still being worked on at Chatham, clearly the waste management facility would be in regular and continuous use. However, that is not so. The waste management facility was put on a care and maintenance basis when the dockyard closed, and I believe that I am right in saying that there have been no additions to the redundant but radioactive components that are stored in the storage shed. There have been additions of radioactive waste to the burial ground, as the refuelling and refitting facility has been cleared and decontaminated. The decontamination of that nuclear facility's building is now complete and the burial pits have been filled and capped off.

I had hoped, after the traumas of the closures of the Chatham dockyard, that I should be able to confine my interest in those 500 acres to the redevelopment and future commercial and industrial prosperity of the site. Indeed, that was the case until last Monday, when it was brought to my attention that an article in *New Scientist* magazine of 22 January 1987, written by Mr. Roger Milne, suggested that the Ministry of Defence was considering the transfer of redundant radioactive items such as bulkheads, pumps and boilers from Devonport dockyard, where storage is said to be limited, back to MOD Gillingham, for storage on an interim basis. The source for that article was the report of Her Majesty's radiochemical inspectorate for 1985-86.

On being alerted to the article, my reaction was to put down immediately a question for answer last Tuesday, 27 January, and to ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State whether he had any plans for transferring nuclear waste from Devonport to Gillingham. Almost a week later, I still await an answer to my question. On Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Speaker generously allowed me to ask supplementary questions during Defence Questions and the statement on the management of the Royal Dockyard. To those two oral questions, I received courteous but less than illuminating responses.

The article from the *New Scientist* received much exposure on Tuesday in the Medway towns from press, radio and television. That reaction has been predictable. There has been outrage that, having dealt a hammer blow to employment in the Medway towns by closing the dockyard, the MOD should now seek to bring its unwanted nuclear dross back from Devonport to Gillingham. I will not indulge in the ludicrous, scaremongering hyperbole of the prospective Liberal and Labour parliamentary candidates in Gillingham and Medway respectively. Perhaps Opposition Members would like an example. One of the gentlemen spoke of the "catastrophic proposal" which would end the chance of commercial or residential development near the dockyard, and warned that dumping could turn the north of Gillingham into a "ghost town". The other gentleman is quoted as having said:

> "Why the hell should anyone at this time think of dumping dangerous waste in an urban conurbation of a quarter of a million people? There is already a tremendous fuss about dumping low level waste by Nirex in rural areas. But now they are talking about intermediate waste here — it's just incredible."

I shall not indulge in that sort of language. Those outbursts suggest that Gillingham is about to be transmogrified into a second Chernobyl by a wilful decision of some unnamed Minister of Defence official. However, I must make it absolutely crystal clear to my right hon. Friend the Minister that I am upset that Ministry officials should have made their thinking public through its publication in an obscure annual report of the radiochemical inspectorate rather than through proper formal consultations with the local borough council and me. That demonstrates a woeful insensitivity to the relationship between the Ministry of Defence and the Medway towns. I must also make it abundantly clear that in the absence of such consultations I am completely opposed to the transfer of nuclear waste and contaminated items from Devonport to MOD Gillingham.

I spent Saturday morning at MOD Gillingham to appraise myself at first hand of the circumstances in which contaminated waste is presently stored and has been buried. I am satisfied that that facility is properly managed, that those who work there carry out their duties conscientiously and efficiently and that there is no danger from the items at present stored there. But the items at present stored there are mostly cobalt 60 contaminated and have a fairly short half life. They have already been stored there for some years and the [illegible] of having more intensively contaminated material there does not appeal to anyone.

It is a shame that the local liaison committee which operated before the dockyard closed no longer exists, because it would have been an appropriate vehicle for the local consultation which the Ministry thought it might conveniently forgo. Any transfer of unwanted contaminated items should be from Gillingham to Devonport and not the reverse. The great Royal Navy base and dockyard at Chatham is being redeveloped to one of the most exciting development plans in the United Kingdom, if not in Europe. In order not to prejudice the success of that development I must ask my right hon. Friend to set aside any further thoughts of transferring nuclear waste into MOD Gillingham. The people of Gillingham and the Medway towns retain their great affection for the Royal Navy, but they have no desire whatever to embrace the nuclear waste of the Royal Navy at Devonport.

**Dame Peggy Fenner:** Although nine tenths of the acreage of the former dockyard is within my hon. Friend's constituency, he and my colleagues know that for many years Chatham dockyard had a nuclear refitting capability. We were proud and happy to support that work and through the liaison committee we maintained a most wonderful relationship with the people in the towns and the local authority. I hope that my right hon. Friends in Government will find it unthinkable to transfer work from our dockyard, with the best dockyard mateys in the business, to Devonport and to suggest that in return we receive Devonport's waste: That would be indefensible.

**Mr. Couchman:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for her support in this matter and I hope that my right hon. Friends will see us as a double act who command double the attention.

8.23 pm

**Dr. David Owen** (Plymouth, Devonport): I know that two further hon. Members wish to speak, and as I shall speak about a constituency matter I shall not develop other aspects of the Navy debate which I might otherwise wish to do.

The right hon. Members for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) and for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) spoke about the Merchant Navy, and I can well understand that we do not wish to go further into the problems that it faces. However, as a member of the all-party group which is trying to draw attention to those problems, I wish to stress my deep anxiety about what is happening, particularly in terms of strategic importance.

A consequence of the Channel tunnel may be a reduction in the ferry fleet which is an important part of our reinforcement to the central front in times of tension. It is hard to project what will happen to the Channel and ferry traffic on the east coast. It may be more robust than some forecasts have led us to believe, and I tend to believe that may well be the case, but, I am worried that people will not invest in new vessels because of uncertainty. If ever there was a case for Government help, it is to give specific capital help for building new ferries to provide confidence to carry the operators over this difficult period when no one is certain what will happen with the Channel tunnel.

*[Dr. David Owen]*

I recommend that to the Minister as a practical suggestion for maintaining the strategic option of that reinforcement capability from the merchant marine in that section.

It is immensely important to maintain the facility for servicing North sea oil rigs. That aspect of our maritime function is of fundamental importance.

I hope that the House will excuse me if I make a speech as a BackBencher about my constituency. Devonport has faced horrendous problems during the past three years, wholly unnecessarily. I remind the House that under the agency management option, the most recent survey which was conducted independently shows that 6,000 jobs will be lost, plus 2,000 jobs in knock-on effects through the city, totalling 8,000 jobs over the seven-year period of the contract. By any standards that is extremely worrying for a far south-west region which is already facing serious unemployment and has natural difficulties in attracting sufficient industries.

That also raises serious doubts about Devonport management's estimates of how many job losses will take place. Obviously, one has every reason to be reasonably optimistic, but I certainly do not share the belief of those who think that a large volume of work will come to the dockyards from outside contractors, bringing employment. It is a highly competitive market. I see that the hon. Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes) has entered the Chamber. Throughout this exercise she has been hopelessly optimistic about the possibility of outside work. It is helpful to seize any work, wherever possible, but we cannot reasonably expect a great deal of such work in future.

If a private company becomes involved, it is as well that it is well founded and soundly based. I do not understand why there is any criticism of my suggestion that people should talk to Brown and Root. I have no quarrel with Brown and Root per se as a company, and, if it must come to Devonport, we and the city council must live with it and the work force must work with it. The idea that we should wreak vengeance on the company because it happens to be chosen by the Government is a most absurd, short-sighted policy. Our dispute is with the Government and their decision to make an agency management proposal.

I still retain a fundamental objection to the division of an industrial enterprise into two. This is not like franchising some servicing arrangement; this is a fundamentally heavy industry. One need look only at the investment in the nuclear side and in refitting submarines to realise how crucial capital investment is to its success.

I have never forgotten first becoming Minister responsible for the Navy in 1968 and visiting both the Rosyth, and Devonport dockyards. In fairness, at that stage modernisation was already taking place at Rosyth, with the Polaris submarines coming along. Then we faced a legacy of neglect in capital investment that was over a century old. Certainly successive Governments for 40 years had refused to provide the necessary investment.

I fear that the agency management option would take away any structure for modernisation, capital investment and efficiency on which the work force will have to survive in a purely privatised company. The agency does not have adequate funds or the inclination to make the continuous capital investment that is necessary. If the Government do not have overall responsibility for the work, they will not want to invest all their capital, or short capital, in the dockyards. That is the fundamental flaw in the argument.

In real terms, defence spending will decline by £1 billion in the next three years — a 5·9 per cent. cut. Defence spending will be £18·1 billion in 1986-87 and £17·1 billion in 1989-90. What happened to the financial analysis? The forward defence budget estimates that spending on the nuclear strategic forces will have more than doubled, while there will be a decline in the money available for conventional forces. There will also be a decline in the capital account. It is the capital investment that is of great concern to me.

The decision has already been reached on Rosyth dockyard and vesting day has taken place. I regret that decision, and I believe that the Navy will also regret it. We are told that, technically speaking, the options for Devonport are open. The debate on the dockyards may not take place tomorrow. If it does, it will be debated in the middle of the night, and no doubt that is the Government's intention if they keep it on tomorrow's business.

I urge the Government, even at this stage, to look at the question of unifying the dockyard and refusing to go down the path of proposed separation. Industrialists cannot see the slightest sense in that proposal. Everybody has criticised it. The Select Committee on Defence—an all-party Committee—criticised it. The Select Committee on Public Accounts also criticised it. Everybody, apart from Mr. Levene, has criticised that proposal. I do not know of anyone who, having considered the question, believes it to be sensible. The city council and others are trying to fight the proposals.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman can tell us what he did to make the dockyards efficient.

**Dr. Owen:** We took the dockyards away from the Admiral Superintendents. I believe that the Minister has opened up a can of worms by asking that question. I brought someone in om ICI, Mr. Leslie Norfolk, as chief executive of the dockyards to bring in more expertise from the private sector, and he did a great deal. The Mallabar committee, established at that time, considered the long-term structure and supported the trading fund. Ever since that committee report, I and others have supported the importance of the trading fund. The hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Speed), the last Minister with responsibility for the Navy, also supported the idea of the trading fund.

In evidence to the Defence Select Committee, published in a report on 10 July 1985, I said:

> "The advantage of a Trading Fund approach is that it retains a unified Dockyard — assets, management and workforce all being part of an integrated enterprise under overall Government control. If the Government will not take the employees out of the Civil Service numbers count while still retaining their terms and conditions of service, then it would be better to retain the Trading Fund concept with the workforce employed by the Trading Fund direct, in effect the MoD, but no longer part of the Civil Service."

It is clear that that is one option. The other option, to retain a unified dockyard, would be a Government-owned plc. Given the Government's philosophy and the Dockyard Services Act 1986, there is no doubt that the only option that the Government can consider—without losing face — is a Government-owned plc. Even at this late stage I plead with the Government to reconsider this matter.

If the Government adopt the agency management proposal, there will be considerable resentment among trade union leaders and the vast majority of the people who work in the dockyard. They are not militants; they are decent, honourable men. The trade union leaders have fought the proposals with great skill. I admire what they have done. They have been objective and have put forward sound arguments. I believe that the trade union leaders have been treated shabbily. To put it bluntly, the consultation exercise appears to be a sham.

Nothing could do more to rebuild some respect in our democratic process within the House than for the Secretary of State, who has no past history of involvement in the affair, to come to it with a fresh mind and sit round the table with the trade union leaders. He should say that he is prepared to consider the Government-owned plc proposal. At one stroke that would go some way to relieving the work force's anxiety about pension and redundancy payments. The Government would be the controlling interest. Perhaps they would not control everything, but they would be pooling assets with the management. There may be some proposals for selling shareholdings to other commercial companies or the employees. If so, I would not be terribly upset about that. However, I am upset at the proposal to give up Government control. That is not in the Navy's interest.

If we consider the practical arguments we have got the experience of putting the refits out to private companies. Comparisons have been made in the past. Indeed, the Labour Government had such a comparison. The Conservative Government are supposed to be making such a comparison at the present time, but we have had no figures for it. The Navy has been dissatisfied about private refits. Why? The reason is quite simple. It is like taking a car into a garage. People may not know exactly what is wrong until the car is opened up. The same principle applies to ships.

When a ship comes in for a refit, estimates have already been made about what is likely to be needed. However, once it is opened up, rust or some major mechanical problem may be discovered that could not have been anticipated. Under the dockyard system, which operates under Government control, all the work would be carried out regardless of the time, so that the ship was properly repaired. If the ship was placed with a private commercial contractor, it is likely that it would close down the hatches, pretend that the rust did not exist and ignore the unforeseen problems. That is understandable.

If HMS Invincible has a propellor shaft that is bent or some other major problem, it is in the interests of the Navy that a capital ship of that size can go straight into the dockyard, disrupt the refitting cycle and be turned around as soon as possible. The Navy can do this under the present system. Under private control, the agency management would say that it has not got this or that, the cost will be tremendous and it will have the Government across a barrel. The Navy cannot go anywhere else; big ships can only go to Devonport. There is no doubt that if the dockyards were in private hands the Ministry would be absolutely screwed. The agency could charge any price. There is nothing that the Government could do about it.

That is the problem. The Navy has suddenly realised that it has been taken for a ride. The Admiralty Board originally endorsed this type of proposal — look at the towpath papers — but it has discovered the problem. It is clear that the Navy thought there would be savings, but that is not so because it will have to finance the pension fund. Money will be taken from the Navy. The Government are taking £1 billion from the defence budget in the next three years and the Navy will be squeezed and there will be less available money but it will have to pay out more for dockyard refits.

It has been argued that on the basis of the comparison of costs the agency management option would represent a £5 million saving on top of those anticipated by the Government-owned plc option. Thus, there would be £5 million saving on the Devonport dockyard turnover of £300 million per annum. Such a saving over seven years represents 0·2 per cent. per annum. That is well within the margin of forecasting error, especially when one considers that that estimate is in the Ministry of Defence's document, and that it favours the agency management proposal rather than a Government-owned plc.

I have said enough. All sense demands a re-think. OK, we shall not get a trading fund, with people still in the Civil Service. OK, the Government may not give us the next best option, which is a trading fund outside the Civil Service. But pressing ahead with the agency management under the present proposals is folly. The Government will regret it, the Navy will regret it and the city of Plymouth will be dealt a devastating blow. Even at this late hour, I beg the Government to think again.

Perhaps I can say more openly that the Government would get a good response from the trade union leaders. They would be ready to discuss a compromise. They do not like it, but they are practical, realistic men. Their whole life is made up of cutting out deals. If they can go away with only half a loaf, they will do so. The Secretary of State would get the co-operation and commitment of the work force at Devonport which served the country mighty well during the Falklands crisis.

I urge the Government not to turn down a possible compromise, which would give them many of their objectives and get most of what is needed—in the longer term it will probably provide all that is needed — in terms of efficiency and effectiveness at Devonport dockyard.

8.41 pm

**Mr. Jonathan Sayeed** (Bristol, East): I hope that the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) will excuse me if I do not follow him into Devonport dockyard, though I noted that he was the only hon. Member who has spoken about the dockyards who recognised that the Royal Navy favoured major changes in dockyard management.

I propose to talk about frigates and to add my voice to those of hon. Members who are deeply disturbed about the decline of our merchant fleet.

A frigate is fought from its operations room. The action information organisation controls all weapons and information systems for sub-surface, surface and air threats, as well as communicating with friendly forces. It collects, collates and evaluates the threat, indicates some possible responses and presents information to the command with the assistance of the principal warfare officer.

When operating under hostile conditions, the Royal Navy continues to demonstrate its superb professionalism

*[Mr. Jonathan Sayeed]*

and the coolness under fire for which it is renowned. However, to do its job properly it requires the right equipment. As the sophistication of the threat has increased, so the time available for a response has shrunk, to a point where even an error of one second may mean destruction.

Therefore, it has been necessary to automate much of the collection of information and its evaluation to supply the command swiftly with a constantly updated picture and an assessment of the possible responses. As each generation of weapons has been deployed, the action information system has had to become faster and more automated. We have moved from tote boards, plotting tables and PPIs with markers to a system known as ADAWS, which is fitted widely in the Royal Navy. Although that system works, and has worked well, a swifter, more comprehensive system is becoming necessary and HMS Brave has been undergoing extensive trials with a computer-assisted command system known as CACS1. My right hon. Friend the Minister will know that the system has been designed by Ferranti, which is part of GEC, to go into all batch 2 and 3 type 22 frigates and type 23s.

I am told that there is a fundamental flaw in the design, possibly associated with inadequate computer power. The problem has a number of manifestations, but I shall mention only two. The first is its inability to discriminate between urgent and less urgent information. Ministers will know that it was intended that the system should be able to present the principal warfare officer and the captain with a series of problems that require solution, in order of declining priority. The system fails to do that, and instead deluges the captain with indiscriminate information, thus defeating the object of assisting the command in decision making.

The second fault may sound minor, but it is important, as anyone who has worked in an operations room will know. It is associated with the light pens. By "pricking off" a contact on the display screen, a read-out of its position, course and speed—and sometimes other information—can be computed and presented to the action information organisation. However, I understand that the CACS1 can take up to six times as long to present that information as did the old ADAWS system.

Batch 3 type 22 and all the type 23 frigates are being designed to incorporate the new CACS. Though the production of the system has been thrown open to competitive tender, I understand that the potential suppliers are by no means satisfied that they can cure the system's defects.

There are, therefore, important questions that I believe my hon. Friend the Minister who is to reply will wish to answer. First, can the CACS be made to work? Secondly, will it be fully effective in time to ensure that there is no delay in building and bringing into service batch 3 type 22 and type 23 frigates? Thirdly, is the contract with Ferranti a fixed-price contract with penalties, or is there to be another subsidy to GEC?

My next point echoes what has been said by many right hon. and hon. Members. It is referred to in EDM 515, which I believe will garner considerable support. It is, of course, the decline of the British merchant fleet, which is an integral part of the maritime defence of this nation.

Without a British merchant fleet in time of war, our fighting services will be unable to carry out their duties and the country will starve. However, some of the suggestions that have been made for rebuilding the British merchant fleet have been defective, because they have ignored the causes of decline.

In 1970 a total of 21 per cent. of United Kingdom dry cargo trade was with the Community; by 1985 that figure had doubled. Handling times have been reduced by the introduction of containerisation to one tenth of their break bulk figure. Despite the increase by 20 per cent. in United Kingdom oil trade due to exports, the fall in our oil imports has meant that United Kingdom tonne miles are down by 70 per cent. That reduction alone has contributed to the loss of the United Kingdom tanker tonnage, which, in turn, accounts for 60 per cent. of the United Kingdom tonnage loss between 1975 and 1985.

In the 1970s banks thought that they could not lose on lending to shipowners, and in the United Kingdom alone the registered tonnage increased, from 27 million deadweight tonnes in 1965 to 52 million deadweight tonnes in 1975. Last year it was down to 15 million deadweight tonnes.

On the world scene, there is still a glut of ships. Last year there was estimated to be an over-supply of tankers of about 67 million deadweight tonnes, or 34 per cent., an over-supply of dry cargo carriers of about 40 million deadweight tonnes, or 20 per cent., an over-supply by about 30 per cent. of liner shipping, predominantly container trade, and a small surplus in general cargo.

In addition, the current charter rates are nigh on ruinous. The average tanker voyage charter weight fell from world scale 130 to world scale 50 between 1980 and 1985 and the average tramp time charter rate index fell from 250 in mid-1980 to 105 in 1985. When one adds to that the difficulties that British flag shipping has had to face in competing with flags of convenience, which employ Third world crews, which can cost 40 to 50 per cent. less than crews of the United Kingdom flag, one can start to assess the magnitude of the problem that needs to be faced.

The Government were not elected to be a laissez-faire Government shrinking from their responsibilities. While all the wiseacres protested that trade union reform was impossible, the Government went ahead and proved them wrong. On denationalisation, the abolition of domestic rates, the reform of social security, the sale of council houses and the introduction of limited list prescribing, the Government have proved the pundits wrong. In American parlance it is a "can do" Government, but on merchant shipping it is a "do nothing" Government.

For some years I have been asking the Government to get the Community to take concerted action against shipping lines which dump uneconomic freight rates on the market. I was told by Ministers that that was impossible. However, I am delighted to say that on 16 December the Council of Ministers made a decision that will permit the Community retrospectively to penalise those who destroy the profitability of our shipping with unfair trade practices and pricing. At the same time it has taken action on liner trades by permitting co-operation between competitors on common standards and co-ordinated timetables, and at long last it is prepared to countenance reprisals against third parties which restrict access to their water by Community ships. However, the Council failed to agree about cabotage and greater transparency of subsidies.

I say to my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State that as Greece, Spain, Italy and France are unlikely to respond to any suggestions from Britain on bilateral treaties on cabotage, he should mention to the Minister of State, Department of Transport that it is time Her Majesty's Government demanded that the European Court forced those countries to permit our ships to have the same access to their waters as they have to ours. We should use our membership of the largest trading block in the world to force far eastern and east European shipbuilders to compete fairly by prohibiting access to Community ports of cut-price ships dumped on the market. We should use the EEC to force out of business the ships whose quality, equipment, crew competence or crew numbers do not match our exacting standards.

As I believe my synopsis of the problems has shown, all those actions will take time to translate themselves into a reversal of the decline of British merchant shipping. However, there is one action which the Government could take unilaterally which would have an immediate effect. The Treasury could permit a 50 per cent. ship allowance in the first year, with the first 25 per cent. tranche of the writing down allowance in that same year. Indeed, if it were permitted under the rules—I do not know whether it is—that 50 per cent. free depreciation allowance could be increased to 75 per cent. for British-built ships. By doing that the Government would encourage ships to be re-registered under the British flag, ships to be built in British yards and British seamen to be trained to sail under the red ensign again.

Some in the Treasury would protest that it would cost too much. They forget that, although there is an immediate cost to the Government in tax revenue forgone, it is only a deferring of a tax on profits. If they wish to consider the problem in solely accountancy terms — I hope that, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer is an ex-Royal Navy man, he would not—they should remember that they get no tax at all from foreign companies operating foreign ships carrying our goods, nor do they receive any income tax from British seamen who move their families abroad while they work for overseas companies.

The Treasury should recognise that there is a parallel between these suggestions and the effect of high personal taxation. As we have seen in Britain and, more startlingly in the United States, when the upper bands of personal tax are reduced, the net tax taken from the same percentage of the population goes up. I see every reason to believe that a more generous tax regime for British shipping would, in time, result in an increase in tax to the Exchequer, an increase in the invisible balance of payments surplus and an increase in the number of British seamen and ships essential for the security of our nation.

8.55 pm

**Mr. Keith Best** (Ynys Môn): I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) will forgive me if I do not deal immediately with the theme that he advanced so ably, that of the merchant marine. I shall deal with that shortly. I see my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann) in his place. He is the noblest and most articulate advocate of that cause that the House has the privilege of hearing.

There is only one element of our defence forces that is, individually and severally, fully flexible, omni-purpose, worldwide, self-supporting, capable of offensive action and with a deterrent value disproportionate to its cost in its ability to tie down large numbers of adversary forces with comparatively small numbers of our own. I refer, of course, to our amphibious forces. I must declare an interest as I currently serve as a naval gunfire support liaison officer.

In shipping terms, amphibious forces need command-assault ships with helicopters and landing craft and commando carriers with at least a company group helicopter lift capability.

The "Statement on the Defence Estimates" for the past few years tells a sorry tale. In the annexe entitled the "Strength of the Fleet" in the 1980 Defence Estimates one sees under the heading "Assault ships" that we have two, Intrepid and Fearless. Under the heading "Commando Carriers" are the ships Bulwark and Hermes. In the 1982 Defence Estimates there is the same categorisation. There are still two assault ships, Fearless and Intrepid, but commando carriers are down to one, Hermes. In the 1986 Defence Estimates in the category "Assault ships" there are still Intrepid and Fearless, but the category for commando carriers has disappeared from the face of the Defence Estimates. It is nowhere to be found, for the good reason that we have no commando carriers. That must be remedied.

Page 34 of the Defence Estimates 1986 states, under the heading, "Amphibious reinforcement of Norway";

> "Once the United Kingdom/Netherlands force has been committed to operations it may land directly from its own shipping across and over beaches, without any need for ports and airfields. The force has sufficient helicopters and landing craft to enable it to establish and consolidate an initial lodgement ashore. The mobility afforded by these helicopters and landing craft makes the force particularly suitable for operations in North Norway, where land movement is severely limited by fjords, poor roads, steep-sided valleys, bridges, defiles and tunnels, and where airfields are few and far between."

That is a succinct and proper assessment of the ability of and need for an amphibious capability. However, that statement postulates that there are sufficient helicopters and landing craft. I should like to devote a little time to that subject.

There is a need for the helicopter lift. I intervened in the speech of the hon. Member for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill) on that subject. It is important that we get that right. I understand why, in answer to my parliamentary questions, my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement is not prepared to divulge the number of helicopters that is the criteria for an aviation support ship evaluation. I have asked about certain other matters that are regarded as confidential. I entirely accept that. I hope that I am not reading too much into this, but it is interesting that in a parliamentary answer on 2 July last year, my hon. Friend told me that an aviation support ship is now under consideration. I question whether one will be enough, or whether we should have two. Much depends on the nature of the craft — its sophistication and the amount of protection that it may give to the embarked force as well as the crew. However, I am encouraged—I hope that I am not encouraged falsely—by a reply that I received to a question that I asked on 17 December last year, which stated:

> "We shall be addressing the means of providing helicopter lift in support of amphibious operations over the next few months. The number of ships will be addressed within our consideration of the overall shape of the amphibious package."—[*Official Report*, 13 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. *157*.]

*[Mr. Keith Best]*

I hope that that means that there is more than one ship in contemplation, in the role of aviation support ship. When he replies, will my hon. Friend the Minister say when the results are likely to be reported to the House?

Swan Hunter will complete the study into extending the lives of Fearless and Intrepid, the two assault ships, this summer. As for feasibility studies into the option of building new ships, letters have been sent to some 80 firms asking whether they wish to participate in the work. It is not planned to complete the replacement studies until summer 1988, with an evaluation taking about a further year. That is a lengthy evaluation. Does that not mean that, because decisions will have to be taken fairly soon for the replacement of those ships, but bearing it in mind that by the summer the evaluation of the extension of the ships' lives will have taken place, the inevitable conclusion must be that the decision has already been taken? The ships will not be replaced, but their lives will be extended. Perhaps I have a suspicious mind. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister can gainsay me in my deduction and in my assessment of the statements in the parliamentary answers that I have received.

Notwithstanding the questions that I have for my hon. Friend, I am fully confident, that they will be fully answered. I congratulate the Government on having given a clear commitment to amphibious forces. However, in due course it must be matched by action. I hope that when the right hon. Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies) speaks, he will be able to do slightly better than his hon. Friend the Member for Clackmannan. I hope that, rather than say that he cannot give a commitment, he will give a commitment from his party to one, or at least one, aviation support ship. He is able to give commitments about expenditure that he says he will save from the Trident submarine programme, so surely he can give us a similar commitment in respect of our amphibious forces which, as I said, are one of the most important elements of our defence forces, not least because it is the only out-of-NATO area offensive capability that we have, which is disproportionate in its capability as a deterrent to tie down a large number of opposing forces.

I now refer to our surface fleet numbers. I wonder what the judgment will be on the United Kingdom by the study of the major NATO commanders into maritime force requirements. That study is continuing. I ask my hon. Friend the Minister to let us know when it will be completed. The United Kingdom makes by far the largest contribution to the NATO surface naval presence in the eastern Atlantic and the Channel of any European NATO member. That contention must not in any way be used as an excuse for any reduction in the size of our surface fleet.

Of any nation, we have the most to lose by having an inadequate fleet. We are an island people whose livelihood and salvation has been based on the sea. Other European NATO members are continental land powers. We are a maritime nation and we must not lose sight of that. I hope that any comparison of the size of fleets between ourselves and other European NATO members will not be used as a persiflage or covering to show that we should have a fleet of a parity with other European NATO members which have traditionally been land-based continental powers rather than sea-based powers. We must continue to conduct our defences as a sea-based power, for the reasons which hon. Members have advanced so ably this evening and which I do not wish to reiterate now.

The size of our surface fleet within the coast constraints which must necessarily follow—we are beginning to see the constraints for the first time this year after the continuing NATO commitment of a 3 per cent. real increase and we are now having to face some hard facts—may depend on our new frigate. Will it be a specialist frigate such as the type 23 with its towed array sonar, or a more general purpose frigate? I hope that we are considering the latter.

If we are considering a more general-purpose frigate, I trust that, notwithstanding the fact that we may have lost the first battle in the campaign, the whole campaign has not been lost for the S90 short fat hull, which was referred to earlier. That hull may not have been appropriate for the type 23 frigate. I accept that now, although I argued strongly that it should have been a contender for the type 23. The type 23, with its specialist role, its quietened hull, high engine to diminish noise levels, and its very specialist role, was not especially appropriate for the S90. That hull is far more appropriate for a general-purpose frigate.

However, the House should know that no evidence was presented to the Marine Technology Board that the performance of the S90 frigate when operating with the towed array sonar had been addressed. In effect, that consideration was not made, although most of us accept that the S90 was probably inappropriate for the type 23. The fact that it may have been inappropriate for the type 23 with its specialist role, does not in my judgment invalidate the S90 for consideration for a future frigate programme.

The Lloyd's Register of Shipping under the chairmanship of Mr. Macleod has agreed to conduct an inquiry into hull forms for frigates and destroyers. That report should be ready in six months or nine months time—at least that was the judgment of my hon. Friend the Minister of State in December. Perhaps he can update us and give a more precise date of when that study will be completed.

Together with seven other NATO nations, the United Kingdom participated in a 15-month joint feasibility study completed towards the end of 1985 called "The NATO Frigate Replacement Programme (NFR90)". The results of that study have been evaluated and we are moving towards the next phase called "project definition". A decision is expected by the middle of this year.

Will the United Kingdom put forward the concept of a short fat hull in view of its equal seaworthiness, larger weapons platform, larger radar horizon and cheaper cost? I appreciate that we must await the result of the inquiry into hull forms. If that inquiry comes forward with a good bill of health for the S90, I hope that that will be carried forward by the Government into "The NATO Frigate Replacement Programme (NFR90)" in the project definition stage. I believe that the S90 would be a cost-effective way of providing a future frigate for this country and for the rest of NATO.

Like my hon. Friend the Member for Tynemouth (Mr. Trotter), who mentioned the speech made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport to the General Council of British Shipping, I welcome my right hon. Friend's new-found enthusiasm for finding answers to the problems of our merchant marine. But that new-found enthusiasm is due almost exclusively to the consistent pressure from speeches, and now publications, of my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton. As a classical scholar, he will recall that, 2,000 years ago, Senator Cato consistently said the same thing: "Delenda est Carthago" —Carthage must be destroyed. That is the only thing for which he will be remembered. Carthage was indeed destroyed, so the message got home. There is much to be said for one constant message. My right hon. Friend has been responsible for one constant message; and it looks as though it is getting home.

I shall not deal with the statistics or the analysis of decline of our merchant fleet but merely offer two solutions. The first must be fiscal. In the Adjournment debate of 25 November 1982, initiated by my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton, entitled "Merchant Fleet", Mr. Iain Sproat, whom the whole House will welcome back after the general election, used this as his first and most important argument in relation to what the Government were doing to support our merchant fleet and to secure its future:

> "We have a corporation tax regime that encourages investment in shipping."—[*Official Report*, 25 November 1982; Vol. 32, c. 1106.]

That was said in 1982; the encouragement was removed in 1984. The central argument that was deployed in that debate in 1982 was removed by subsequent fiscal legislation.

In 1985, the *British Shipping Review* said this:

> "To those in the industry one of the most frightening features of the last decade has been the degree of apparent indifference to and lack of understanding of the future of the shipping industry shown by the nation, public and politicians alike. In a world in which most major shipping countries—including those most wedded to free enterprise—afford considerable support to their shipping industries by way of tax concessions, subsidies and cargo reservation, successive British Governments have done little but express sympathy. Indeed, the Budget of 1984 actually cut heavily into the special capital allowances which were the only significant support the shipping industry had previously enjoyed. Happily there have been signs in the past year of a reawakening of public and Government concern . . . Nevertheless, time is running out and early and decisive action is needed to put British shipping on a par with its competitors and so generate the flow of future investment required to enable the British merchant fleet to equip itself with the ships that will be needed in future years. The essential point here is that with capital costs sometimes representing half the cost of running a modern ship, fiscal regimes matter enormously in the competitive equation, especially when, as in the UK, other forms of aid and protection are lacking."

The ninth report of the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Communities, which has already been mentioned in the debate, advocated assistance to encourage the provision of special features during the building of ships which would make them more readily adaptable or suitable for military purposes. What is being done about that? What Government input is there at the design stage as well as at the building stage of merchant ships to ensure that they are more readily adaptable or more suitable to undertake a military role in the event of their being called upon so to do?

My hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East summarised some of the reasons for the decline in our merchant fleet. He mentioned the problem of oil tankers. I can speak from personal experience because in Anglesey, in my constituency, there is a single buoy mooring half a mile off the port of Amlwch. That single buoy mooring was positioned to accommodate super-tankers that could not get into port to discharge their oil. Unfortunately, at the time it was introduced, it was almost immediately redundant, and hung by a slender thread for years thereafter. Shell has now decided to close it down altogether. That is particularly sad for my constituency, because the quid pro quo basis for that single buoy mooring was an annual payment to the Ynys Môn borough council of some 0·5 million. With that money, the Ynys Môn borough council built leisure centres on the island and many other assets that presently are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike in my constituency. It is a major loss, but it was inevitable because the day of the super-tanker was doomed, for the reasons that were advanced by my hon. Friend.

A tremendous number of old hulks are rusting, lying up, and unable to be sold. Again, I can speak from personal experience because the port of Holyhead is owned by Sealink. Mr. Jim Sherwood himself is suffering a grave disadvantage at present because of the number of rusting hulks that are laid up.

All the problems of the decline of the merchant marine fleet cannot be laid at the Government's door, but the stimulus for recovery can and must come from the Government. I hope that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State will say something about that matter when he replies. As I said to my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton, Carthage finally was destroyed—the prophecy came true—because its continuance was regarded as inimical to the very survival of Rome. In a positive way the continuance of our merchant fleet is just as critical to the survival of the British people. We must act now or face the inevitable consequences.

9.17 pm

**Mr. Denzil Davies** (Llanelli): This debate has had four themes: the rapid decline of our Merchant Navy, the sterile debate between the Government and the alliance about Trident, the concern about the royal dockyards and their future and, finally, the funding of the Royal Navy in particular in relation to the type 23 frigate and, of course, the amphibious northern flank commitment to Norway. Many hon. Members have spoken about the decline of the Merchant Navy. The right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann), my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) and other hon. Members made strong and important speeches. This is the third or fourth Navy debate in which speeches of that kind have been made, as well as during debates on the Defence Estimates. Nothing has been done by the Government. It is not a party matter, as was pointed out. The decline goes on, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth pointed out with the figures that he put before the House.

I am told that the Channel tunnel also could accelerate the decline of the merchant fleet if it replaces shipping in the Channel.

In an interesting speech, the hon. Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) set forth various measures that need to be taken. I do not think any hon. Member is under the illusion that it will be easy to arrest the decline. It requires a combination of defence, industrial, commercial, and financial policies. The hon. Member also mentioned capital allowances. As he knows, it was his right hon. Friend the then Chancellor who did away with capital allowances and exacerbated the problem. The problem is that there is no co-ordination and no lead Department.

*[Mr. Denzil Davies]*

The Ministry of Transport cannot be the lead Department. The only way to arrest the serious decline of our merchant fleet is by co-ordination.

The Minister of State for the Armed Forces spent a considerable amount of time on the latest open document on Trident, and the hon. Member for Woolwich (Mr. Cartwright) tried to answer the Government's arguments about Trident, but what was said about Trident related more to votes than to defence. The Government attempted to justify their purchase of Trident, although everybody knows that they have no option but to buy the latest submarine ballistic missile from the United States. At one time it was to be the C4, which, it was said, would be splendid for our purposes. Then the production line for the C4 ran out and we had to buy the D5. Again reasons were found for purchasing the D5. If the Americans were to decide tomorrow not to have the D5 but something called the E6, the Government would buy the E6 and there would be another open document to justify the E6 as the best alternative for Britain.

It would be much more honest if the alliance were to say that they too favour Trident. The alliance is trying to save the face of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen), who came out strongly against Trident. Perhaps he regrets doing so now; I do not know. The alliance's attempt to find an alternative—either an Anglo-French missile or a version of cruise — is dishonest. The honest course for the alliance would be to say that it favours Trident.

Does it make any sense for Britain to go for a third generation of British nuclear weaponry? I do not believe that it does, for many reasons, including the fact that whatever alternative is chosen would not cost much less than Trident and the money would still have to be found from a declining defence budget. The choice has to be made between a weapon of so-called last resort and a conventional capability within NATO. That choice cannot be fudged, nor should it be fudged.

My hon. Friends the Members for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) and for Dunfermline, West (Mr. Douglas), the right hon. Member for Devonport and the hon. Member for Woolwich referred to the dockyards. I am unable to understand why it is not possible to run the dockyards within the public sector as a commercial organisation by means of a trading fund. A trading fund worked well for the royal ordnance factories. The Royal Mint probably operates by means of a trading fund. Small amendments may be needed to the Act relating to trading funds so that it can be applied to the dockyards. That would allow for the commercial discipline that a trading fund could provide within the Civil Service. It would not be necessary to go as far as having a public limited company. In that case it would not be a trading fund; it would be simple commercial accounting. There is no magic about a trading fund. It would provide commercial funding and a profit and loss account for the operation of the dockyards. I hope that the Government will think again. Not to do so would not make any sense.

The right hon. Member for Devonport said that there was no sense in splitting the ownership of assets away from the use of those assets. That is a fundamental argument against the Government's case. We are not dealing with the franchise of a fast food chain. These enormous assets will not be owned by the users of those assets. There will be no incentive, therefore, for the users, whose contract will come to an end within seven years, to prevent the depletion of those assets. They should work the assets for all they are worth and create an income profit, knowing that it is not necessary to replace the capital assets, especially if the contract is not renewed. The Government should think. They should not go ahead, but decide that it is possible to run the dockyards through a trading fund.

The consultation which the Act demands has not taken place. There [illegible] been no discussion with the trade unions on the economic and social consequences of what is to happen. In an earlier debate the Under-Secretary of State said that there could be no such consultations because the issues were confidential between the Government and the company that would take over the dockyards. Under the Act the Government have an obligation to consult the trade unions and employees on the social and economic consequences. The Government are shielding themselves behind confidentiality, but they have a legal duty to consult.

**Mr. Douglas:** Is my hon. Friend aware that my hon. Friend the Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown) and myself met the Prime Minister last Thursday when we received an assurance that she was concerned about not disclosing to the trade unions, particularly at Rosyth, the impact of possible redundancies?

**Mr. Davies:** I was not aware of that meeting, but I am aware that the obligation under the Act is clear. The Government cannot transfer, hide behind or shift their legal obligation by saying that the matter is confidential between themselves and the contractors. I hope that the Under-Secretary will deal with the matter, if not tonight when we debate the orders, because it is causing anxiety to employees.

The figures for savings are dubious. For the same reasons as the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport gave, I do not believe that there will be any savings. I believe that the cost will be more because the contractor will be in a monopoly position and be able to demand from the Government a higher price for emergent work — for work which no one thought would be needed. At the end of seven years I think that the dockyards operation will have cost more.

My next agrument is about the funding, or underfunding, of the Royal Navy. The hon. Member for Beverley (Sir P. Wall) was interesting until he came to the political knockabout. I tend to agree with him when he bemoans having the service debates towards the end of the financial year, a long way from the publication of the Defence Estimates which we debate close to the beginning of the financial year. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is aware of the public expenditure White Paper. It does not set out the different funding requirements of the services, but that White Paper, which was published about a month ago, makes one fact crystal clear—there will be cuts of £1 billion over the next three years in the defence budget. They will not be cash cuts but real cuts, after taking the inflation rate into account. Perhaps the figures are optimistic, since it is always different to work out which inflation rates should be applied to defence expenditure.

It appears that spending will be reduced by £1 billion over the next three years. If a Tory Government admit in an election year, perhaps, that they will impose cuts amounting to £1 billion in the defence budget, what will they do if they are re-elected and they are faced with the enormous problem of trying to fund the Trident project with a declining budget?

How much of the cut of £1 billion will come from the Navy's budget? Perhaps we shall find the answer to the question when we read the new defence White Paper. Leaving aside Trident, the Navy must face the prospect of declining expenditure and cuts in various areas of its budget.

My hon. Friends the Members for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett) and for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) and others have talked about the type 23 frigate. I shall quote paragraph 98 of the report of the Select Committee on Defence of 1986, which states:

"In view of the decline in resources it will be remarkable if this average"—

that is the average of ordering three new type 23 frigates a year, and we are already way behind it—

"is achieved for a force of 50 vessels in five years' time."

No one really believes what the Government are saying about this ordering programme. I do not think that even Ministers believe that the Government will be able to maintain in the 1990s a 50 escort, frigate and destroyer modern Navy that is based on the ordering pattern for type 23s that the Government have talked about.

Several economists have come to the conclusion that by 1990 or 1991 we are likely to see defence expenditure fall back to about 4·5 per cent. of gross domestic product. They have come to this view having studied the Government's figures. Defence expenditure currently is 5·2 per cent. of GDP. If the economists are right, how will the Government be able to fund Trident and maintain the expenditure that will be needed for a 50-warship navy? I do not think that anyone believes that it will be possible to do that.

The House will remember that one of the consequences of Sir John Nott's defence review was that Chatham dockyard was closed. I have considerable sympathy for the hon. Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman), who has said that the Government closed the dockyard in his constituency and are now considering dumping nuclear waste in that area. The various options that are before us were with us in 1980 or 1981, and I should like to know the cost now of a type 23 frigate. It is probably about £125 million, and there are many who say that it is even higher. In June 1981, Sir John Nott said:

"Secondly, we can maintain our surface fleet at its present full strength only through a continuous programme of refits and major mid-life modernisations, requiring a huge and costly dockyard infrastructure. Typically, it can now cost £70 million"—

I do not think that that was the correct figure—

"to modernise an old 'Leander' frigate, which is actually more than our target cost for the new type 23 frigate."—*[Offical Report,* 25 June 1981; Vol. 7, c. 389.]

That is a quotation that I used in my speech on 19 July 1982.

What is the cost of a type 23 now? Is it £125 million, £130 million or £140 million? It was designed as a throw-away frigate, a frigate that would not need mid-life modernisation, but that was because the dockyards would not be available to carry out that sort of modernisation. Who will throw away a frigate that cost £125 million? We shall hang on to the frigates, even the ones we have now, and they will become older and older and less effective because of the Government's policies. I shall not give the type of commitment that the hon. Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Best) wants. It certainly appears that Fearless and Intrepid need to be replaced and that there needs to be some type of air support. I do not know how much that would cost. Indeed, I do not think that the Government know. The Government will not be able to pay the full price of those orders and have 50 frigates and have Trident. A choice will have to be made.

I fear that we shall resile from the Norwegian commitment, just as we are resiling from the Danish commitment. Our commitment to Denmark may not be major or considered very important—I raised this point during the speech of the Minister of State for the Armed Forces — but it is a commitment to the Baltic approaches. The Government are negotiating about reducing that commitment. We are told that nothing has been done unilaterally—of course not.

**Mr. Best:** I appreciate that the right hon. Gentleman cannot give me a commitment about Fearless and Intrepid and an aviation support ship. However, can he give a commitment that the Labour party will not resile from the Norwegian commitment?

**Mr. Davies:** I can give that commitment, because I believe that it is possible to fund that commitment with a budget if Trident has been cancelled. I do not believe that it is possible fully to fund that commitment and have Trident. That is our position.

I do not think that any Government have faced up to the question of what role the Royal Navy, especially the surface fleet, should have. The Navy cannot possibly have the type of blue water role, with power all over the world, that some people romantically want. Clearly, the Navy would occasionally have a role in the Gulf, a Belize guardship role and obviously a role in the Falklands, but it must have a role in the European theatre. So long as the Government and NATO subscribe to a defence policy—we considered this in the Army debate—that foresees a six-day or seven-day conventional war in Europe, which then becomes nuclear, there will be question marks over the role of the surface fleet. If that war is to be so short, one of the Navy's traditional roles—to protect supplies crossing the Atlantic—will not be needed. We must face up to that. If our defence strategy is flexible response and forward defence and nothing else, people will ask, as Sir John Nott in effect did in his defence review, "Why on earth do we need a surface fleet?" Of course the submarine navy performs a different role. We need to think in terms of moving from the idea of battlefield nuclear war in Europe to the idea of — God forbid — a longer conventional war. In that case, of course there is a need for the Navy to protect the sea routes and do the type of work that it is has provisionally done for Britain. That fact will not be faced this side of the election, but it will have to be faced after the election. If the Conservative party wins, the Navy will be decimated in terms of its surface fleet. We are buying Trident and the logic is that, by subscribing to the battlefield role in Europe, we do not need a surface navy of the type that I believe we should have. For all these reasons, the Navy's future under the Conservative Government is not happy or rosy.

9.38 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence Procurement (Mr. Archie Hamilton):** It gives me great pleasure to close my first Navy debate. The hon. Members for Clackmannan (Mr. O'Neill), for Woolwich

*[Mr. Archie Hamilton]*

(Mr. Cartwright) and for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) and my hon. Friend the Member for Plymouth, Drake (Miss Fookes) have referred to the royal dockyards and it would be remiss of me not to respond. As we have said on so many occasions, there have been several studies over the past two decades, under successive Administrations, of the organisation of the dockyards. The right hon. Member for Devonport made a point about the Mallabar report, which suggested that we should have a trading fund. It is significant that we do not have a trading fund. One point that has not been disputed in all that time is that we need fairly fundamental changes in the way in which the dockyards are run.

We have seen Administrations come and go; we have seen the studies come and go; and we have seen the years come and go. There has, however, been comparatively little real change in the dockyard organisation. Still, there is general agreement—even from the trades unions—that there is a need for change.

We can either go on debating change for the next two decades, or we can take the view that, if change is to be made, it should be made now. That is the view the Government have taken, and it remains our view. As the House knows, we have now signed a contract with Babcock Thorn Ltd. for the operation of Rosyth dockyard over a seven-year period from April this year. So far as Devonport is concerned, we have announced Devonport Management Ltd. as our preferred contractor for the future operation of Devonport dockyard. We have, however, taken no final decision on Devonport, and will not do so until after we have carefully considered any views the trades unions wish to put to us and until we have had a meeting with them on 13 February.

To hear opponents of the scheme talk, one might be forgiven for thinking that they, and they alone, had an interest in the needs of the fleet and in the nation's security. The Government's record on defence is second to none, and we need no lessons from the Opposition. As for the needs of the Navy, Opposition Members may have heard from the trades unions that at their meeting with the Navy Board recently, they were told that the board saw commercial management as the best way forward, not only for the Royal Navy but for the dockyards and their work forces.

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** Will the Minister confirm that no report, other than the Levene report, has recommended the option that he is now proposing? Will he further confirm that in his paper on the Government-owned plc, the Ministry of Defence envisages a reduction in the standards of refits, and lengthier gaps between refits, for some of our major naval vessels? Will he now tell us how many jobs he has signed away in the contract between the Government and Babcock Thorn?

**Mr. Hamilton:** As we have made quite clear, the Government-owned plc would have led to the loss of jobs because of the fall in work load. In fact, Babcock Thorn has said that it can improve on the Government's forecasts.

What is the response of the Opposition to such a clear commitment to commercial management from the most senior officers in the Royal Navy? Quite simply, they ignore it, as they have ignored much of the supporting argument we have presented over the many months. Instead, they claim that the dockyards are being sacrificed on the alter of dogma.

By careful negotiations, we have secured arrangements which we believe will produce over £320 million in savings to the taxpayer over the next 10 years, with more thereafter. We have taken steps to ensure that our strategic interests are protected, and that includes safeguards on foreign control. We are providing for a realistic separation of customer from supplier, and for maximum competition between the two dockyards and with the private sector generally. We are allowing local managers the freedom to manage, without public sector constraints. We are providing for the dockyards to become more efficient so that they can compete for, and I hope win, commercial and naval work. In that way, they will secure jobs which—let there be no doubt—will not be secured by the declining naval refit and repair programme.

If it is dogma to want to make the dockyards more efficient; if it is dogma to want to save taxpayers' money; if it is dogma to want to see new work introduced to the dockyards and to minimise job losses—I for one plead guilty to dogma.

Finally, I refer to the Dockyard Services Act. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is perfectly well aware of his obligations under the Act to inform and consult the unions. He made it quite clear, when, on 27 January, he announced the contract with Babcock Thorn, that he was satisfied that it complied with such duties as the Act imposed upon him. It is notable that the noble Lord Denning, in another place, who pressed for the inclusion in the Bill of the provisions relating to informing and consulting the unions, has commented that there had been intensive consultation on the options, that we had done all that was reasonably necessary and that, on the choice of contractor, we had gone through all the proper information and consultation procedures.

**Mr. Douglas:** The Minister will have heard my intervention in the speech of my right hon. Friend the Member for Llanelli (Mr. Davies). Can he say when the unions at Rosyth can expect to be given accurate figures for redundancies under the Babcock Thorn contract?

**Mr. Hamilton:** That is the responsibility of Babcock Thorn and I should have thought that the company would open negotiations with the trade unions quite soon. All that I can reassure the hon. Gentleman about is that those redundancies will be fewer in number that we forecast under the Government-owned plc.

**Mr. Gordon Brown:** I apologise, Mr. Speaker, for intervening again. However, will the Minister tell us whether, as part of the contract between the Government and Babcock Thorn, the Government have agreed to fund a number of redundancies, and if so how many?

**Mr. Hamilton:** We do not reveal the precise number, although we have agreed that there will be a certain number of redundancies.

It is time to stop arguing and to look to the future. We must work to make commercial management a success in the interests of all concerned, the nation, the Navy, the dockyard, the work force, and the regions. My hon. Friend the Member for Drake raised the issue of COMPEX. The COMPEX comparison exercise that was announced in the Government White Paper was to open up the market to help the Government to gauge the likely size and capability of the market and compare the performance of the commercial yards during the refits with similar refits being undertaken in the dockyards. It will be at least another year before the final results are analysed, but some comparison of the frigate refits should be available shortly.

I should be doing very badly, Mr. Speaker, if I did not refer to the Merchant Navy, because I know that that has raised considerable interest in the debate, especially from the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) and also from my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann), who, I know, has a great interest in the future of the Merchant Navy. Many other hon. Members have also referred to the Merchant Navy and its importance to our defence. Hon. Members have asked about the defence implications of the falling tonnage on the United Kingdom register. Therefore, I shall deal first with the defence requirements.

The Government monitor closely the availability of merchant shipping to meet defence needs and, for the present, there are still sufficient ships to meet that demand in time of war. Our main concern has been the number of trawlers suitable for mine countermeasure purposes. Our studies into the alternative ways of meeting the requirements have shown that perhaps the task could be undertaken by suitably modified offshore support vessels.

However, right hon. and hon. Members have taken the discussion much wider than the issue of the needs of the armed forces, into questions of civil supply and war and economic shipping. Of course, those are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, and my officials work closely with his Department. I am glad to see that I have the support on the Front Bench of my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Transport. The House will have to forgive me if I add nothing new but merely remind hon. Members of what the Government are doing.

During the past decade there has been a substantial reduction in the number of ships on the United Kingdom register, basically as a result of transfer and sale and not of low investment. United Kingdom shipowners are continuing to sell vessels or transfer them to other registers. However, a growing number are going to dependent territory registers. Such transfers do not mean that ships are lost to the nation's needs. The Government already have the power to requisition, in time of tension or war, ships of dependent territory registers, as well as United Kingdom registers. The Government are giving considerable attention to the question of foreign registered vessels. The Department of Transport is having discussions on that issue with three major open registry states.

**Mr. O'Neill:** Can the hon. Gentleman advise the House how willing the crews, who in the main will not be British, will be to participate in such an exercise as the defence of the United Kingdom, no matter how desirable we consider that to be? Where shall we get the men to look after and support those ships?

**Mr. Hamilton:** On the issue of manpower and redundancy, I am sorry that the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth found the announcements of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport on 10 December 1986 to be limp. My right hon. Friend is consulting shipowners and the seafaring unions about the ways in which the Government could help with training and with the cost of transporting crews to and from vessels that operate away from this country. He also announced the Government's intentions to create a Merchant Navy reserve. That means financial support and, where necessary, legislation at the earliest opportunity. I hope that that answers the hon. Gentleman's question.

My hon Friend the Member for Beverley (Sir P. Wall) and the hon. Member for Wallsend (Mr. Garrett) raised the question of ship orders——

**Sir Edward du Cann:** Although I appreciate that this is the first Navy debate that my hon. Friend has had the opportunity to reply to, in the context of what he has said —which, I regret to tell him, I do not think that the House will find satisfactory—will he be good enough to ensure that the debate is reported to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport, who has not been able to be present during the debate, with a view to considering everything that has been said on the subject of the merchant service? In spite of what my hon. Friend has said, it remains the view of the House that the position is extremely serious and that urgent Government action is needed to rectify it.

**Mr. Hamilton:** I take the point. The House has expressed considerable anxiety and I know that my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Transport, who is present, will report back to the Secretary of State for Transport. I am sure that the debate will be read carefully to pick up all the points that have been made. Today we can consider seriously only the defence interests of merchant shipping and that is what I have tried to do.

On ship orders, there have been many inquiries about the type 23. Orders were placed in the summer for three type 23 frigates and it would be premature to take decisions on the size and timing of orders for further follow-on ships. My hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, North (Mr. Griffiths) mentioned Vosper Thornycroft and minehunter orders. Tenders for four follow-on single role minehunters were invited last month and no decisions have yet been taken on the timing of the orders for fleet minesweepers. Orders placed in 1986 were worth almost £2 billion. Twenty-six ships and submarines are currently on order, including the first of a class of five new vessels, that is the type 23 frigate, the single-role minehunter, the AOR, Trident and Upholder.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beverley suggested that the Government had moved from a commitment of 50 destroyers to "about" 50. This is a misunderstanding. "The Way Forward", Cmnd. 8288, in 1981 stated:

> "We have at present 59 destroyers and frigates declared to NATO. We shall now seek to sustain a figure of about 50."

The hon. Member for Newcastle-upon-Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) returned yet again to the AOR order. Harland and Wolff's bid was scrutinised originally by two independent consultants—PA on costing and Three Quays on ship design. The building cost is to be monitored by a third, Touche Ross. I apologise if this profusion of independent advice led me to refer to the latter in the wrong context earlier. The plain fact is that Swan Hunter, an admirable yard in other ways, lost the order on technical merit as well as on costs. However, it has been given a special chance for the second ship and I hope that it will take it.

**Mr. Nicholas Brown:** If that is the case, why do the Government insist that scrutiny will be through the

*[Mr. Nicholas Brown]*

Northern Ireland Office, which is clearly partial in its judgment on this matter? Why does the hon. Gentleman not allow all the issues involved in the debate to be scrutinised by somebody who is completely independent, not the Northern Ireland Office or a direct agent of the Government?

**Mr. Hamilton:** Those independent consultants will be most insulted to hear that they are for some reason not independent. They are set up to give independent advice.

**Mr. Garrett:** Would it not be possible for the reports of the independent consultants to be published? Could we not have a publication of the comparative technicalities to allow citizens such as ourselves to use our common sense and our judgment?

**Mr. Hamilton:** I do not think that it is our business to publish all independent consultants' reports, but I assure the hon. Gentleman that progress on building the AOR will be monitored by Touche Ross.

The hon. Members for Clackmannan and for Wallsend and my hon. Friend the Member for Bristol, East (Mr. Sayeed) raised the question of CACS. The programme to develop the complex computer-based automated command system for surface ships has suffered problems with delay and cost overrun, especially in software development. Vigorous steps have been taken to address those problems and to determine a sensible way forward. In the case of CACS4, it has recently been decided that work to develop and produce the command system for the new type 23 frigate will be put out to competitive tender. That is in line with our policy of introducing competitive tendering where possible and will afford the opportunity of considering the application of the latest computer technology in the type 23 programme. Invitations to tender have been sent to four consortia and bids are due in mid-April.

**Mr. Sayeed:** Is my hon. Friend sure that there will be no delay in the building of type 22 and type 23 frigates and is he certain that CACS will be ready in time?

**Mr. Hamilton:** I am quite sure that there will be no delay to the type 23 building programme, but I cannot guarantee that the CACS will be ready to go into those frigates.

My hon. Friend the Member for Beverley talked about the cost-effectiveness of the Royal Marines. My hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn (Mr. Best) and the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East also referred to the great value of the Royal Marines and the need for amphibious shipping. On 9 December my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State said that the Government had decided to retain an amphibious capability in the longer term.

As a first procurement step, we have now placed a contract to the value of under £250,000 to Swan Hunter for feasibility studies into the option of extending the lives of assault ships Fearless and Intrepid. We have also sent letters to firms that might be interested in participating in studies into the option of building replacement ships. HMS Fearless and HMS Intrepid are currently planned to remain in service until the mid-1990s. There is ample time for us to pursue whatever option proves to be the most cost-effective.

**Mr. Best:** My hon. Friend will recall that I pointed out that with regard to the replacement of HMS Fearless and Intrepid there would be a study that would conclude in the summer of 1988 and it would be a further year before there was an evaluation of the proposals. Does that mean that the Government cannot come to a decision as to whether to replace or extend until the summer of 1989? When will the decision have to be made to ensure that there will be a continuance of an amphibious capability, bearing in mind what the Minister has said about the lives of HMS Fearless and Intrepid coming to an end in the mid-1990s?

**Mr. Hamilton:** We will certainly have the continuity that my hon. Friend is seeking and we shall certainly have the life-extended ships or new ships by the mid 1990s. That is all I can say.

The hon. Member for Wallsend and my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Môn mentioned the saga of the short, fat ships. As announced in another place, we are fortunate to have secured the services of Lloyd's Register of Shipping to conduct the inquiry that will be considering the report by Lord Hill-Norton on hull forms. Lord Hill-Norton has said that he regards Lloyd's Register as being fully qualified to conduct an independent enquiry. We welcome the opportunity to resolve this long-running controversy. The inquiry will consider the conclusions of Lord Hill-Norton's report and we will not miss the opportunity of improving the Royal Navy's capabilities or the possibility of reducing costs.

It is up to the chairman to decide how he will conduct the inquiry, but it is the intention that he should produce an unclassified summary of his report for publication. Whatever the outcome of the inquiry, the type 23 is the only frigate design that has progressed sufficiently to be considered for series ordering by the Ministry of Defence in the next few years.

**Mr. James Callaghan** *rose*——

**Mr. Hamilton:** I am sorry; I must get on.

My hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Mr. Couchman) raised the difficult point about the dumping of medium-level nuclear waste at the Royal Naval dockyard in Gillingham. I apologise to my hon. Friend but I have answered his query and that answer is probably sitting on the board at the moment.

The residual nuclear storage facility — known as MOD Gillingham — consists of a storage facility for radioactive materials, contaminated equipment and a disposal site for low-level radioactive waste. The latter was used for the disposal of waste up till the end of last year, but there are no plans for its further use. The storage facility was used for contaminated equipment when Chatham dockyard was in operation. Now it contains intermediate-level waste awaiting disposal. Its use for the storage of containers of radioactive material and contaminated equipment from other dockyards is being considered. Items may be transferred, temporarily, from Devonport and/or Rosyth pending an extension of their own storage facilities. There will be no hazard to members of the public from the storage of such items since the radiation levels just outside the buildings will be such that no special restrictions on movement will be required. I must stress to my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham and to my hon. Friend the Member for Medway (Dame Peggy Fenner) that the storage will be only temporary.

**Mr. Couchman:** Would my hon. Friend care to say what "temporary" means?

**Mr. Hamilton:** That will be the time that it takes to construct the facilities at the other dockyards.

There seems to be some confusion about how the Trident savings are made up. The net real cost reductions on Trident are £546 million and the change in the exchange rate produced savings of £598 million, making a total of £1,144 million. The effects of inflation added on £540 million, making net savings of £604 million.

I should like to go on about Trident——

*It being Ten o'clock, the motion for the Adjournment of the House lapsed, without Question put.*

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

### NORTHERN IRELAND

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).*

That the draft Agriculture and Fisheries (Financial Assistance) (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 13th January, be approved.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

*Question agreed to.*

### WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).*

That the draft Weights and Measures (Carriage of Solid Fuel by Rail) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 12th January, be approved.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

*Question agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** By leave of the House, I shall put together the three motions in the name of the Chairman of the Committee of Selection.

### DEFENCE

*Ordered,*

That Sir Humphrey Atkins be discharged from the Defence Committee and Sir Hector Monro be added.—*[Sir Marcus Fox, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

### ENERGY

*Ordered,*

That Mr. James Pawsey be discharged from the Energy Committee and Mr. Robert Jackson be added. — *[Sir Marcus Fox, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

### TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE

*Ordered,*

That Mr. Tony Banks be added to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee. — *[Sir Marcus Fox, on behalf of the Committee of Selection.]*

## School Building (Lancashire)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

10.1 pm

**Mr. Peter Pike** (Burnley): I welcome the opportunity to raise a subject which is important for hon. Members who represent Lancashire constituencies. This is not the first time that I have raised the issue in the House, but the situation facing us is more critical than at any time in the past few years. If we do not get an adequate response tonight from the Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science, I shall continue to raise the issue, time and again, until we get what the people of Lancashire are entitled to.

During the debate on the Consolidated Fund Bill on 24 July I was called to speak at 7.58 am on the Friday morning, with only two minutes available to me. Of course, I was not able to develop my case, but I threw out a challenge to the Under-Secretary to see for himself the problems in Lancashire. The hon. Gentleman readily accepted that challenge, but in the end the Secretary of State made the visit. We welcomed the fact that the right hon. Gentleman visited Lancashire, but we should have been equally glad to welcome the Under-Secretary of State.

We believe that the problem is there for all to see and that it speaks for itself. That is why we are appalled at the situation facing us. The capital allocations were announced in January. My first reaction when I met the county council's chief executive, Mr. Brian Hill, and the leader of the council, Mrs. Louise Ellman, was that the figure must be a mistake. If the Minister will tell us that the figure one should be placed in front of the allocation of £5,994,000, I shall sit down and not pursue the matter.

I was a member of the all-party delegation that put the case to the previous Secretary of State last year. The county council presented a video showing that it needed £44 million of extra resources over the next five years to deal with the problem of Lancashire's crumbling schools.

We have two main problems. The first is that many of the county's schools were built before 1914 and, because of their age, are deteriorating rapidly. In many cases, it is an expensive uphill battle to keep them in use. The county council is doing a magnificant job, but it is not the easiest of tasks. I believe that the county council is sometimes forced to waste money because it is not able to deal with the problem in the appropriate way. In many cases there is a need for new buildings rather than renovation of existing premises.

The second problem is with school premises with flat roofs built in the 1950s and 1960s. The House will be aware that flat roofs cause problems throughout the country. After a number of years, problems occur internally as a result of that kind of structure. In many cases the roofs require fairly expensive treatment to remedy the problems. In Lancashire, where the rainfall is slightly above the national average, flat roofs can cause even more problems than in some of the more fortunate parts of the country.

I believe that the figure of capital allocation announced must be a mistake. The county council capital allocation bid for 1987-88 was £18·8 million. As I have said, the allocation is £5,994,000. That is 32 per cent. of the figure that was bid for. It has to be said that the figure for 1986-87 was £12,538,000. In cash terms, that is the largest

*[Mr. Peter Pike]*

reduction for any local education authority in the country. After the representations made, I believe that even this Government cannot be serious if that is the allocation.

If a mistake has been made, whether it was a mistake by the county council or the Department, let us get the matter cleared up and agree that more resources are needed so that we can solve the problem. If the Government really believe that the allocation that they have made is sufficient to meet the problem, it is an insult to the people of Lancashire and it is an appalling and despicable way in which to treat that county. I will be generous and say at this stage that I believe that some mistake has been made and that additional resources must be made available.

The problems from area to area are not necessarily always the same. In some areas the aided schools are the biggest priority. Sometimes it is the primary schools and sometimes it is the high schools or secondary schools. That is partly for historic reasons. Burnley was a county borough and concentrated first on the renewal of secondary and high schools. Most of our aided schools are in good condition. The biggest problems in Burnley are the county primary schools.

I have made the debate cover a wider area than Burnley deliberately because I recognise that the problems differ in other boroughs and districts in Lancashire. The capital allocation for aided schools to enable the governors to do necessary work has gone down. In 1985-86 the figure was £2,244,000. It has now gone down to £1,302,000 and it is £793,000 for 1987-88. That will create a problem for the parts of the county where the aided sector needs to take priority.

In my borough early last year Burnley Wood school had to be closed. I visited that school during the Christmas recess, just before Parliament reassembled. I wanted to see the scale of the problem. I was appalled. In spite of the fact that the county had tried to keep it presentable and attractive, dry rot had taken over so that large sections of the school were quarantined and could not be used. Shortly after that visit the school premises were closed. Burnley Wood school still exists but is now in different premises. Part of it is in Fulledge at Todmorden road school and part is in Coal Clough primary school. That is not the best solution and it cannot be allowed to continue. Yet the capital allocation places the scheme for the renewal of premises in jeopardy. I believe that the county council has decided that the project should still go ahead, having reconsidered the matter closely. It may be subject to county council confirmation at a full meeting. But it is an expensive project, and for every project that one leaves in, others have to go out. Whether it is Burnley or other parts of the county that have to exclude other schemes, it is an equally appalling and unacceptable state of affairs.

When the Secretary of State visited Burnley during the summer recess, he looked at Stoneyholme county primary school, which occupied two buildings adjacent to each other. There is a dry rot problem. The county is spending money trying to deal with it, but it is unable to eradicate it permanently. In addition, the school is in a growing population area and urgently needs new premises. If the county council decided to spend money on modernising those premises, it would be wasting its money because it would not be able to combat the prevalent dry rot in the in the building. Even if, for a moment, we assumed that it could, we are still faced with the problem of the old-fashioned premises, the insufficient capacity to meet the needs of the population and insufficient resources for the staff who have to work there.

Other schools in Burnley with other projects are also placed in jeopardy. Hargher Clough county junior school needs a replacement kitchen. Burnley Wood Top Church of England school needs a scullery and Burnley Barden county infant school is in need of a connecting passageway and the refurbishment of its toilets. Several projects need to be done at Burnley college. The same can be said throughout the county. There are projects at Rawtenstall Alder Grange county secondary school for extensions following secondary reorganisation. I could read out a lengthy list of all the schemes that are placed in jeopardy at present.

All those schemes, wherever they are in the county, are urgently needed. We need more resources. Only the Government can help us to deal with the problem. I know that in theory the county is able to spend 30 per cent. of its capital receipts from disposal of premises, but it is not a solution in an area such as Lancashire, where land values are low and the disposal of such sites yields only a very low income. It could be said that even if the council could spend 100 per cent., which could be fully justified, it would still fall short of helping Lancashire to deal with this pressing problem.

I hope that, when the Minister replies, he will recognise the seriousness of the problem. I know that Conservative Members are as concerned about the issue as my hon. Friends. It is an important issue. We look forward to receiving a favourable response and to action being taken to deal urgently with the problem.

10.13 pm

**Mr. Jack Straw** (Blackburn): I commend my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) for the way in which he has led the campaign for improved allocations for school buildings in Lancashire. I thank him for this opportunity to speak briefly in this Adjournment debate.

The Minister must explain why Lancashire has been so discriminated against in the allocations. Let us take Essex as an example. My hon. Friend the Member for Burnley extracted the figures from the Minister in a written answer. Essex is of a similar size to Lancashire. Its allocation has been around £11·6 million for three years, including next year. Lancashire had £15 million in 1985-86 and £12·5 million this year. It will have £5·9 million next year. That is the biggest cash cut as well as the greatest percentage cut, second only to Northamptonshire. Why have Lancashire's needs not been recognised as they should be? It is a well-administered county. There is no fat to cut in the county. Building workers are out of work there. There are people who need work. Work is crying out to be done in Lancashire's crumbling schools.

It is simply crazy for the Government to refuse to make the allocations available to Lancashire. Only a Government who cared more about cutting tax for the better off than about ensuring that our school children had decent accommodation could have reached such a ridiculous decision. I hope that we shall hear tonight that the Minister will increase the allocation for Lancashire, as he should.

10.14 pm

**Mr. Ken Hargreaves** (Hyndburn): I congratulate the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) on raising this important issue in this Adjournment debate. When the announcement was made it was greeted with incredulity by all the people in Lancashire, who thought that £5·9 million was simply unacceptable. We could not understand it at all. The press and television blamed the Government and it seemed that once again Government cuts were responsible. However, it now appears that the truth is that the county council has been grossly negligent in either making the applications in the wrong categories or filling in the forms incorrectly.

Money was available if the council had applied for it correctly. That fact should be stated. There should be an inquiry at the county council at the highest level to put the matter right. Millions of pounds more were available. That money could have gone to our schools, but it will not because it was not applied for.

The Department of Education and Science is not without criticism. Two years ago my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Wyre (Sir W. Clegg) led a deputation to the Secretary of State. Last year I led a similar deputation. We asked to see the Secretary of State when the allocation was £12·5 million. Therefore when an application was received for £5·9 million, someone must have realised that something was wrong and inquiries should have been made.

Surely these applications are not dealt with by a junior clerk. They must be dealt with by an official who really should have had the intelligence to realise that something was wrong. He should have queried the application. Apparently, that did not happen and the Department allocated all that it could in the circumstances.

Whoever is to blame, Lancashire school children and Lancashire ratepayers will suffer. We should have an urgent meeting of everyone involved—the Department, the county council and the Members of Paliament representing Lancashire—in an attempt to sort matters out because this is a monumental cock up.

10.16 pm

**Mr. Kenneth Hind** (Lancashire, West): I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science for allowing me to take part in this debate. I find it disturbing that there should have been a massive piece of crass incompetence by the officials in the way in which applications were filled in for capital grants to the Department of Education and Science.

Too often, Labour councillors in Lancashire have been quick to blame the Government, and in this case they went straight to the media and complained. When we consider the application carefully, we find that two thirds of it is filled in in non-priority areas, knowing that two thirds of the current year's grant was provided for in priority areas. As a consequence, in the first area — with regard to school capital grants — when the Government told Lancashire 12 months ago that it could have £5 million, it only applied for £2·8 million. With regard to new work, in the current year the council applied for £1·5 million, but for 1987-88 it only applied for £62,000. It is no small wonder that when we trace the application through, the matter of the low figure comes to light. The council did not make a correct application. Because of that, I fully support the comments made by my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves). There must be a detailed inquiry in Lancashire county council to deal with the matter and heads must roll. This must not be allowed to continue. If nothing is done, every child in Lancashire will suffer as a consequence of the incompetence of these officials and councillors.

I must stress to people in Lancashire that the chairman of the education committee is not a Conservative. I appreciate the difficulties that my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science faces in helping us in this matter. However, will he do all that he can to try to find additional money to get Lancashire out of the mess that it has created for itself?

10.19 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Science (Mr. Bob Dunn):** I am grateful to the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) for raising this matter tonight, and I listened with interest to the speeches of the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw) and my hon. Friends the Members for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) and for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind). I am glad to see my hon. Friend the Member for Chorley (Mr. Dover) here to support the debate.

There are strong feelings in Lancashire on this topic. There is also a good deal of misunderstanding about the Department's procedures for making capital allocations for education and about the way in which Lancashire education authority's allocation was determined. Therefore, I am pleased to have this opportunity to clear away those misunderstandings and to put the record straight. The hon. Member for Burnley mentioned the shortfall in Lancashire's capital allocation for 1987-88 compared with that for the current year, and I shall explain in some detail why the authority's allocation for next year is so much lower. But before I do, it might be helpful to the House if I spend a moment putting Lancashire's position in context.

As hon. Members will know, allocations in respect of prescribed capital expenditure on education are made annually to all local education authorities under the provisions of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980. Education is one of five services for which authorities receive block allocations; the others are housing, transport, social services and other environmental services. An annual allocation is also made specifically for the urban programme.

The total net provision in the Government's capital spending plans for education in the local authority sector has increased by some 18 per cent. over the 1986-87 plans. The total available for allocation in respect of education capital expenditure in 1987-88 has, however, in common with the totals for other spending blocks, been fixed at a level which takes account of the increased spending power from receipts by which authorities may supplement their allocations and of other flexibilities in the system. Overall, there is an estimated £2·8 billion spending power from receipts available to authorities in 1987-88. In consequence allocations have, across the board, been fixed at a level which would, if trends in the use of available spending power continue, bring local authority capital spending up to the cash limit.

For education, individual authorities' allocations are calculated by assessing their capital expenditure plans,

*[Mr. Bob Dunn]*

which they supply to the Department each year in a common form, against a consistent and well-publicised set of criteria. The purpose of this is to ensure that authorities receive equitable treatment. The criteria have been drawn up with the aim of encouraging local education authorities to recognise national priorities, for example in removing surplus school places; they are also designed to ensure that no local education authority which observes those priorities should be unable to fulfil its statutory obligations.

The annual allocation made to an individual local education authority does not, therefore, represent our view of what that authority's capital expenditure on education should be. It is the authority's share of the education element of an overall figure which, together with available receipts, provides total spending power for local authorities of more than double their total allocations.

Lancashire's allocation for prescribed education capital expenditure in 1987-88, for schools and further and higher education, was £5·994 million. This compares with a figure of £12·538 million for 1986-87. With regard to the schools part of the allocation, this reflects a change, not in the way the Department compiles allocations, but in the composition of the authority's plans. I hope that hon. Members will bear with me here if I go into some detail about the nature of Lancashire's bid for 1987-88 and about how it compares with its plans for the current year, since it is only by doing so that this alleged injustice can be explained.

First, let us look at committed expenditure — by which I mean the second and subsequent years' spending on projects which have already started. When we wrote to Lancashire a little over a year ago to tell it of its 1986-87 allocation, we also told it, in line with our normal practice, that, other things being equal, we should be prepared to include in its 1987-88 allocation rather more than £5 million worth of such expenditure. Commitments of this order would be what we would expect to flow from a schools building programme of the size suggested by our allocations for 1985-86 and 1986-87.

**Mr. Hind:** Does that mean that when the money was paid for the current year Lancashire was aware that it would be entitled to £5 million for that part of the programme? Despite the fact that it knew that, it applied for £2·4 million, thus losing about £2·5 million of potential grant.

**Mr. Dunn:** That is quite right. We expect commitments of about £5 million to flow from a schools building programme of the size suggested, as I said, by our allocations for 1985-86 and 1986-87.

When the Lancashire authorities submitted its plans, its commitments for schools were shown as only £2·8 million. Plainly, we could not allocate more than the authority had asked for. In effect, Lancashire lost over £2 million.

Right hon. and hon. Members may be as surprised as I am that an authority should conduct its capital programme in a way that guarantees that the allocation is over £2 million less than it might have been. I am bound to say at this point that this low level of commitments also suggests that, despite the authority's continuing complaints about the inadequacy of its schools allocations, it may none the less have chosen to divert part of those earlier allocations to other purposes — in my view, a surprising strategy in the light of its present protestations.

Referring now to Lancashire's allocation for new work starting in 1987-88, I have to say that once again the shape of the authority's plans was markedly different from those that it submitted for the current year. For example, it told us that in the current year it intended to expend over £1·5 million on new projects which would remove surplus school accommodation. This, as the House knows, is work to which we give high priority, not only because it results in savings in local authorities' current spending, but because, by removing some of the worst buildings from use and bringing others up to standard, it helps towards the achievement of a higher quality stock of school buildings. Lancashire's stated priorities thus coincided with our own, and its allocation for the current year reflects that. But its plans for new work in 1987-88 show expenditure of only £62,000 for this type of work — a drop of 96 per cent. Again, we could allocate only what the authority asked for.

The allocation also covers virtually all the authority's planned expenditure on new projects designed to meet "basic need"—that is, new or expanded schools in areas of population growth.

These three categories are the ones to which the Department must give priority in formulating allocations, as they involve statutory or contractual obligations upon authorities. Of Lancashire's plans for 1986-87, around two thirds of expenditure fell into these categories. Its plans for 1987-88, however, placed two thirds of expenditure into lower priority categories. In allocating in respect of this work, the Department distributes what remains by means of a formula that takes into account both the local education authority's expenditure plans and the incidence of substandard school accommodation in its area.

As for work at voluntary aided and special agreement schools, Lancashire fared much better this time around than last time. In fact, it did very well indeed. The allocation for 1987-88, as well as meeting in full the authority's plans for committed expenditure, also meets over four fifths of its plans for new major building work, including the projects at Blackburn St. Bede's Roman Catholic school and Blackburn Our Lady and St. John's Roman Catholic school.

**Mr. Pike:** I carefully listened to the figures that the Minister gave. Obviously, this is the first occasion I have had to consider the figures. If a delegation from Lancashire county council seeks to meet either the Secretary of State or the hon. Gentleman to discuss these issues, will he be prepared to meet such a delegation? I am sure that the county council has another version of what the hon. Gentleman has put to us.

**Mr. Dunn:** I know Lancashire. I am a Lancastrian by birth, or at least I was born in that part of the area known as Greater Manchester. I hope that what I have said satisfies the House that Lancashire's allocation was a fair one that took the fullest possible account of the authority's plans as represented to the Department.

**Mr. Pike:** Will the hon. Gentleman meet a delegation?

**Mr. Dunn:** The hon. Gentleman must contain his eagerness.

I am concerned that the Lancashire local education authority should have been so surprised by the size of its allocation for 1987-88, bearing in mind the nature of its expenditure plans. Therefore, I have asked officials of the Department to discuss with Lancashire various aspects of its capital expenditure plans so that, if possible, we can avoid compounding the authority's difficulties in future years. I shall bring the request of the hon. Member for Burnley to the attention of the Secretary of State.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-nine minutes past Ten o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Tuesday 3 February 1987*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## NEW WRIT

*Ordered,*

That Mr. Speaker do issue his Warrant to the Clerk of the Crown to make out a new writ for the electing of a Member to serve in the present Parliament for the Borough Constituency of Greenwich, in the room of Nicholas Guy Barnett, Esquire, deceased.—*[Mr. Foster.]*

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (BECKTON) BILL *(By Order)*

BRITISH RAILWAYS BILL *(By Order)*

*Orders for Second Reading read.*
*To be read a Second time upon Thursday 5 February.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## EMPLOYMENT

### Unemployment Trends

1. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about the trend of unemployment over the last six months?

**The Paymaster General and Minister for Employment (Mr. Kenneth Clarke):** Over the last six months the trend in United Kingdom seasonally adjusted unemployment has been firmly downwards. The average monthly decrease over this period has been 17,000.

**Mr. Chapman:** In welcoming that fact, will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm that there has been a drop in the number of jobless over virtually the whole country and that the drop has been greater in the north than in the south? Will he also confirm that the trend in the number of jobless over the past three months represents the best performance over any three-month period in the last 14 years?

**Mr. Clarke:** I confirm the last point made by my hon. Friend. The fall in the number of jobless people over the past three months, which has been accelerating, is the fastest since 1973. I am glad to say that unemployment has been decreasing throughout the country, but it has been decreasing fastest in the north, the north-west, the west midlands and Wales, which is very good news.

**Mr. Mason:** Is the Minister aware that the rapid pit closure programme has caused economic distress in many areas of the northern region, resulting in a much higher average rate of unemployment than in the rest of Britain? To what extent is he satisfied with the trend in finding jobs for the long-term unemployed, particularly in south Yorkshire and the Barnsley travel-to-work area?

**Mr. Clarke:** I accept that the impact of the closure of uneconomic and redundant coal mines is quite severe in the parts of south Yorkshire represented by the right hon. Gentleman. Therefore, I trust that the efforts of British Coal Enterprise Ltd. and of everyone else in the region to attract alternative employment will have rapid success. There are signs that new employment is coming along, but it will take a long time to fill the gaps left by the coal industry. I am delighted to say that the increase in the number of self-employed people has been faster in Yorkshire and Humberside than in any other part of England.

**Mr. Holt:** Will my right hon. and learned Friend confirm the accuracy of his Department's unemployment figures in the Library and thus show that the statement by the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth) that unemployment in my constituency had risen was totally inaccurate and misleading to the House? The truth of the matter is that the unemployment figures have come down.

**Mr. Clarke:** I am delighted to confirm that. I followed the exchanges on unemployment in Langburgh between my hon. Friend and Opposition Members. My hon. Friend's knowledge of the area is unrivalled, and I am glad that he has been able to correct the attacks made by the hon. Member for Stockton, South (Mr. Wrigglesworth).

**Mr. Leighton:** Does the record not show that in each of the seven years in which the Government have carried out their chosen monetarist policies unemployment has soared and that when the Chancellor announced his U-turn or body swerve in the autumn statement of increased public expenditure, unemployment reached a plateau and dipped ever so slightly? Does that not show that the Conservatives were wrong for seven years, that a small movement towards the Opposition's policies have had a favourable effect and that we need a Government who will carry out those policies with vigour and conviction?

**Mr. Clarke:** That is an original interpretation, but with his knowledge of these matters the hon. Gentleman knows that the total number of people working in Britain has been steadily rising since 1983. Britain has had a sustained recovery which is steadily producing more new jobs. Indeed, the increase in the number of new jobs is now overtaking the number of people coming into the market for the first time and looking for those jobs.

Our public spending plans could not be described as adopting the Opposition's policies. As I understand it, the Opposition are committed to increasing public spending by at least £10 billion, most of which would be spent on providing new jobs in the more Left-wing town halls up and down the country.

**Mr. Soames:** Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that many skilled jobs are vacant in a number of factories in my constituency and that many people would be happy to come from the north to take up those excellent jobs? Will he try to do more to enable people to move from the north to the south with greater facility?

**Mr. Clarke:** I accept that skill shortages are already beginning to appear in large areas of the south, including my hon. Friend's constituency. We keep stepping up the adult training programme and increasing the number of people trained and we have just introduced the job training scheme to train those who have been unemployed for more than six months. I know that many people would like to move into my hon. Friend's constituency and take up the jobs, but it is to the housing market, including the private rented sector, that we must look for further reform to make that easier.

**Mr. Evans:** First, I apologise to the House for the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), who, unfortunately, has had to seek emergency dental treatment. May I put it to the Paymaster General that, although the nation would welcome a genuine reduction in unemployment, everyone knows that, unfortunately, in the past six months the trend has had more to do with the fiddling of figures, upon which the Government have embarked, and the number of people on Government schemes, who now number nearly 1 million, which is almost as many as were unemployed in 1979 when the Government took office? What discussions has the Paymaster General had with the Prime Minister about her promise of a return to full employment? Can he give us some idea of the time scale envisaged?

**Mr. Clarke:** First, I send my genuine good wishes to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, East (Mr. Prescott), who I know is suffering from a painful condition. I only hope that he does not barrack the dentist while he is receiving the treatment of which he is plainly in need.

I shall not use this opportunity yet again to go over the arguments about whether the figures are genuine or whether everything is accounted for by schemes. At an Action for Jobs breakfast my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said that she saw no reason why we should not look in the longer term to a return to full employment. If we can sustain the present rate of growth in the economy, low inflation, good industrial relations and the continuing creation of additional jobs in the economy, that is a perfectly worthwhile objective, but we need to sustain the present recovery for quite a long time yet.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. May we have briefer questions so that we may then have briefer answers?

### Tourism

2. **Miss Fookes** asked the Paymaster General if he will outline what improvements to the system of vocational qualifications have been made in tourism-related qualifications in the last year.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. David Trippier):** Good progress is being made to develop vocational qualifications within the tourism industry, in line with the objectives of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications. The Hotel and Catering Training Board is establishing a modular certification system through the Manpower Services Commission funded "Caterbase" project, and the Association of British Travel Agents and City and Guilds are continuing to develop competence-based vocational qualifications in the retail travel and tour operator sectors.

**Miss Fookes:** I thank my hon. Friend for that constructive and helpful reply and for the zest and enthusiasm that he brings to tourism as an important economic sector, but may I remind him, if he needs reminding, that far too many people in the tourism industry still have no qualifications? Will my hon. Friend look to the longer term with regard to a wider spread of qualifications?

**Mr. Trippier:** My hon. Friend is absolutely right. We start from a position in which 94 per cent. of those employed in the industry have no qualifications whatever, and we need to put that right. That is why we are introducing the new modular Caterbase programme and why I am pleased that the sector has some 9,000 young people on YTS and some 2,000 trainees under the old JTS for 1985-86.

**Mr. Wigley:** Will the Minister assure the House that in the new ideas on which the Government are now working consideration will be given to having training modules that concentrate on the winter months, so that those involved in tourism, who are far too busy in the summer to take advantage of training, can have some complementary opportunities in the winter so as to balance the year-round opportunities for employment?

**Mr. Trippier:** I very much welcome the hon. Gentleman's constructive suggestion. I shall be meeting the chairman of the Hotel and Catering Industry Training Board and in the next two weeks I shall certainly discuss that. It is, of course, part of our new policy on tourism to try to extend the tourist season, which the hon. Gentleman, of course, would welcome.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** I am delighted at my hon. Friend's announcement. Does that mean that the Government will now carry out the recommendation of the Select Committee on Trade and Industry to extend the tourist season by paying a third of the labour costs of experimental extensions of the season at either end by a total of one month? Will my hon. Friend bear in mind the fact that permanent pensionable employment is needed, not just seasonal peak employment?

**Mr. Trippier:** I am sorry to have to disappoint my hon. Friend, but I dealt in some detail with the Select Committee report in a full debate on the Floor of the House. As my hon. Friend knows, we were prepared to accept more than half the recommendations, but we had to reject that specific suggestion.

**Dr. Godman:** Despite what the Minister says, tourism is a valuable industry, characterised by threadbare training provision. When will the Government expand the leisure and tourist management training courses in colleges of higher education?

**Mr. Trippier:** I am pleased to say that I shall have an opportunity this Thursday to visit the Dorset Institute of Higher Education, which is one of the leading colleges in this sector. We have also been impressed with the number of places made available at polytechnic and university level. I agree with the hon. Gentleman that if we are to encourage more people to come into the industry and take up important management positions, tourism needs to be recognised as a responsible and respectable sector by those institutes of higher education. I am delighted to tell the hon. Gentleman that I have frequent meetings with my colleagues in the Department of Education and Science on that subject.

### MSC Schemes (East Midlands)

3. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on funding Manpower Services Commission schemes in the east midlands.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment (Mr. John Lee):** It is expected that the Manpower Services Commission will spend about £148 million on programme costs in the east midlands during the financial year 1986-87. The amounts for the major programmes are:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| Youth training scheme | 56 |
| Adult training | 11 |
| Community programme | 56 |
| Enterprise allowance scheme | 11 |

**Mr. Leigh:** With every young school leaver in Gainsborough this year being offered, for the first time in history, either a job or further education or training, does my hon. Friend agree that even the Opposition, with their twisted logic, will find it difficult to claim that we do not care about unemployment when, since 1979, in the east midlands alone more than £85 million has been spent on helping 1,500 firms to create 18,000 jobs?

**Mr. Lee:** My hon. Friend's figures are absolutely right. I hope that everyone, including the Opposition, will welcome the fact that by Easter everyone under 18 will have a guaranteed training place.

**Mr. Corbett:** Will the Minister confirm that he has ordered a 20p in the pound cut in funding for community programmes in the east midlands, the west midlands and elsewhere?

**Mr. Lee:** As far as the east midlands is concerned, there will be no significant change in funding.

**Mr. Greg Knight:** Does my hon. Friend accept that the YTS scheme in the east midlands and elsewhere is one of the most successful schemes in the world and shows that Britain is not only leading Europe in the provision of new jobs, but is leading Europe in the provision of relevant and successful training schemes?

**Mr. Lee:** I agree with my hon. Friend. The Government now have in place what are probably the most comprehensive employment and training schemes in the Western world.

### YTS

4. **Mr. Bruce** asked the Paymaster General how many young people have been followed up by the Manpower Services Commission area office staff since completing their YTS programme.

**Mr. Trippier:** Since YTS began in 1983, the commission's head office has arranged follow-up surveys asking YTS leavers about their experience on the programme and what they did on leaving. Initially, these were sample surveys conducted by the MSC's own statisticians, but since April 1985 all YTS leavers have been surveyed by an independent research organisation.

**Mr. Bruce:** How many of those youngsters have progressed to useful jobs in an area related to their YTS training? Does the Minister acknowledge the concern that too many youngsters, especially those in areas of high unemployment, simply move from one scheme to another rather than find permanent employment related to the training that they are supposed to have received?

**Mr. Trippier:** The facts show that 57 per cent. of those on YTS go into work, 3 per cent. go on to full-time courses at college and training centres, 7 per cent. join another YTS course, 6 per cent. do something else and 28 per cent. register as unemployed.

The hon. Gentleman will be aware that in his part of the world, and in the travel-to-work area that covers his constituency, the percentage of youngsters who actually find work is much higher.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley:** Is my hon. Friend aware that at a time when training is increasingly important in all areas of employment, there has been a wide welcome for the extension of YTS, so that no young person under the age of 18 need choose to be unemployed?

**Mr. Trippier:** I very much welcome my hon. Friend's comments. For those aged under 18, unemployment is no longer an option. That is something that we should broadcast from the rooftops.

### Job Training Scheme

5. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General what plans there are to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of the job training scheme in the 10 pilot areas.

12. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Paymaster General how many people are presently receiving training under the new job training scheme within the pilot areas.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** On 26 January 1987, 1,008 people were taking part in the new job training scheme pilots. An interim evaluation of the scheme is already under way. The Manpower Services Commission will continue to monitor and evaluate the new job training scheme as it is extended nationally, and the commission's sub-group will oversee that process.

**Ms. Short:** Does the Paymaster General admit that he did not monitor the pilot schemes before going for expansion, because his purpose was to lower the unemployment figures, not to help the unemployed? Will he confirm that experience of the pilot schemes shows that there was difficulty with recruiting and a high drop-out rate, and that it was impossible to provide proper training with the money made available?

Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman admit that he misled the House about the attitudes of trade unions to the scheme? Their conditional approval was for a higher allowance. As the Government did not comply with that, that means that trade union leaders do not support the scheme.

**Mr. Clarke:** We carried out sufficient monitoring for it to be quite clear that the scheme was a valuable addition to what we are offering. We found no shortage of trainees wanting to join the scheme, no shortage of work experience and no shortage of managing agents. As for the drop-out rate, as the hon. Lady describes it, 17 per cent. left before the end of the scheme, but that figure includes quite a number of people who left for the excellent reason that they had found a job. We believe this scheme to be a valuable addition that should be introduced as rapidly as possible.

We could have a sterile political debate. It is easy for me to point out to the hon. Lady that she and her hon. Friends want to delay the introduction of training schemes and the reduction of unemployment until after the election, but that is hardly a responsible attitude.

The TUC commissioners did and do support the scheme. They reserved their position on the amount of allowance to be paid, but they were much more supportive of the scheme than the Opposition in their initial reaction.

**Mr. Ron Davies:** If, as the Minister says, there is no shortage of applicants for the places available, will he guarantee that people will not be refused benefit if they refuse places on the scheme?

**Mr. Clarke:** No one is refused benefit just for refusing to take part in a programme or scheme. To be entitled to benefit, Parliament demands, as it has for the past 40 years, that people should demonstrate their continuing availability for work and should not refuse good offers of employment.

**Mrs. Peacock:** Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that it makes sense to expand the new job training scheme as quickly as possible to provide many young people with the training that they need for the jobs that are now becoming available?

**Mr. Clarke:** I agree with my hon. Friend. It is pointless to tell unemployed people that they must wait for this successful scheme to be extended simply because the Labour party has decided that it needs further monitoring. I think that we are ready to go ahead.

**Mr. Thurnham:** As the job training scheme has been approved by the TUC, will Ron Todd not find it rather strange that Opposition Members are creating such a fuss about it?

**Mr. Clarke:** Unfortunately, one cannot be a fly on the wall in any discussions between Ron Todd and Opposition Members. The members of the TUC sub-group and the commission supported the scheme and its extension, subject to the proviso that the quality of the scheme should be maintained, a point with which the Government were in total agreement. The TUC reserved its conclusions with regard to the allowance. The Labour party is arguing about how much people will be paid on the scheme. That is entirely in line with the usual Labour party attitude on most of these things, but it does not represent a fundamental objection.

**Mr. Ashley:** How can the Minister claim success for this trial scheme when he has just confessed that there is a 17 per cent. drop-out rate? That does not make sense. Does he acknowledge that the newly extended training scheme simply will not work while it continues to try to use unemployed people as cheap labour?

**Mr. Clarke:** With 822 out of 1,008 still receiving training and benefiting from it in the pilot areas, it would be pointless to scrap the scheme or not to extend it because 100 or so have left the scheme, especially when some of them left to take up jobs. I regret the Labour party's attacks on the scheme, which I believe are motivated solely by the fact that the Labour party is perplexed by the fall in unemployment and by the extension of training and new employment prospects and is therefore trying to delay the scheme until after the election for purely political reasons.

**Mr. Butterfill:** When so many people throughout the country and in my consitituency cannot get jobs because they do not have the necessary training, and when employers would otherwise employ them, is it not curious and irresponsible for the Opposition to say that the schemes are not good and to discourage people from obtaining the qualifications that would otherwise get them employment?

**Mr. Clarke:** My hon. Friend's last point is a very serious one and I agree with him. For years the Labour party opposed YTS and stopped many young people from getting the benefit of that scheme. If the Labour party opposes YTS it will dissuade some long-term unemployed from benefiting from that scheme. The Labour party is against it for purely party political reasons and is continuing to be irresponsible about these projects.

## Benefits

6. **Mr. Robert C. Brown** asked the Paymaster General how many referrals have been made to adjudication officers from newly unemployed claimants, from the date when form UB671 was introduced into unemployment benefit offices.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The improved procedures which I announced on 28 October are designed to ensure that new benefit claimants satisfy the long-standing legal requirement for entitlement to benefit that the claimant should be available for work. The new procedures have now been introduced in all but a handful of unemployment benefit offices. By 26 December 1986, the latest date for which information is available, 12,688 cases had been referred to the independent adjudication authorities as a result of the new procedures.

**Mr. Brown:** Will the Minister tell us how many of the 12,000-odd people did not pursue their claims, how many claims were disallowed and how many people had bogus interviews on the basis of this form when interviewed for the restart programme?

**Mr. Clarke:** I hope that I can remember all those points. First, these are people who pursued their claims but had them referred to the adjudication officer because there were doubts about the claims. About 7 per cent. of new applicants do not pursue their claims, and of those who do, some claims are referred. These are early days, but of those referred so far we have adjudicated on about half—6,626—and 2,252 of those had their claims disallowed.

On the hon. Gentleman's final point, a form of this kind has always been used in cases of difficulty in relation to entitlement to benefit. The ancestor of the form that we are now using, and about which so much fuss has been made, can be traced back to 1947. Some of the same questions appear on that remarkably similar form.

**Ms. Clare Short:** Are the Government still using it?

**Mr. Clarke:** We still use it for guidance for staff where there are doubts about the availability for work, so that we can be consistent in offices up and down the country.

**Mr. Brandon-Bravo:** Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that in my constituency duplicated leaflets, the printing of which is unattributable, have been distributed by pressure groups instructing people how to fill in—or not to fill in, as the case may be—the forms in question. They have also been used to instruct people in, or to discourage them from, filling in necessary information with regard to equal opportunities. Would my right hon. and learned Friend care to comment on that?

**Mr. Clarke:** I disapprove of people giving set answers. The implication of set answers is to tell the claimant, "Never mind telling the truth about your claim. If you give these answers regardless of the truth, you will get benefit." *[Interruption.]* My hon. Friend will notice that that was cheered by large numbers of Labour Members. The Labour party appears to have moved to the extraordinary position of saying that anyone is entitled to benefit, if he asks for it, without having to demonstrate that he is entitled to it. No doubt, as the Labour party has a very Left-wing candidate in Greenwich, it will campaign on that basis in the area in the near future. I do not think that it will get the electorate's support.

**Mr. Evans:** Will the Paymaster General admit that the leaflets that have been circulated are not "How to claim benefit if you are not entitled to it" but "How not to be tricked by the trick questions framed by the Department of Employment"? Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that one of my constituents, who is typical of many, who has been unemployed for three years, who was offered three interviews more than 25 miles away from where he lives and who has no means of transport to those jobs, has had his benefit stopped? That is treating the unemployed with contempt.

**Mr. Clarke:** The questions on our form are not trick questions. They are remarkably similar to the questions that have always been asked and are wholly consistent with the rules that Parliament has laid down for entitlement to benefit. A Labour Act of Parliament—the last of such legislation—laid down availability for work as a condition of benefit. I am not clear from what the hon. Gentleman said whether he agrees that standard answers should be given. If, like his hon. Friends, he says that standard answers should be given, based on the suggestions of the Claimants' Union or others, he is advocating that people should claim benefit whether or not the claim is genuine and truthful, and that is a remarkable change of policy by the Labour party.

### Labour Statistics

7. **Mr. Knox** asked the Paymaster General how many people were out of work in the Staffordshire, Moorlands parliamentary constituency at the most recent count.

**Mr. Lee:** On 11 December 1986 the number of unemployed claimants in the Staffordshire, Moorlands parliamentary constituency was 3,414.

**Mr. Knox:** Is my hon. Friend aware that unemployment in my constituency, although lower than in most constituencies, has risen substantially under Labour and Conservative Governments over the past 13 years? How does he explain that in an area where wages and salaries are low, productivity is high and labour relations are excellent?

**Mr. Lee:** I know of my hon. Friend's genuine and deep concern about the problems of unemployment generally in his constituency. The position is improving, even in his constituency. The number of unfilled vacancies is increasing and unemployment is slowly falling. Two job clubs will open soon—at Leek in March and at Cheadle later in the summer. I hope my hon. Friend agrees that there is an increasing skill shortage in his textile industry, just as there is in Lancashire. There is also a shortage of industrial land in his constituency on which firms can expand. I believe that the local authority is addressing its mind to that problem.

### Skill Shortages

8. **Mr. Jim Callaghan** asked the Paymaster General whether he will make a statement on skill shortages in British industry.

**Mr. Trippier:** My right hon. and learned Friend announced in the House last week a major new initiative for re-skilling Britain. The job training scheme will help unemployed people gain the skills now needed by employers in our expanding economy.

**Mr. Callaghan:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his answer, but may I point out that, over the past 10 years, in the engineering and construction industries training for apprentices has almost collapsed, that in two other major key industries the number of trainee schemes has fallen by half and that the Government's schemes, such as those operated by the MSC and YTS, cannot cope with this problem? What will the hon. Gentleman do in the immediate future to rectify this problem?

**Mr. Trippier:** I think that the hon. Gentleman is guilty of massive exaggeration. No one would seek to deny at the Dispatch Box that there is a skill shortage. I would not even attempt to do so. But the figures show that fewer than 15 per cent. of firms currently expect output to be constrained by a shortage of skilled labour. That compares with 25 per cent. at a comparable point in the previous economic cycle in 1978-79 and with 50 per cent. during the last time the Labour party was in government.

**Mr. Lawler:** Does my hon. Friend agree that it is slightly ironic that the more the Government do to increase the number of people in training to fill skill shortages, the more the Opposition seem to protest?

**Mr. Trippier:** I could not agree more. The Opposition are in a dilemma. They complain, as the hon. Member for Heywood and Middleton (Mr. Callaghan) has done, that we need skills training, yet when we introduce new programmes, as we did last week, they complain. They cannot have it both ways.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** Has the Minister seen the interview with the Secretary of State in today's edition of the *Yorkshire Post*, in which he said that he would advise young unemployed persons to seek employment in the service sector or in tourism? If that is the case, is it any wonder that we have skill shortages in our manufacturing industry?

**Mr. Trippier:** I have heard my right hon. Friend say similar things in the past, which I must agree, in the sense that although we all recognise—somebody must say it from the Despatch Box—that manufacturing industry is the most important sector of the British economy and it will be the wealth creator, we cannot see in Yorkshire, Lancashire or elsewhere in the United Kingdom that it will be a job creator in the future. Because of higher productivity per man and modern technology, manufacturing industry is more likely to shed labour, even though it is increasing its profitability.

**Mr. Forman:** Notwithstanding the £1·5 million that I think the Government have allocated on an annual basis to various relevant training programmes during their period in office, does my hon. Friend accept that there is room for improvement in private sector training? Will he consider recommending to his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer either further tax relief for private sector training or, possibly, adult training allowances of some kind?

**Mr. Trippier:** I am happy to draw what my hon. Friend has said to the attention of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor. My hon. Friend is absolutely right about the earlier point that he made. It is important for us to recognise what the private sector is doing in training. Recently, I was greatly impressed by the work that it has been doing, particularly in distance learning. We now see a new module coming off the stocks approximately on a weekly basis.

**Mr. Sheerman:** Will the Minister accept that the Opposition have never been against youth training and that we are not against but are in favour of quality training? We do not believe that a scheme such as the job training scheme, which offers three weeks' training in six months of experience, matches up to the desperate skill shortages that are reported in the engineering, construction, and information and technology industries. Is it not a fact that the Government have destabilised and destroyed skills training and put nothing in its place and that it is about time they started to train people to compete?

**Mr. Trippier:** The hon. Gentleman must admit that if the JTS leads to a recognised qualification, or part thereof, that is respected by employers it is a move in the direction that he wishes to see. I am well aware of the first point that he made. Her Majesty's Opposition did not oppose the introduction of the MSC scheme or the youth training scheme. Nonetheless, they spend an inordinate length of time trying to rubbish it on every conceivable occasion.

### Unemployed Centres

9. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received regarding the funding of unemployed centres; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** We have received a number of representations from hon. Members and others about the value of funding centres for the unemployed under the community programme.

**Mr. Hayes:** I am sure that my hon. Friend is as dismayed as I am that he has been unable to receive a categorical assurance that the small minority of Left-wing activists who have wrecked the Harlow unemployed centre will not be involved in the management of it. Will he reassure unemployed people — that is the vulnerable people in Harlow who have been cynically manipulated —that there will be help from the MSC in other ways?

**Mr. Lee:** The centre in Harlow was given repeated warnings not to display political literature and was given every opportunity to put its house in order. According to the Wednesday 28 January edition of the *Morning Star*, a certain Danny Purton of the management committee said:

> "We are not prepared to censure posters put up by the unemployed, unless racist or sexist."

In other words, anything of a political nature is acceptable to him. Therefore, the centre will cease to operate, because funding will be withdrawn. My hon. Friend asked about the innocent people who will suffer because of the mindless minority. We shall do everything that we can, via the MSC and existing programmes, to be helpful and sympathetic.

**Ms. Richardson:** I understand that the Harlow unemployed centre was closed down very largely because of literature that was placed there by the campaign for action for benefits, a worthy organisation that is drawing attention to people who need benefits. Will the Minister ensure that, generally speaking, there is sufficient funding for unemployed centres to ensure that women who have either lost their chance of training in non-traditional skills, or who will never have a chance because of the closure of manual skill courses for women at skillcentres, can be provided with advice?

**Mr. Lee:** The hon. Lady's question goes somewhat wider than the question on the Order Paper. Via the MSC, we are continuing to fund 83 unemployed centres, at a cost of around £3·5 million per annum. There are about 670 places and they are equally available to women and men.

### Job Creation

10. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Paymaster General how many new jobs have been created since 1983.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** There were about 1,119,000 more people in work in September 1986 than there were in March 1983

**Mr. Yeo:** I congratulate my right hon. and learned Friend and, indeed, the whole Government on that achievement. As the labour force is likely to grow very much more slowly in the next five or six years than it has grown since 1983, even if the present trend of job creation is merely maintained, is it not right that we can look forward to a significant reduction in unemployment?

**Mr. Clarke:** I agree with my hon. Friend. There have been more people in work in every quarter since 1983, and the growth in new jobs is now outstripping the number of school leavers and women who are entering the market for the first time. That is giving rise to this extremely encouraging downward trend in unemployment, and there is every prospect that that trend will be maintained.

**Mr. James Hamilton:** Is the Minister aware that instead of creating jobs in my constituency there has been a demolition job, with the ruthless closure of the Caterpillar Tractor Company, without any consultation with the union, and that 1,221 jobs are involved? If the Minister obtains all the information from the Secretary of State for Scotland, he will find that the Department was taken for a buggy ride as well as myself. I notice that there was a £62·5 million development programme, yet at the end of the day the plant was ruthlessly closed. Will the Minister take that on board now and do something about it?

**Mr. Clarke:** I have been following the case. I agree entirely with all the comments of my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland about this very unfortunate proposal. In other cases where there have been unavoidable closures of old, traditional industries that have outlived their competitiveness or have failed to keep their place in the market, there has been the steady replacement of large employers by new jobs, the expansion of existing businesses and particularly a growth in self-employment and small businesses. That has to be encouraged, particularly in Scotland. On balance, in Scotland we are now seeing a growth in the total number of people who are employed. I agree that efforts will have to be redoubled in the hon. Member's constituency if this American firm goes ahead with the proposal about which he and others are arguing.

**Mr. Spencer:** Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that in those areas that are covered by inner city task forces the power of local authorities to insert local labour only clauses should be more extensively used?

**Mr. Clarke:** We have taken advantage of the inner city projects to provide work experience and training for local people as well as to refurbish buildings in a number of places, most notably by means of a large contract in Birmingham. If we could obtain the co-operation of all local authorities in the inner city task force areas, I am sure that we could build on that kind of approach. My hon. and learned Friend knows that in Leicester we continue to face the implacable hostility of the city council and the total indecision of the county council. I keep hoping that that will improve, but undoubtedly it slows up the progress that we are making and slows up the provision of jobs and training for local people.

**Ms. Clare Short:** Does the Minister agree that there are still fewer people in employment in Britain now than there were in 1979, that the decline in employment in manufacturing is more than 2 million and is still continuing, that 500,000 of the so-called new jobs are in self-employment—largely people who had good wages, but who are now struggling to survive — that employment for men is still declining, and has continued to decline since 1983, and that 200,000 of the so-called new jobs are simply an expansion of the community programme?

**Mr. Clarke:** In 1979 we had hyper-inflation, a great deal of British industry was over-manned and uncompetitive and we entered a severe world recession. Undoubtedly, that permanently lost us many jobs. However, since 1983 there has been a sustained growth in the number of people working in this country. There is nothing wrong with the fact that half those people are in self-employment, despite the fact that the Labour party is hostile to the whole idea that people might work on their own account. There is nothing wrong with the fact that more women are taking up part-time jobs, although that accounts for only about a quarter of the growth that is taking place. Now that we have growth with low inflation and better industrial relations, we are seeing more employment and falling unemployment.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Michael Hirst** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 3 February.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

**Mr. Hirst:** In relation to the Zircon affair, will my right hon. Friend confirm that the Metropolitan police asked the BBC to co-operate but the BBC refused to do so unless the police went through all the legal processes? — *[Interruption.]* Is she aware that when asked by the police where the relevant tapes and files were held, the BBC replied to the effect, "You will have to take the lot"?— *[Interruption.]* Can she also confirm that the BBC's solicitor liaised in the drafting of the warrant and that information and the relevant material that was held in Glasgow was disclosed to the police by Duncan Campbell himself?

**The Prime Minister:** I am sure that the House will be very interested in what my hon. Friend has to say. However, he will know that these are not matters for Her Majesty's Government — *[Interruption.]* It is for the police to decide whether to apply for a search warrant and for the courts to decide whether to grant the application. The Government do not give orders to the police as to how —*[Interruption.]*—when, and where the law should be applied.

**Mr. Kinnock:** Does the Prime Minister recall saying 10 days ago that the courts are very rightly concerned to protect the liberties of the people and that they will not just give a blanket injunction not to publish? What is her view of action which results in the blanket confiscation of five films and other material, which nobody ever suggested relate to national security, with all the consequent prohibition of the right to publish?

**The Prime Minister:** As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General said in a written reply on 29 January 1987:

> "On Friday 23 January 1987 the Director of Public Prosecutions, at the request of the Attorney-General, asked the Metropolitan police to investigate possible breaches of the Official Secrets Act 1911 arising out of the publication in the *New Statesman* magazine of a report entitled 'The Parliamentary bypass operation'." — [*Official Report*, 29 January 1987; Vol. 109, c. *320*.]

Clearly, it is a criminal case under the Official Secrets Act. As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, in criminal cases it is for the police to decide whether to apply for a search warrant, and it is for the courts to decide whether to grant the application. The police did decide to apply for a search warrant and it was the courts which decided to grant the application. That has never been a matter for the Government, for past Home Secretaries or for past Secretaries of State for Scotland, and it is not a matter for the present Government.

**Mr. Kinnock:** Does that reply not make it clear that, contrary to what the Secretary of State for Scotland said yesterday, all this action has been initiated directly by the Attorney-General, one of the Prime Minister's Ministers? Why is it that a few months ago a discussion with the BBC was, in the Prime Minister's words, sufficient to stop one film, but it is now found necessary to undertake an invasion of the BBC to stop five films? Is it not the case that since 22 January every action by the Government has been prompted, not by considerations of national security, but by an obsession to save the Prime Minister's face?

**The Prime Minister:** The right hon. Gentleman is deliberately trying to muddle the injunction with matters of criminal law. He knows full well that decisions to prosecute on matters under the criminal law are for the Attorney-General in his prosecuting capacity, and not for the Government in any way. It would be wholly wrong if they were. The right hon. Gentleman knows full well that it is for the police to decide whether to apply for a search warrant; the police took the decision to apply. It is for the courts to decide whether to grant the application; the courts decided to grant it. I would have thought that, having agreed that a vital matter of national security was at stake, the right hon. Gentleman would also agree that the police were right to investigate how the information was leaked. Instead, he and his party are now once again attacking the police.

**Mr. Kinnock:** The Prime Minister has good cause to know that I shall do everything to safeguard national security—*[Interruption.]*—but she also has good cause to know that I shall never protect her from the effects of her incompetence and the injustice that she perpetrates.

**The Prime Minister:** The right hon. Gentleman will do everything except support the police in carrying out—*[Interruption.]*—their independent, impartial duties. Their duties are to the law. They carry out their duties impartially, and how they carry them out is not a matter for the Government. The day the Government direct the police about what they do or how they carry out their duties will be the day the rule of law will die, and, with it, freedom.

**Mr. Kinnock** *rose*——

**Hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a serious matter.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I call Mr. Kinnock.

**Mr. Kinnock:** The Prime Minister is killing the rule of law and with it the reputation of the police. Why does she not stand up and admit that she is the initiator of this action and that it has nothing to do with national security? Is she not big enough to admit that she is trying to cover up her incompetence with this injustice?

**The Prime Minister:** As usual, the right hon. Gentleman is completely muddling a civil action or injunction with the issue of the right of the criminal law to investigate how secret information came into unauthorised hands. The latter is a matter for the Attorney-General in his legal capacity; it is not a matter for the Government. *[Interruption.]* It is no good the right hon. Gentleman shouting at me in that hysterical fashion. The criminal law is a matter for the Attorney-General, not the Government.

**Mr. Heseltine:** Does my right hon. Friend recognise that it is the overwhelming opinion of the House that a serious breach of national security has taken place and that the police are right to investigate it in every way they consider possible? Does she agree that the Leader of the Opposition only reveals his ignorance of government in pretending that it is in some way a political direction which tells the police how to carry out their responsibilities?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, my right hon. Friend is correct. The Government do not give orders to the police as to how, when or where to enforce the law, nor do they wish to have any powers to do so. If any Government wanted to do so, that would be the end of the rule of law and freedom in this country.

**Mr. Steel:** As the Prime Minister continues to reject the idea of creating a senior parliamentary Committee on security issues—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"]—will she say what objective test there is of what constitutes national security, or do we just have to accept that it is what the Prime Minister says it is at any given moment?

**The Prime Minister:** As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition first said that if a Government say that there is a serious matter of national security at stake, their word must be taken, certainly by the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition. The right hon. Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) will also be aware that the Government whom he supported and kept in power issued a White Paper on the Official Secrets Act 1911. That White Paper, issued in 1978, said:

"There is likely to be a broad measure of agreement that information about defence measures and equipment deserves to be protected by the criminal law."

The White Paper continued to state that matters in the legislation that was then proposed for replacing the official Secrets Act:

"should apply to official information relating to matters which concern or affect the defence or security of the realm, including in particular those matters set out in the paragraphs below . . . military weapons, stores and equipment of all kinds, including nuclear weapons, ships, aircraft, vehicles, communications systems and all means of warfare;"

The Opposition seem to have forgotten that White Paper.

**Mrs. Ann Winterton:** To change the subject, Mr. Speaker, and bearing in mind the firemen's strike at Manchester airport, which is inconveniencing thousands of the travelling public in the north-west of England, does my right hon. Friend think that the time is right to introduce legislation to make such strikes illegal in essential services?

**The Prime Minister:** I know that this matter comes up from time to time and that many right hon. and hon. Members would like to introduce such legislation, if it could be made effective. It is not easy to make it effective, as many of us know. The matter is being further reviewed by the Government now because, unlike the Opposition, we believe that the public need protection and that the unions should not hold the public to ransom.

Q2. **Mr. McNamara** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 3 February.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. McNamara:** Is it not about time that the right hon. Lady came clean about the activities of the Attorney-General and his dining with people who are subject to criminal inquiries? [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh!"] Is she aware that the Attorney-General had Mr. Duncan Campbell as his guest at the Garrick in 1985 and that on 17 July last year, he had lunch with Mr. Duncan Campbell at the BBC's expense—[HON. MEMBERS: "Oh"]—to discuss the "Secret Society" series? Is she further aware that, amidst the documents seized by the special branch, was the Attorney-General's note of thanks and Mr. Campbell's full note of that discussion? Should not that note now be put in the public domain?

**The Prime Minister:** I believe that my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General effectively dealt with that matter in the House at the beginning of his speech when we had a debate the other day.

**Mr. Sayeed:** Will my right hon. Friend find time to read the report of yesterday's debate on the Royal Navy? When she does, she will recognise and understand the widespread concern that exists over the decline of our maritime capability. At the same time, she will note many practical suggestions that have been made to reverse that decline. Will she urge those suggestions on her right hon. Friends?

**The Prime Minister:** I am aware of the concern caused by that matter. Even during a period when the capital allowances were very generous, many ships were flagged out to different countries. We are particularly concerned that there should be sufficient officers and men of the merchant marine, and for that reason my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport made his announcement a few weeks ago about helping with fares to enable them to fly back at the Government's expense, to ensure that we have enough.

Q3. **Mr. McWilliam** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 3 February.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. McWilliam:** Is the Prime Minister aware of the statement by the Archbishop of Canterbury that there is an inflammable mixture of frustration, lack of hope and helplessness in the urban communities? Is that not a damning condemnation of the policies of her Government?

**The Prime Minister:** It so happens that I read the entire —*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I ask the House to give the Prime Minister a fair hearing.

**The Prime Minister:** I read the entire report of the debate in another place the other day and found it all interesting, including all the speeches and the reply of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment. I also found interesting the speech of another Member in the other place who said that if in 1979 we had said that £1 billion would be spent on the inner cities to assist them, it would have been thought that that would solve the problems. Since 1979 some £2·2 billion has been spent on the inner cities. That is evidence that it is not money alone that will solve that fundamental problem.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** I hope that hon. Members will raise genuine points of order that I can deal with and that it will not be a continuation of Question Time.

**Mr. Rowe:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Leader of the Opposition's desperate need to reinforce—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. That is just what I was hoping the hon. Gentleman would not say.

**Mr. Robin Cook:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I wish to raise the matter of tabling documents before the House. Before I do so I refer you to page 433 of "Erskine May" where it is written:

> "A Minister of the Crown may not read or quote from a despatch or other state paper not before the House, unless he is prepared to lay it upon the Table . . . A Minister who summarises a correspondence, but does not actually quote from it, is not bound to lay it upon the Table."

I refer you, Mr. Speaker, to the correspondence quoted by the Solicitor-General at the end of Tuesday's debate. You will recall that that was a direct quotation by the Solicitor-General, not a summary of the letter. It is now evident that there were material omissions from the quotation, notably the concluding passage, which states:

> "Look forward to seeing you on Thursday.
> Yours ever, Michael."

I put it to you that it would be appropriate for the House to request that that correspondence be laid upon the Table on two counts. First, such a step would be in accordance with the precedent clearly set out in "Erskine May". Secondly, it has direct and relevant bearing on the debate we are about to commence, in that it demonstrates that last July the Attorney-General was in discussion with Mr. Campbell concerning a film that special branch found it necessary to impound at the weekend. In view of the extraordinary contradiction clearly revealed in the correspondence, is the House not entitled to see both letters?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman correctly draws the attention of the House and of myself to "Erskine May". However, the item quoted was a letter and not a state paper or a dispatch. I see no reason why it should be laid.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Bearing in mind your proper ruling that there should not be a continuation of Question Time, and also bearing in mind that we have a debate to follow, which you rightly ruled on, of three hours, is it right that half of Question Time should be taken up with points essentially concerning that debate? How, in a short Question Time, do other important matters get discussed? Is it right for trailers to go on and on and on?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman knows that I have no control over what is said provided it is in order, and it was in order.

**Mr. Squire:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. You are, of course, the defender of the rights of Back Benchers, who make up the majority of this House. Ever since I have been in this House I have noticed that during Question Time, particularly that of the Prime Minister, there has tended to be an average of three questions from the Opposition Front Bench rather than two. May I ask, Mr. Speaker, that you give careful consideration to the average being two questions and the exception being three rather than four?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let me deal with one thing at a time. I think that the hon. Gentleman's arithmetic is faulty. If he will go to the Library he will see that the average has been much nearer four to five than three, and that is what I try to achieve for Back-Benchers.

**Mr. Bell:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Arising out of the response given to the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara), who referred to certain alleged lunches at the Garrick club between Mr. Duncan Campbell and the Attorney-General——

**Mr. Speaker:** Yes, but that is an extension of Question Time, and I have already ruled one hon. Member out of order. I must say to the House that we have a busy day ahead of us, with a very important debate. I can rule only on matters that are directly my responsibility.

**Mr. Nicholls** *rose*——

**Mr. Harris** *rose*——

**Mr. Skinner** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, Mr. Nicholls.

**Mr. Nicholls:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, arising out of your statement. You have said on many occasions that you are the guardian of Back-Bench liberties. I make no complaint about the fact that I was not able to catch your eye today, but the guidance that I am asking for is this. The fact that I was not able to catch your eye today —and many hon. Members on both sides of the House were not able to do so either—was directly because of the amount of time taken up by the Leader of the Opposition. Surely you should do something about the fact that the Leader of the Opposition cannot control his temper and ask a concise question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I think I mistook the point of order raised by the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire) a moment ago. I think I misinterpreted what the hon. Gentleman was saying. The average number of Back Benchers called at Prime Minister's Question Time is five and, on one occasion, as many as 15 on one day. The hon. Gentleman was referring to supplementary questions by the Leader of the Opposition. A certain discretion is and always has been given to the Front Bench.

**Mr. Skinner:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. When my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) raised his point of order with you and you gave the reply, you may have noticed that, at the point when you were replying to my hon. Friend, the Attorney-General advanced towards the Despatch Box and, having got there, the Prime Minister obviously told him not to open his mouth.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that I am not responsible for hon. Members who may be entering or leaving the Chamber. As far as I am concerned an hon. Member is called only when I call him from the Chair.

**Mr. Harris:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. As the procedures of this House are largely based on precedent, could you confirm that the fact that the Leader of the Opposition was called on four occasions during Prime Minister's Question Time—the first time this has ever happened in this House—does not set a precedent for the future?

**Mr. Speaker:** I have already dealt with that. The House knows that this is not a precedent. Leaders of the Opposition have on occasion—I confess not often—been called four times, and that is perfectly in order.

**Mr. Skinner:** I have not finished my point of order.

**Mr. Strang:** Further to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, on the point of order raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook). Would it be of help to the House if you could clarify the distinction between a letter signed by a member of the Government on official business and an official document?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) quoted from "Erskine May." That which was quoted by the Solicitor-General was a letter and not a state document or a dispatch. I have nothing further to add to what I have already said.

**Mr. Skinner** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I think we should move on because we have an important day ahead of us.

**Mr. Skinner:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I must tell the hon. Gentleman that he did not get his point of order in order on the first occasion, and it was not a point of order.

**Mr. Skinner:** It is a point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am not prepared to take it.

## Freehold Entitlement

3.41 pm

**Sir Brandon Rhys Williams** (Kensington): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to extend the right of enfranchisement to resident leaseholders of properties excluded by reason of their rateable value

As I do not think that this is a very controversial proposal, I shall make my remarks as brief as I can.

When Parliament passed the important Leasehold Reform Act 1967, it conferred the right of home ownership on residents in houses let on leases of 21 years or more and gave the benefit of home ownership to many hundreds of thousands of people in all parts of the country. But the Act contained an anomaly. It excluded a substantial number of people living in the most expensive properties. After the new rating assessments which were made in 1973, these properties were those in the Greater London area whose rateable value was in excess of £1,500 and elsewhere in excess of £750. Therefore, there are now still thousands of people in inner London and, I would imagine, a considerable number of people in other parts of the country—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I must ask the House to give the hon. Gentleman a fair hearing.

**Sir Brandon Rhys Williams:** There are thousands of people in inner London and a considerable number of people, I believe, in other parts of the country who are deprived of the right of home ownership because their properties have this high rateable value.

I calculate that in Kensington, which I have the honour to represent, there are hundreds of properties which are affected by this exclusion from the right of enfranchisement. I think that the House will agree that this is a totally unfair and unreasonable form of discrimination. Indeed, I am sure that no one would wish this situation to continue. The object of my Bill, therefore, is to remove this barrier of the upper limit which is set in relation to the rateable value.

I should like, briefly, to make three points. There is no fear that if my Bill were passed it would result in sudden, drastic changes in the appearance of areas which Londoners value as they are because — certainly in Kensington and, I think, in other parts of London where the Bill would apply—the local authorities have already declared conservation areas; I do not think that the objection which concerned Parliament in 1967 any longer has any force.

On the question of valuation, I should like to make it perfectly clear that I am not proposing any element of confiscation. The Bill which I hope to introduce will contain a formula which I think should be based on highly qualified professional advice and which will be scrupulously fair to both the parties. There is no question of the owners of the freehold being obliged to part with their property on unreasonable terms.

Thirdly, I should like to say to those who fear that the passing of my Bill would mean the end of long leasehold as a form of tenure, that I do not regard that as a matter for very deep regret. The time has come to stop playing Normans and Saxons with regard to home ownership. Everyone should be entitled to own the home in which they live and I am not content that there should be large numbers of people living in Kensington — and other parts of inner London—who are second-rate citizens in that respect. We do not want any second-rate citizens in Kensington or in any other part of the country.

Everyone should be entitled to the benefit of home ownership. I hope, therefore, that the House will give me leave to introduce my Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Bill ordered to be brought in by Sir Brandon Rhys Williams, Mr. Gerald Bowden, Mr. Hugh Dykes, Sir Geoffrey Finsberg, Mr. John Heddle and Mr. John Wheeler.

### FREEHOLD ENTITLEMENT

Sir Brandon Rhys Williams accordingly presented a Bill to extend the right of enfranchisement to resident leaseholders of properties excluded by reason of their rateable value: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 3 April and to be printed. [Bill 62.]

## Special Branch Activities

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Page 269 of "Erskine May" deals with the sound broadcasting of parliamentary proceedings. The BBC is deeply involved in this issue. Last night, the 9 o'clock BBC news led with 13 minutes on the subject, whereas the ITN news had a much shorter display. The BBC had the item first, whereas ITN had it second. Of the last four emergency debates, only one has been broadcast. I am not saying that this debate should or should not be broadcast, but there is no doubt that the BBC is a participant in the controversy, and has a vested interest in broadcasting the debate.

Page 269 of "Erskine May" says that the broadcasting of debates should be

> "subject to directions of the House."

How can the House have some sort of control over the broadcasting of these subjects, in which the BBC is deeply involved and has a vested interest in ensuring a disproportionate amount of publicity?

It may be that this matter should be referred to the appropriate Committee, but I understand that the issue is subject to the directions of the House. What action can the House take today to decide whether the debate should or should not be broadcast? At the very least, the matter should be discussed.

**Mr. Eric Forth** (Mid-Worcestershire): Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Can you say whether any authorities within the House were approached by the BBC before its decision to broadcast the debate was taken, or whether any authorities in the House chose to deliberate on the matter before the BBC decided to broadcast it? Surely it is not good enough that we are faced with a fait accompli and that what my hon. Friend has proposed will come after the decision and after the broadcast has taken place

**Mr. Speaker:** If both hon. Gentlemen feel strongly about this, their proper course is to bring it to the attention of the Broadcasting Committee. There is a great deal of interest in this debate, not only in the House but in the country at large, and we should proceed with the debate.

**Sir Kenneth Lewis** (Stamford and Spalding): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is an important debate. Does the hon. Gentleman have a helpful and genuine point of order?

**Sir Kenneth Lewis:** Do you agree, Mr. Speaker, that it is no bad thing that the debate should be heard by the country?

**Mr. Roger Gale** (Thanet, North): May we have your undertaking, Mr. Speaker, that not only will the debate be broadcast but that it will all be broadcast?

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not turn up the knobs.

3.50 pm

**Mr. Gerald Kaufman** (Manchester, Gorton): I beg to move,

That this House do now adjourn.

We are debating events which took place during the past few days, but those events trace back their origins to many months ago. It was in November 1985 that BBC Scotland commissioned Mr. Duncan Campbell to make a six-part series called "The Secret Society".

The hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney) yesterday traduced the BBC for engaging Mr. Campbell, and Mr. Campbell for being the kind of journalist that he is. Mr. Campbell certainly has a reputation for being troublesome, but he has been just as troublesome to Labour Governments as to Conservative Governments, and I have no doubt that he will be so again as soon as he is given the opportunity. That is the mark of an independent journalist.

**Mr. Ray Whitney** (Wycombe) *rose*——

**Mr. Marlow** *rose*——

**Mr. Kaufman:** The mark of an independent journalist is to be troublesome to everybody.

It was in June last year that Mr. Campbell, in an interview, raised the secret Zircon project——

**Mr. Whitney:** Is the right hon. Gentleman telling the House that if he had been Home Secretary instead of the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) he would not have been party to the prosecution of Mr. Campbell? Is he also saying that the BBC should have entrusted a programme on the nation's secrets to a man with such a record?

**Mr. Kaufman:** The hon. Gentleman has not been listening to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister made it clear that Home Secretaries are not parties to prosecutions.

It was in June last year that Mr. Campbell, in an interview, raised the secret Zircon project with Sir Ronald Mason, the ex-chief scientist at the Ministry of Defence, and it was about that time that the Government became aware of the projected "Secret Society" series. The Prime Minister confirmed that in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) on Monday last week.

In that same answer the Prime Minister said:

> "The Government became aware . . . of the intention to include specific material on a secret defence project in October 1986."

October 1986 was four months ago. It was then that alarm bells should have been ringing in the Ministry of Defence, in the Attorney-General's office, and in Downing street itself. If specific material relating to a secret defence project was, in October 1986, known to be in the possession of Mr. Campbell and others, surely that was the time when, in the interests of national security, Mr. Campbell and others should have been questioned, warrants should have been issued, any necessary searches should have been made, and, if appropriate, persons should have been charged under the Official Secrets Act. But none of those actions was taken.

Instead, all that happened, in the Prime Minister's own words, was:

> "Discussions then took place between the Government and the BBC, which subsequently decided on grounds of national security not to show the material on the project."—[*Official Report*, 26 January 1987; Vol. 109, c. *18*.]

So all that the Government did to protect the nation's security was to have a friendly chat with the BBC and remain apparently content that secret material should still be available to possibly numerous non-authorised persons, none of whom, including Mr. Campbell, was questioned, let alone charged. That surely was a culpably negligent way in which to treat secret material affecting national security.

The Government by then knew that five other programmes were to form part of "The Secret Society" series, yet they expressed no concern about them. They had no discussions with the BBC about them. They made no request whatever to the BBC not to show any or all of those five other programmes.

Last week the Prime Minister sought to obtain credit from the Government's actions when she boasted to my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition:

> "In October 1986 the Government learned of the BBC's intention to show specific material on a secret defence project. Discussions took place between the Government and the BBC, which subsequently decided, as a result of those discussions, not to show the material on the project. Therefore, the discussions were successful."

The Prime Minister clearly thought that that point was so telling that she repeated it several times. She said:

> "The discussions with the BBC were successful."

A little later she said:

> "As a result of the action which the Government took . . . the BBC did not show that film."—[*Official Report*, 27 January 1987; Vol. 109, c. 177-78.]

If the Government were as successful as the Prime Minister claims, presumably the success was a complete success. Presumably the Government had no other concerns about the "Secret Society" programmes. Presumably they had no misgivings on security grounds with the other five programmes in this series.

On 22 January the Foreign Secretary invited my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and other Labour Members to a security briefing on the Zircon project, following which the Labour Members, as the Prime Minister mentioned again this afternoon, accepted that national security was sufficiently involved in the material of that programme.

The acceptance of that contention has been used again today for partisan purposes by the Prime Minister, but characteristically she has never expressed the tiniest acknowledgement of the concern of the Leader of the Opposition for national security. None of the Labour Members would contemplate revealing what was communicated to them at that secret briefing, but they are perfectly free to disclose what was not communicated to them at that briefing. Therefore, let me make it absolutely clear that no indication of any kind was given to my right hon. Friends that national security was involved in any way in any of the other five programmes.

That was not surprising in view of the content of the programmes which is as follows. Data: the threat posed by computer data banks to the citizen's right of privacy and whether the current legal safeguards are adequate. Powers: an account of the plans which exist for the government of Britain in a wartime emergency. Police: an account of the work of the Association of Chief Police Officers. Radar: an account of the problems which have attended the updating of Britain's air defences since the war and includes contributions from the Royal Air Force. One issue which some people may regard as being detrimental to national security is a programme about the work of certain Cabinet Committees.

However, the Government did not complain about any of that, so why, in investigating the security leak involving the Zircon programme, have the police been ordered to seize material relating to the five other programmes?

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** (Bury St. Edmunds): The right hon. Gentleman said that the police were "ordered". Would he like to say by whom?

**Mr. Kaufman:** I shall come to that matter in my own time and in my own way.

Today's *Daily Mail* claims that already material seized from the BBC last weekend contains "red hot secrets". If that is so, we must face the fact that those red hot secrets have been lying around in the BBC's offices in Glasgow for months, available to any Soviet agent who wanders in.

If that newspaper story is true, the Government are once again revealed as culpably negligent with the nation's security. If it is not true, and if the Government's inaction on these programmes and this material is properly based on acceptance that they are innocuous in security terms, we must ask why, at this late stage, material without security implications has been seized in a massive police fishing expedition, with the use of a catch-all warrant going far beyond the accepted scope for such searches.

Therefore, there are already key questions that the Home Secretary must answer when he replies. As it was known for months that Mr. Duncan Campbell was in possession of secret material that the Government regard as damaging to national security, why was no action taken until two months ago? As not only Mr. Campbell's informant or informants but Mr. Campbell himself must, if the Government are right, be in breach of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911, why have arrests not been made and why have charges not been brought? Why, instead, have there been those vengeful and spiteful fishing expeditions against Mr. Campbell and the *New Statesman?*

I understand that when the police called on Mr. Campbell the other weekend some of them spent part of their time reading back issues of the *New Stateman*. If they had gone back for enough, they would have had a worthwhile intellectual experience.

The *New Statesman* is a ready-made victim because of being what the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine)—a peculiar and rare example of a rat trying to jump back on to a sinking ship—labelled an organ of Left-wing opinion. The Prime Minister was ready to echo her errant right hon. Friend's opinion last week, but for a very different purpose. She said, in response to my right hon. Friend the Member for Islwyn (Mr. Kinnock):

> "I suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that I think he should direct his strictures at Left-wing organs such as the *New Statesman* which have, in spite of the fact that the BBC refused to show the film, deliberately attempted to release material which is contrary to national security."

The right hon. Lady emphasised her point later by saying:

> "The action of the Government prevented the showing of the film"—

she realised that her slip was showing and corrected herself—

> "or the BBC agreed not to show the film. The trouble has arisen because of Left-wing organs like the *New Statesman*."—[*Official Report*, 27 January 1987; Vol. 109, c. 178-181.]

So the *New Statesman* was the baddie in contrast with the BBC, which was the goodie. The BBC co-operated with the Government and, at the Government's instigation, refused to show the film. The Prime Minister now shows her gratitude to that public-spirited organisation, which complied with her wishes and was so patriotic in comparison with the extremist *New Statesman* by letting loose the special branch on the BBC's headquarters in Glasgow—where, among the van-loads of subversive material that was taken away was archive film of the state opening of Parliament.

*[Mr. Kaufman]*

Ministers, including the Prime Minister, will say, "It was not us." Yesterday the House was treated to the extraordinary spectacle of the Secretary of State for Scotland denying any responsibility by anyone for the police raid on the BBC. He implied that it had taken place as the result of a process of spontaneous combustion. I would have said divine inspiration, but the raid was carried out by the Metropolitan police, not the Greater Manchester police.

The Secretary of State for Scotland was clearly upset that the exploding parcel of answering Parliament on this difficult issue had landed in his lap. He showed that it was nothing to do with him by making it clear in his first sentence that the action was by the Metropolitan police, and then pointedly mentioning the Metropolitan police a further eight times. He also specifically complained, on a couple of occasions, that the private notice question had been been put to him. However, Mr. Speaker, both you and the Secretary of State are aware that it was the Home Secretary whom we wished to question. You will also be aware of the reasons why that was not possible, through no fault of ours. The fact that the Home Secretary never wanted to answer was obvious yesterday from the frantic way in which he repeatedly gesticulated towards the Secretary of State for Scotland whenever we indicated that he, the Home Secretary, might have a responsibility.

Of course, as police authority for London, the Home Secretary has personal and parliamentary responsibility for every action by the Metropolitan police. However, it is not only the Home Secretary who is answerable to this House for what has taken place; it is the entire Government under the leadership of the Prime Minister. Therefore, I hope that the Home Secretary will answer — or deny if what I put to him is inaccurate — our contention that the Prime Minister, at a meeting in her room in this House the week before last, with the Attorney-General present, gave the Foreign Secretary direct responsibility for clearing up the mess left by the Zircon bungle. It is now said that it was at a meeting chaired by the Foreign Secretary, and attended by, among others, the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General, that policy decisions were taken on how to handle the Zircon problem.

When the Home Secretary replies, will he specifically state whether such a meeting took place? Only if he denies that will we be convinced, and silence will be taken as confirmation — *[Interruption.]* All the right hon. Gentleman has to do is say "No".

If the Secretary of State for Scotland is to be believed, the Metropolitan police suddenly took it into their heads that it would be an interesting way to pass time if they raided the BBC offices in Glasgow. He said that

> "the decision to apply for a search warrant was taken at the request of the Metropolitan police."

He challenged anyone to question the divine right of autonomy of the special branch.

However, the matter is not quite that simple. The Secretary of State, being as unscrupulous and shifty as he thought it possible to get away with — and being too sensible to try to lie — gave the game away with obscure phraseology about petitions being presented to the sheriff of Glasgow by the procurator fiscal

> "with the authority my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Advocate."—[*Official Report*, 2 February 1987; Vol. 109, c. 695.]

Who exactly is the Lord Advocate? His name is Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, and he has many distinguished predecessors, most notably the father-in-law of my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell). The most relevant aspect of the office of Lord Advocate, in the context of this controversy, is what is said about him in a certain highly relevant Act of Parliament, section 12 of which states:

> "The expression 'Attorney-General' means the Attorney or Solicitor-General for England; and as respects Scotland, means the Lord Advocate."

Section 8 provides:

> "A prosecution for an offence under this Act shall not be instituted except by or with the consent of the Attorney-General:"

No prizes—it is from the Official Secrets Act 1911.

**Mr. Jerry Hayes** (Harlow) *rose*——

**Mr. Kaufman:** What was the Secretary of State for Scotland seeking to conceal from this House yesterday? It was that when the special branch raided the BBC in Glasgow with warrants citing, first, section 9 and then section 2 of the Official Secrets Act they did so not on their own initiative but in accordance with a statute that places the right to institute prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act solely with the Attorney-General.

I wish to quote a written answer, part of which the Prime Minister quoted at Question Time today. Anyone who has the patience to read the fine print could have linked the Attorney-General with the raid by studying that written answer given last Thursday, not surprisingly, to my hon. Friend the Member for Workington. I shall read that quote in its entirety and not partially, as the Prime Minister did today:

> "**The Attorney-General:** On Friday 23 January 1987 the Director of Public Prosecutions, at the request of the Attorney-General, asked the Metropolitan police to investigate possible breaches of the Official Secrets Act 1911 arising out of the publication in the *New Statesman* magazine of a report entitled 'The Parliamentary bypass operation'. It is the policy of both the Attorney-General and the Director of Public Prosecutions not to give details of advice provided to police about the conduct of current investigations."—[*Official Report*, 29 January 1987; Vol. 109, c. *330*.]

It was the Attorney-General who launched this whole train of events—the answer makes that clear. Unless we get a specific denial today, we have the right to take it that it was either the Attorney-General——

**Mr. Hayes** *rose*——

**Mr. Kaufman:** It is the Attorney-General's answer that I am quoting. If hon. Members do not like it, they should take it up with the Attorney-General.

**Mr. Hayes** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The right hon. Gentleman is not giving way.

**Mr. Kaufman:** Unless we get a specific denial today, we have the right to take it that it was either the Attorney-General or the Director of Public Prosecutions, working to the Attorney-General's instructions, who gave the police their orders to raid not only the *New Statesman* but also the BBC. The Attorney-General has the opportunity to tell the House; I will gladly give way if he wishes to do so. Did the Attorney-General take, initiate, authorise or consent to that action?

Of course that action was taken not on the instructions of a ministerial meeting that the Attorney-General had attended — no Attorney-General would do that — but after having consulted Ministers and taken cognisance of their views. We need an answer. [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer now."] I have asked the question and the House must draw its conclusions from the Attorney-General's reaction. *[Interruption]* If we have an answer from the Attorney-General at some stage, we shall study it in the context of the clear statement made by the Prime Minister in this House on 22 January when she said, with reference to the action taken on 22 January:

> "The Government took out and obtained an interim injunction"

She went on to repeat:

"the Government took that action."—[*Official Report*, 22 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 1021.]

**Mr. Hayes** *rose*——

**Mr. Michael Heseltine** (Henley) *rose*——

**Hon. Members:** Give way.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Both the right hon. Member and the hon. Member know that if the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) does not wish to give way they must not persist.

**Mr. Kaufman:** I shall give way to the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine).

**Mr. Heseltine:** In an earlier reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Bury St. Edmunds (Sir E. Griffiths) the right hon. Gentleman said that it was quite clear that orders had been given, yet it is clear that the right hon. Gentleman has no evidence of that whatsoever.

**Mr. Kaufman:** Is the right hon. Member for Henley saying that a group of special branch officers go to Heathrow, catch an aeroplane and go to the BBC headquarters in Glasgow at random, with absolutely nobody telling them to do so? *[Interruption.]* That is an interesting example of the kind of random gathering that will be made illegal under the Public Order Act 1986.

From the very beginning this whole train of events has borne the personal hallmark of the Prime Minister.

**Hon. Members:** Who gave the order?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This is a very serious debate and it is not helped by shouts of hon. Members on both sides from sedentary positions.

**Mr. Kaufman:** This debate is being broadcast and the public will hear how I am being shouted down. I am prepared to wait until hon. Members are silent.

The hallmark of the Prime Minister is bungling inefficiency coupled with arrogant authoritarianism. Everyone should have a concern for national security and, in so far as national security is involved in this episode, the Government have shown themselves to be slipshod and negligent.

Action to deal with the leak over the Zircon project has been delayed for months while the number of unauthorised people with access to that material has increased. The secret itself has become more and more widely known long before it was published in the *New Statesman*. Of course, the Prime Minister's definition of national security is not confined to material that might help the Russians militarily. It expands to take in material that would politically inconvenience her Government.

**Mr. Hayes** *rose*——

**Mr. Marlow:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it possible for the right hon. Gentleman to produce evidence for his allegations and accusations rather than indulging in personal abuse and trivia?

**Mr. Kaufman:** The Prime Minister does not seem to understand that national security must be upheld not in the absence of civil liberties but to protect our civil liberties. But to undermine our civil liberties is to undermine national security. The Prime Minister will authorise any action, however extreme or destructive of our liberties, to revenge herself on those who inconvenience her. That is the reason for the introduction into Britain, in Glasgow last weekend, of the 3 o'clock knock as a summons by the police.

That is the reason for the raid on the offices of our most internationally respected institution. That raid will have caused consternation among the BBC's many admirers abroad who are friends of Britain and will have caused satisfaction in Moscow. The raids on the BBC last weekend will be shown on Moscow's television screens again and again to undermine the BBC's reputation among uncommitted nations which respect and trust the BBC's broadcasts as the voice of decent democracy.

Yesterday, the *Glasgow Herald*——

**Mr. Albert McQuarrie** (Banff and Buchan): A good newspaper.

**Mr. Kaufman:** A very good newspaper. The *Glasgow Herald* said in its leading article:

> "Having thoroughly searched the offices of a dissident magazine, the secret police then worked through the night removing documents from the headquarters of the broadcasting organisation."

It continued:

> "It is not of Eastern Europe that we write but of our own dear free country. The actions of the Government in the Zircon affair began by seeming merely incompetent. They now appear incomprehensible and, worse, sinister."

The *Glasgow Herald* continued:

"what we are seeing is a political witchhunt."

It is the Prime Minister's style to use the cloak of national security for witch hunts. It is the Prime Minister's style, as in the Tisdall, Ponting and Massiter cases and now in this case, to manipulate the Official Secrets Act for political purposes. It is above all, against that arrogant and high-handed style of government that we shall be voting tonight.

4.21 pm

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd):** There is one point on which I agree with the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). He and I exchanged gesticulations across the Table yesterday when my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland was speaking. The right hon. Gentleman misunderstood the advice that I was trying to give him. I was suggesting that he might listen to my right hon. and learned Friend. If he had taken that advice, we would have been spared some of the amazing inaccuracies to which we have just listened.

It may be for the convenience of the House if I set out the sequence of events covered by the motion but, at the outset, I wish to make it clear, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland did yesterday, that I totally reject the charge that there has been interference by the Government in this police investigation.

*[Mr. Douglas Hurd]*

On 23 January, the Director of Public Prosecutions, at the request of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General in his prosecuting capacity, asked the Metropolitan police to investigate any criminal offences that may have been commited by those associated with the making of the television programme in the series "The Secret Society" dealing with a proposed intelligence-gathering project and the publication in the *New Statesman* of an article entitled "The Parliamentary Bypass Operation". Apart from the proper involvement of the Law Officers in England and Scotland, no Minister sought to direct the course of the police investigation which followed; no Minister sought to influence the course of the police investigation; and no Minister knew of the steps that the police were proposing in the course of their investigation.

This afternoon the Leader of the Opposition said that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister had been the initiator of all this action. He spoke in a passion and he was wholly wrong. The right hon. Member for Gorton, who made a carefully prepared speech, used exactly the same, or a very similar formulation, when he said that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister had unleashed the special branch on the offices. He produced no jot of evidence to suggest that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister had done anything of the kind. It is not sufficient in a matter of this importance to dress up generalised and prejudiced accusations of this kind.

I shall not describe meetings between Ministers — [HON. MEMBERS: "Oh."] — but, in response to the question asked by the right hon. Member for Gorton, I shall say this categorically: at no meeting of Ministers was prosecution discussed, for the simple reason that questions of prosecution are never discussed collectively between Ministers. As has been often described in the House, including by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General, those are matters for my right hon. and learned Friend in his prosecuting capacity. He does not consult his colleagues—indeed, he debars himself from consulting his colleagues on any matter relating to a prosecution.

There are on the Opposition Benches right hon. Gentlemen who have held the position of Prime Minister, Home Secretary or Law Officer of the Crown, either in England or in Scotland. They know how that procedure worked in their time. That is how the procedure works now and, for the reasons which I shall give, I believe that is how it should work in future. That is to say, once an investigation has been set in hand, it should be for the police and not for politicians to decide how it should be carried out within the law.

There is no argument between the two sides of the House that a grave breach of national security occurred. No one has been stronger on that point than the Leader of the Opposition. On 22 January, during Prime Minister's Questions, he agreed that the material in question was prejudicial to national security. Five days later, on 27 January, he went further and asked my right hon. Friend:

> "Does the Prime Minister really hope to convince the country that a chat with the BBC is a sufficient way in which to safeguard national security?" — [*Official Report*, 27 January 1987; Vol. 109, c. 178.]

The right hon. Gentleman clearly felt then that sterner measures should be taken, or should have been taken. But I would ask, in view of what the right hon. Member for Gorton said today and what the Leader of the Opposition has been spilling out for 48 hours, whether the Leader of the Opposition really hopes to convince the country that when a serious breach of national ecurity has occurred there should be no action by my right hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General to set in hand a police investigation or that that investigation should be anything less than determined and thorough.

I have continuing difficulty in understanding the thrust of the Opposition's argument. Are they saying that this investigation should not take place — that is the main thrust of their criticism — or are they saying that it should have taken place earlier? They cannot have it both ways.

**Mr. Neil Kinnock** (Islwyn): The right hon. Gentleman will know that the whole thrust has been criticism of the Government for eight months of complacency and inactivity followed by two weeks of intensive bullying or attempted bullying. I ask the right hon. Gentleman a question which the Prime Minister would not answer last week: why were there all those months of complacency and inactivity and recent days of hyper-activity? Why did the Government not take action on the basis of the information to which they had access as early as July or even June last year? Why did they leave it until they tried to cover their trail with injunctions and invasions of the BBC?

**Mr. Hurd:** So the right hon. Gentleman is not complaining of the investigation by the police — [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] I am coming to the question but I am making an observation. The Opposition must be clear whether they are now complaining that— [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer."]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. If the Home Secretary is answering the question, there is no point in intervening. Give him a chance.

**Mr. Hurd:** The point which the Leader of the Opposition has raised has already been fully debated in the House — [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] As my right hon. Friend——

**Mr. Kinnock:** Mr. Speaker's ruling was debated.

**Mr. Hurd:** The matter was fully debated in the House. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has pointed out, action was taken to persuade the BBC not to broadcast the programme. Then, when it was possible, because of information which became available, an injunction was taken out to prevent further showing of the film. It follows from what I have said that it is not for me to comment on the timing of a prosecution or of an investigation because that is not a matter for the collective decision of the Government. Having answered the question put by the Leader of the Opposition, I return to the question that I put to him: are the Opposition saying that this investigation should not have taken place — that has been the whole thrust of their criticism until now — or are they simply saying that it should have taken place earlier?

If national security is to be protected—again, there is no real argument between hon. Members on this matter — serious breaches must be investigated to see whether there is a case to bring before the courts. A failure, after a serious breach, to investigate how that breach occurred and who might have been responsible should rightly be condemned as a breach of elementary duty. At one amazing stage in his speech this afternoon, the Leader of the Opposition asked why there have not been arrests and charges. The answer is that the investigation is under way. Hon. Members should think about what the right hon. Gentleman would have said if there were arrests and charges before the investigation had been completed. He is standing the principles of justice on their head.

**Mr. Robin Cook** (Livingston): If it is the Home Secretary's case that the weekend raid was to collect evidence in the course of an investigation into a criminal offence, will he explain why it then was necessary for the police to remove both copies of the master tape for every programme? Surely the removal of identical copies of the same tape shows that this has nothing to do with the collection of evidence but everything to do with a wish to obstruct and intimidate the BBC.

**Mr. Hurd:** I shall refer to that point as I detail the sequence of events.

Following the request from the Director of Public Prosecutions to the Metropolitan police, search warrants were obtained by the police, through approaches to the Common Serjeant—he is equivalent to a circuit judge—in respect of four London premises. These warrants were secured under the special provisions in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 for obtaining search warrants in respect of journalistic material. One of these premises was, of course, the offices of the *New Statesman* magazine. Documents and other material were removed from all the four addresses and are still to be examined by the police. During the course of the searches, Mr. Campbell indicated to the police that most of the work for the film had been conducted while he had been staying in Scotland and that the research material was stored at the BBC headquarters in Glasgow.

I am informed that, on 26 January, Mr. Alan Protheroe, the BBC assistant director-general, was telephoned at BBC headquarters in London and asked whether he would be prepared to hand over the original film to help the police investigation. He stated that he was not prepared to do so because of the—[HON. MEMBERS: "Why not?"] Mr. Protheroe was within his rights. He said that he was not prepared to do so because of the possibility of breach of copyright, and he advised that if the police wanted the material they should attempt to obtain it through due legal process.

That is why the investigation then shifted to Scotland, as described by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State yesterday. He told the House of the visit of the officers of Strathclyde police, with members of the Metropolitan police special branch, to the BBC premises on 31 January, following the grant of a warrant by the sheriff in Glasgow. He described the legal exchanges that occurred on 31 January, as a result of which a revised warrant was obtained to search the premises of the BBC after an officer of the Metropolitan police had taken an oath before the sheriff. The warrant was then executed and material was removed from the premises of the BBC.

The material is now being examined to establish whether an offence may have been committed in Scotland and a report will be made to the procurator fiscal. At the same time, the Metropolitan police are examining the material in the context of their investigation into the breach of national security. I understand that the police intend to return any material that can be eliminated from their inquiries as soon as they can. They will retain only material that they consider provides possible evidence of an offence under the Official Secrets Act.

**Mr. Kinnock:** The Home Secretary, in part, has answered the question I wanted to raise. He has gained some reputation, at least in recent years, of being something of a libertarian. As it is the case that the police took themselves to Scotland because of the information provided by Mr. Campbell that research material would be available in Scotland, what is the Home Secretary's view of the decision to take away all copies of film, together with research material, rather than at least leaving the BBC with one copy of each film? Why does he believe—no one has even suggested that the other five films had anything to do with national security—that there was any justification for taking them away?

**Mr. Hurd:** I was about to refer to that point because the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) raised it, and I promised to refer to it. I understand that the material on which the programmes were based is so interwoven that it was not possible——

**Mr. Kinnock** *rose*——

**Mr. Hurd:** The right hon. Gentleman misses the point because he continues to believe that the purpose of this operation is to do with the showing of the films. That is not so. This is a criminal investigation designed to establish whether a breach of security took place, how it took place, who was involved and whether there is a case for prosecution. Therefore, we are dealing not just with the films but with the whole of the material that may be relevant to such an investigation. I understand that the material on which the programmes were based is so interwoven that it was not possible immediately to disentangle one kind of material from another. Therefore, as I said, the material is being sorted out as quickly as possible so that the police can return any material that is eliminated from their inquiries as soon as possible.

**Mr. Tony Benn** (Chesterfield): As the Home Secretary has responsibility for the Metropolitan police and Government relations with the BBC, will he tell the House on exactly what date this operation was reported to him and what response he gave to it?

**Mr. Hurd:** It was reported to me after it had taken place, for the reason that I have described. I shall refer to the right hon. Gentleman and his extraordinary accusations against me yesterday. What I have stated until now is the sequence of events to date as I understand it.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** (Bury St. Edmunds): In respect of the BBC's refusal to make available to the police material that was relevant to the prima facie breach of national security, will my right hon. Friend confirm that it is the duty of every citizen, including the BBC, to assist the police with their inquiries and that, if the BBC had been willing to assist, the matter of the warrants would not have become so critical?

**Mr. Hurd:** I prefer not to enter into the detail of those matters because they may come before the courts in one way or another, although my hon. Friend is at liberty to develop that argument if he wishes to do so.

I do not in the least underestimate the strength of concern of many hon. Members about both the breach of

*[Mr. Hurd]*

security and the events that followed. It seems to me that the attack on the Government has shifted ground remarkably in the last day or so. Originally, the argument was that we had improperly intervened and directed a major attack by the police upon Mr. Campbell and upon the BBC to frighten them or to inflict some sort of revenge. There were rather strong traces of that in the speech of the Leader of the Opposition today. The right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) made that the main point of his intervention yesterday. It was also implied by the intervention of the leader of the Liberal party and others.

What is now emerging, it seems to me, is a different and, indeed, contradictory line of criticism. Now it is clear that Ministers did not intervene in the conduct of the police investigation—*[Interruption.]* Nothing has been said or written that produces one jot of evidence to the contrary. The implication now is that we should have intervened and taken action to prevent the investigation taking the course that it did. This implication lies behind what the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) and the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) have been saying. Our fault, it is now said, lies not in intervention but in failure to intervene to prevent the course of action that was taken.

For example, the right hon. Member for Hillhead yesterday asked which Minister should take responsibility for the way in which the police conducted the investigation. Obviously, Ministers can take responsibility only when they have power to intervene and influence events. The right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the Home Secretary has no power to intervene in the course of an investigation by the police. The Home Affairs Select Committee——

**Mr. Bruce Millan** (Glasgow, Govan) *rose*——

**Mr. Hurd:** I shall finish this point and then give way.

The Home Affairs Select Committee, in its report of April 1985, affirmed that the special branches are not creatures of Ministers or of the security service but are accountable to their chief constables.

**Mr. Millan:** The warrant that was used last weekend covered all six films, not just one film. It was specifically authorised by the Lord Advocate who is a Government Minister.

**Mr. Hurd:** That is why I referred to the perfectly proper part that was played by the Law Officers in England and Scotland, upon which my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland touched yesterday. Both yesterday and again today the right hon. Member for Gorton made much of the fact that the Home Secretary is the police authority for the Metropolis. Of course that is true, but is the right hon. Gentleman saying that police authorities up and down the country should have the right to intervene and to direct the police investigations? *[Interruption.]* Yes, that is exactly what he is saying. The whole thrust of the Labour party's policy towards the police is that their operations should increasingly be handed over to politicians, whether at local or central level.

In the exchanges last week on Wapping it became clear that the Labour party would hand over decisions about the policing of Wapping to the borough leaders of London. Now it emerges that the Labour party would also open to political direction the way in which the police investigate alleged offences.

**Mr. D. N. Campbell-Savours** (Workington): That is not true.

**Mr. Hurd:** We can argue that case in the country when the time comes. I simply say to those hon. Members in all parts of the House who are genuinely concerned about the liberties of the individual that I believe that the courts of law provide much safer protection against any abuse of power than some system of arbitrary political interference with the investigative role of the police.

The chairman of the BBC wrote to me yesterday. In his letter he said that the BBC would take whatever legal action might be appropriate. That is indeed the BBC's right, as it is the right of any citizen in this country. It is for the courts to decide whether suggestions that on any occasion the police exceeded their powers are valid; it is for the prosecuting authorities to decide whether a case should come to court; and it is for the court to decide on a verdict once a case has been brought. There is no part for politicians in these three processes.

**Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn** (Perth and Kinross): Does my right hon. Friend appreciate that it was in the High Court that the warrant and its terms were confirmed? Does he accept that in Scotland, for a Law Officer to be asked to prosecute by a Minister would be totally alien to our system and that what would be even worse would be if he were asked not to prosecute by a Minister and to call off the police, which is what the Opposition suggest?

**Mr. Hurd:** I am grateful to my hon. and learned Friend. He confirms my understanding that the system that applies in Scotland is exactly the same as the system that applies in England and Wales, which I have been describing over and over again. That is the prosecuting role of the Law Officers of the Crown and that is divorced from collective decision by the Government.

No one is wholly content in 1987 with the Official Secrets Act. That is why we tried to reform it at the beginning of our term of office. I do not doubt that this matter will return to the agenda when there is some chance of the necessary degree of support for a change. However, there is no doubt in my mind that, whatever the chosen instrument, two essential principles must continue to be upheld. First, it is essential—this is a point that the Opposition have continually let slip—that breaches of national security should be thoroughly investigated and, if offences have occurred, that those responsible should be brought to justice. Secondly, it should be clear that the liberties of the citizen are much better secured by recourse to the independent courts than by a system through which politicians guide, nudge or direct the police in the course of their investigations.

4.44 pm

**Dr. David Owen** (Plymouth, Devonport): Today the House is discussing the state of the law in this land. The law is made here, and it is as parliamentarians that we should be discussing some of the legal aspects of this case.

At the start it should be stated clearly that the Official Secrets Act is grossly defective and that section 2 ought to be repealed. Once again, the evidence for its repeal comes from our experience of its application. It is also abundantly clear as a result of this case that the protection of the individual citizen under the law of this country is inadequate. On Friday we shall have a rare opportunity to seek to remedy the inadequacies of the protection afforded to the individual citizen. The hon. and learned Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) will introduce a private Member's Bill to incorporate into the law of this land the European convention on human rights. Article 10 of the convention would provide some safeguard in terms of a basic right against such provisions as have operated in the past few days.

Apart from the fact that this case demonstrates the need to repeal section 2 of the Official Secrets Act and the need for a freedom of information Act and a Bill of Rights, it underlines, on a number of counts, the case that has constantly been made for some form of parliamentary mechanism to investigate matters of national security.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Dr. Owen:** No, the hon. Gentleman can intervene later. I am just developing my argument.

A fundamental question relates to the issue of warrants and the breadth and scope of such warrants. It has always been understood that a warrant is a basic intrusion on civil rights. It has to be done, but the terms of the warrant have always been considered to be of extreme importance and they have been zealously guarded. [HON. MEMBERS: "What are they?"] I shall deal with that point. One may refer to the generalised warrants against which John Wilkes argued, to the American constitution and how the colonists, because of their experience of generalised warrants, insisted upon an amendment to the constitution to safeguard the rights of the citizen against search and seizure. We thus have the power to challenge the scope of a warrant.

In the case of the *New Statesman* a warrant was issued. I have it here and it is quite specific. It refers to

> "any material, whether in written, electronic or other form, which relates to the subject matter of an article in the issue of The New Statesman magazine dated 23 January 1987 entitled 'The parliamentary bypass operation' and that the issue of a warrant is appropriate by reason that service of notice".

The warrant is narrowly confined. It may be that the House and the country were not zealous enough about the range and depth of the investigation of the *New Statesman* offices, but the fact is that it was not a matter of major controversy, whereas the BBC Scotland case has been a matter of major controversy. I should like to examine why, and the differences between the two cases.

In the case of the *New Statesman*, although the special branch spent four days there and carried out an investigation in great depth, including even the subscription department, it has been openly accepted by those involved in the investigation that the police were courteous at every stage and seemed to wish to confine the articles that they took away specifically and deliberately to the terms of the warrant. I understand that there has been little criticism of the police by either the editor or the solicitor of the *New Statesman*. The amount of material that was taken away was extremely limited—about 27 items from the offices of the *New Statesman* and 11 items from Mr. Campbell's house. That was sufficient in total to fill only a small suitcase, whereas the material taken from the Scottish offices of the BBC filled three vans.

It is also true that, before criminal action was taken against the *New Statesman*, civil action was taken to persuade the magazine not to publish again any of that material.

Neither the Government nor the Home Secretary denied that the Government were deeply involved in that whole process, just as they had been involved in persuading the BBC not to show the Zircon film. They were then acting in their capacity as guardians of national security, as they are perfectly entitled to do.

**Mr. John Powley** (Norwich, South): They had a duty.

**Dr. Owen:** Indeed they had a duty to do so.

I have not seen the Zircon film, although others have. I presume that the Leader of the Opposition has seen it, or has discussed it with the Foreign Secretary and come to the conclusion that it was not unreasonable for the Government to persuade the BBC not to show the film. As a consequence, first under your advice, Mr. Speaker, the House agreed not to see the film, although it is rather odd that about 900 people in Cardiff have already seen it, but the Government seem to have taken no action——

**Mr. Marlow** *rose*——

**Dr. Owen:** I shall not give way.

Questions arise about the investigation and the warrant that was issued on the BBC. Detective Superintendent Cole said on Sunday 25 January, in front of the editor of the *New Statesman*, and the magazine's solicitors, that he had been asked to conduct this investigation. I imagine that he was asked by the Director of Public Prosecutions. I gather that the Attorney-General does not deny that he knew that that was taking place and that he acted in his role as adviser on prosecutions. I confirm the procedure which the Home Secretary stated, that successive Attorney-Generals have taken the view that that is a decision for themselves to take but that on occasions they have felt it right to consult Ministers, but not collectively, to take advice but to preserve that decision to themselves.

**The Attorney-General (Sir Michael Havers):** To consult only on matters of public policy, if they are relevant.

**Dr. Owen:** I have been consulted by a former Attorney-General who was always scrupulous to maintain that provision. The Attorney-General would be the first to admit that it is dangerous to make the distinction between civil and criminal as separate and distinct as has the Prime Minister. The fact is that Ministers collectively decide whether the issue raises questions of national interest and security. They decide collectively whether to persuade or to take out an injunction to prevent publication. During that process the Attorney-General is involved as an adviser to the Government. His advice is crucial because the Government know that if they decide to take out an injunction, it will very likely, although not definitely, lead to a prosecution.

That was why many of us were amazed to discover that the Prime Minister had not had the Attorney-General with her when the decision had been taken not to take out an injunction to prevent publication of Chapman Pincher's book on MI5. That was why Sir Robert Armstrong let it be thought in the courts for 11 days that the Attorney-General had been present. Sir Robert Armstrong knew—we all knew—that it would be inconceivable not to involve the Attorney-General in the civil process as an adviser because we know that he would be involved in any

*[Dr. Owen]*

prosecution. Although there is quite properly a separation between the two roles of the Attorney-General, they run together as strands and cannot be totally separated.

What else happened in the *New Statesman* offices during that four-day period? I have already paid tribute to the courtesy with which the police officers conducted themselves in their wide-ranging activities.

However, what is important about their investigation is that Inspector Williams, who conducted the raid on the *New Statesman* and the Scottish offices of the BBC, saw the transcripts of the unedited interviews for the five programmes in "The Secret Society" series in the *New Statesman* offices. He also saw the same evidence in the filing cabinets in the *New Statesman* offices and on Mr. Campbell's computer screen. At one stage, he took such an interest in the programme about the secrecy that relates to ministerial Cabinet committees, apparently established by both Labour and Conservative Governments to mastermind election planning, that he said that he would like to think about their contents. He went away to telephone Detective Superintendent Cole, came back and asked to look at the transcripts on the computer screen. He considered them and, after a short time, said that he had seen enough and that he did not wish to see more. He took with him a synopsis of all six programmes which clearly showed the contents of the five programmes, other than the Zircon programme, the contents of which were already known to the authorities.

I think that he was right not to take those programmes away. In my judgment, under the terms of the warrant —I am not a lawyer—he would not have been justified in going wider. Nobody complained about the fact that he looked at them, but did not do anything about them. The big question then arises as to what happened between the end of the investigation into the *New Statesman* and the decision on 31 January to take out that very wide warrant to search the Scottish offices of the BBC.

As we know, that first warrant was challenged by the BBC, which rightly said that it was oppressive. It was withdrawn and a second warrant was issued, incidentally to the wrong address. We then witnessed the spectacle of the police going out with material, coming back with the material, and going out with the material again. As I understand it, the BBC did not challenge the third warrant. I wish that it had done so, but that is a matter for its judgment. [HON. MEMBERS: "Why?"] Because it is extremely important that at every stage warrants are narrowed down to that which is appropriate, and only to that which is appropriate.

**Mr. Fairbairn:** The right hon. Gentleman has said that the first warrant was oppressive. The difference between the warrants was that the petition ran on the basis that an offence had been committed under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911 and that the warrant was granted merely in the terms that an offence had been committed under the Official Secrets Act. That is hardly oppressive and was immediately corrected and conceded by the Crown.

**Dr. Owen:** It was challenged on the ground that it was oppressive. I did not say that the court or the sheriff held that it was oppressive. It was thought by the BBC to be oppressive and was challenged on those grounds. The court is right until proved otherwise. We all live under the laws of the courts.

The court redrafted the second warrant which went through, although it was sent to the wrong address. However, the third warrant did go through.

I do not believe that the House should abandon its right to question the width and the scope of the investigation, but we have the right to ask why all that material relating to the five other programmes was taken. We have that right, but we do not have the power to stop those actions because, as the Home Secretary rightly pointed, the only body with that power is the court. Those with the major right to question the actions at the moment are the members of the BBC's board of governors.

One of the most encouraging things that has happened in this episode is that the new chairman of the BBC's board of governors has shown his robustness and has made it quite clear that the BBC is considering taking legal action.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): He will regret that.

**Dr. Owen:** I do not share the view of the Labour party about the appointment of Mr. Duke Hussey. I do not think that he will prove to be the Government's poodle. I never thought that a man of his outstanding courage and integrity would be rolled over, even by this Prime Minister. Justification of that has already been demonstrated. The Labour party's shadow Home Secretary may live to regret his determination to remove Mr. Hussey from office, something the right hon. Gentleman uttered within hours of Mr. Hussey's appointment.

It is now up to the BBC board of governors to take that action. I hope that it does so and I believe that if the BBC was to make an immediate application to the High Court for the return of the goods it would have at least a sporting chance of getting them returned. I hope that the BBC will do so, but I do not know whether the courts would return the goods. It is fundamentally important that the BBC should probe and test the law. If, nevertheless, the law upholds these actions, I hope that the House will reconsider the law and question whether it should be so wide.

Why do the police want the material from those five programmes? We do not know.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** I know.

**Dr. Owen:** The hon. Gentleman, who openly represents police interests in the House, says that he knows. Perhaps he will tell us later as I shall not ask him to interrupt my speech to let us know now.

**Mr. Peter Lilley** (St. Albans) *rose*——

**Dr. Owen:** I shall not give way. The hon. Gentleman will make his speech in his own time.

We are entitled to surmise because these programmes do not involve national security. One programme includes the Association of Chief Police Officers. Many hon. Members defended that association during the miners' strike as a safeguard which prevented us from having a national police service. Many of us felt that that was the right way of achieving an integrated, co-ordinated response from our different police forces. I cannot see anything wrong with having more information about the organisation. Perhaps some allegations were made in the film which the association may not like. But it is an open body and meets twice a year. It holds its annual general meeting in Preston and meets again in the summer. It invites local authority representatives to attend. There cannot be anything unduly wrong with that. We know that the Air Force co-operated on the programme on Nimrod and that the Home Office co-operated on the programme on the Association of Chief Police Officers.

On the Zircon programme, two former highly senior civil servants were involved. Sir Ronald Mason, the former chief scientist at the Ministry of Defence, was interviewed in July. Incidentally, that makes it a little odd that the Government heard about the programme only in October. Judging from how people have described the look of surprise on Sir Ronald Mason's face when he was asked about the Zircon programme, it is hard to believe that he did not immediately tell the Ministry of Defence about the investigation. Sir Frank Cooper, former permanent under-secretary of state, no doubt well briefed by the Ministry of Defence in advance, was also certain to brief the Ministry after his interview, so the Government were given ample warning.

Yet we are asked to believe that in our society there should be a warrant so wide that the police can mount a vast fishing expedition to remove vanloads of materials because, according to the Home Secretary, the materials were so interwoven that it was difficult to disentangle them. Disentanglement should not have to take place after the removal of material. On that argument, we should allow a warrant to be issued for the police to fish through all our offices.

**Mr. Tony Baldry** (Banbury): It is a matter for the courts.

**Dr. Owen:** No. The court granted a warrant and the police interpreted it. I have made it clear that I believe that the police interpreted the warrant fairly in relation to the *New Statesman* offices, but I do not believe that they interpreted it fairly and openly in relation to the BBC. I shall not allow hon. Members never to let me criticise the police. Many police officers do not want reasonable objective criticism of the police to be silenced. That is particularly true in relation to the Metropolitan police. For perfectly proper reasons to do with the present local government in London, the Home Secretary retains responsibility for the police. If we had a different system of local government with properly balanced proposals and fair representation, that could be changed, but there are reasons why the Home Secretary has responsibility for the Metropolitan police. That puts a responsibility on this House to question how the Metropolitan police conduct themselves. Even if they are conducting themselves in Scotland and even if action may have to be taken against the chief constable for Strathclyde—I hope that that is the right term because I have had difficulty with Scottish legal terms — it must be clear to both the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland that there is legitimate anxiety about the range and extent of the fishing expedition in the BBC's Scottish offices.

**Mr. Michael Mates** (Hampshire, East) *rose*——

**Dr. Owen:** We are perfectly prepared to challenge and to argue against such action, and to use the House of Commons as a forum for that and for saying that the existing law of the land does not protect citizens. Indeed, I would go further.

**Mr. Lilley** *rose*——

**Dr. Owen:** If the police cannot show that the extensive search of the BBC's offices was justified, we should reconsider the law on the issuing of warrants.

**Mr. Mates:** Many hon. Members will agree with many of the right hon. Gentleman's remarks and with his analysis of how far the police or anyone else should be allowed to interfere with the liberty of citizens. However, there is one point that he has not yet covered and I hope that he will deal with it. It is the seriousness of the breach of security. Will he concede that if the breach of security was sufficiently serious the police and the courts were justified in granting wide powers to find the source of that breach? What is important is not the journalism in making and editing the films, but finding the person at the heart of our security who is in a position of trust but who has betrayed that trust.

**Dr. Owen:** The hon. Gentleman asks me to agree to those wide powers. The whole purport of what I have been saying revolves around that. If we use a warrant to force down the door of a private citizen's house and search every article in it, we must be careful to narrow the terms of the warrant. Civil liberties require warrants to be as specific as possible, so I would not follow the hon. Gentleman in asking for wide powers. If the police wish to search another person's house, they should provide the court with the necessary evidence.

As I understand it, in Scotland the police were operating under the terms of the warrant which was issued in relation to the *New Statesman* offices. *[Interruption.]* I should be interested to know exactly how different the terms were.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths:** The warrant that was sought in England for London arose under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 which the right hon. Gentleman clearly has not studied. The warrants sought in Scotland arose, sadly, under the Official Secrets Act because the powers of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act are not available north of the border.

**Dr. Owen:** I am well aware of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. I still believe that the main onus of the investigation was on the *New Statesman* offices. If the warrant went wider than that, it should have been made clear that it was deliberately drawn wider. That makes an even stronger case for the BBC to take action over the third warrant.

Finally, serious questions are raised about the functioning of our democracy and of the police under the rule of law. It would be a major mistake for us to allow the debate to be diverted into a discussion about whether the Home Secretary or the Secretary of State for Scotland knew of these proposals. Throughout the country there is considerable anxiety about the breadth and scope of the police action in the Scottish offices of the BBC. That should be challenged in the courts and this House should lead the challenge.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The House knows that this is a timed debate. No fewer than 18 right hon. and hon. Members have shown an interest in participating. May I ask for brief speeches, please, so that as many hon. Members as possible may be called?

5.8 pm

**Sir John Biggs-Davison** (Epping Forest): I supported the application for this debate because the House should

*[Sir John Biggs-Davison]*

deliberate on these matters. Obviously, the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) should be able to criticise the police or anybody else.

It is difficult to find the right balance between freedom of information and the needs of secrecy. Secrecy should not be misused or overdone. As a lieutenant of marines during the war I remember receiving a signal which began:

> "Most secret. Please inform all ranks under your command."

The right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) was right when in the House he described secrecy as the art of government. We have not been practising the art very well lately, and various remedies are prescribed. An antiquarian might seek to learn something from the Committee of Imperial Defence which Mr. Balfour inaugurated at the beginning of this century. I myself have been attracted by the idea of the entrustment to certain Privy Councillors, including former Prime Ministers holding confidence throughout the House, of information which cannot be imparted for obvious reasons to an assembly of 650 Members.

I do not agree with those Liberals and Social Democrats and others who want a systematic Committee of Privy Councillors. The right hon. Member for Devonport spoke of a mechanism. My right hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Pavilion, (Mr. Amery) is probably correct—as he has experience in these matters—when he said on 3 December:

> "Political control should be strengthened only informally."—[*Official Report*, 3 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. *956*.]

Security should not become the subject of regular questioning in Parliament. It is generally agreed that the Official Secrets Act 1911 is, to put it mildly, unsatisfactory. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary admitted that in his speech today. It may well fall to the next Conservative Government to amend or replace the Official Secrets Act. I say the "next" Conservative Government partly because the nation will repudiate Opposition Members who condone or even use for partisan purposes the leaking of official secrets inside or outside the Palace of Westminster. I do not believe that the electorate will warm to or even take seriously a shadow Home Secretary who sneers at the police as the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) did in his speech today.

There are fallen standards in politics, in the public service and the mass media which must be raised once more. The reputation of the BBC stood so high in Europe and the world at the time of our greatest peril. At best, it was an astonishing lapse of judgment to choose Mr. Duncan Campbell for "The Secret Society" series. Despite his services to the national executive committee of the Labour party, the Leader of the Opposition did well to say on 22 January:

> "the Government properly took out an injunction against Mr. Campbell."—[*Official Report*, 22 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 1020.]

The right hon. Member for Gorton referred to secret police. It is a strange kind of secret police that works in the glare of television. I must confess that when I heard of the operation at the BBC offices in Scotland I had my misgivings and I believe that my hon. Friends also had misgivings.

There was a picture in some people's minds of plain-clothes PC Plods heavy-handed and trampling heavy-footed through the studios of Radio Scotland. The right hon. Member for Devonport referred to "fishing" and the right hon. Member for Gorton spoke of "spiteful fishing". Some light, however, was thrown on the matter by my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst) in his question to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister today. We are now aware that the Metropolitan police requested the co-operation of the BBC. However, that co-operation was not forthcoming. We may say that perhaps the BBC was justified in withholding co-operation. The BBC sought legal advice. Perhaps my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland will confirm that when he replies.

I have been told that the BBC in Scotland sought legal advice from its legal adviser and he properly recommended full co-operation, but the BBC decided not to co-operate. Supposing that co-operation had been given. If it had been forthcoming, as it should have been, the investigation could surely have been conducted decently, discreetly and without any undue inconvenience to the BBC. However, there would have been no appearance of "fishing" and "spiteful fishing" to excite that cacophonous indignation with which the factions on the Opposition Benches cover their unbridgeable divisions.

5.14 pm

**Mr. Norman Buchan** (Paisley, South): I do not like the line that has been developed by the hon. Member for Epping Forest (Sir J. Biggs-Davison) in one respect. This has also arisen on the Government Front Bench, from the Prime Minister and others. There is a suggestion that a reasonably competent, investigative journalist who tends to produce things that the establishment does not like, which certain other newspapers may be afraid to touch—not because the matters infringe national security, but because they might embarrass the Prime Minister or the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster—should not be employed.

I believe that someone who can stimulate us in this way is precisely the kind of person who should be employed. It is then up to the judgment of the producers to consider how the information should be used. The immediate blacklisting of Duncan Campbell that is taking place must be deplored.

It is also worth stressing that this country is becoming obsessed with questions of secrecy. The Government are protecting their political position by their line on the question of secrecy. They call in aid national security which is sometimes defined as "national interest". We must remember that the last judge who defined "national interest" said that that was the

> "policies of the Government of the day."

If Dr. Johnson was alive today he would believe that the calling in of "national interest" was the

> "last refuge of the scroundrel"

as we have seen from the Government Front Bench over the past few weeks.

We are moving into a dangerous situation. The Government are blurring the lines between the legal duties of the state and the political sense and authority of the Government. When that is blurred we are in difficulty. That is why we had all hoped that the Attorney-General—that sphinx-like person on the Government Front Bench—might have spoken. The Attorney-General intervened on the Australian case in the "Real Lives" programme and his intervention was necessary to establish the truth. It required him at least to establish the truth. That rush of blood to the head obviously rather worried him and he has stayed silent ever since except for a minor perambulation across the Front Bench towards the Dispatch Box, which was quickly interrupted this afternoon.

We are facing a dangerous position because we are beginning to prosecute people for matters which in America people would be compelled to disclose. We are trying to prevent things from being said which should be made known. Those of us who have read the *New Statesman* article know that it contains nothing that is secret. No secondary KGB man would have bought a lunch for the secrets contained in that article. The whole performance is nonsense and the Government know that. However, the Government are prosecuting on such aspects. In America, Duncan Campbell would have been hauled before the Congressional Committee as a hero because he told the truth about what is happening behind the Government Front Bench.

The matter is also serious because the Government are blurring the lines between what is legally proper and what which is politically suitable for them. Matters are being exaggerated. We watch what is happening under the name of the rolling back of the state—the rolling back of the welfare state and the rolling in of the authoritarian state —and the ease with which any response to disturbance goes over the top as it did at Orgreave with the miners, and as happened at Wapping two weeks ago with the calling in of the Metropolitan police cavalry charge, which television reports claimed happened without warning. I recall that the Home Secretary is in charge of the Metropolitan police and therefore in charge of that cavalry charge and he is at the same time entrusted with the freedom of speech in broadcasting and the press. That is a dangerous combination of responsibilities which cannot be tolerated.

Of course, this is not a Fascist state. That is not the problem. The opposite is the case, and the problems lie in the incidents which are happening within the structure of the democratic state. For example, there are the attacks by the Prime Minister when she uses the word "significantly". She said "significantly" the article comes from a Left-wing journalist. That in the form of innuendo is the nearest approach to a lie that I have ever heard from a Prime Minister.

We have seen a long and accelerating diminution of civil liberties in this country over the past seven or eight years in every possible way. It has been spearheaded by the sneering, snide remarks and innuendoes of the Prime Minister herself. We cannot avoid the fact that we have a third-rate democrat in the shape of the Prime Minister with a second-rate mind and a first-rate ruthlessness. That is a frightening combination to be facing. We see her attacks on the so-called social security scroungers. We see her attacks on the young unemployed and the way in which she is using the state apparatus to juggle the unemployment figures. We see her over-the-top response in the use of her power and authority.

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): Us, over the top?

**Mr. Buchan:** Yes, the sort of response we saw at Wapping. We now see it in a more dangerous way. It is creeping into the last basic right that we have, freedom of speech. The interference in that freedom is the most frightening of all.

Let us compare what happened two years ago on "Real Lives" with what happened two or three weeks ago. On "Real Lives" the broadcasters still had sufficient confidence in their position and, therefore, courage to resist the imposition of a Government diktat. It forced an open intervention by the Home Secretary. Not this time. After two years of continual attacks and pressure from the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the snide remarks of the Prime Minister, this time the BBC capitulated even before it was necessary. That is the most dangerous of all situations in a democracy. It is not just the over-application of censorship or the open intervention of the Home Secretary, but the creation of a mood in which self-censorship is taking place.

**Sir Kenneth Lewis** *rose*——

**Mr. Buchan:** Time is short and I wish to deal with serious matters.

Self-censorship is extremely dangerous as the timidity is such that the power of the state is not even tested but there is capitulation before it is necessary. We will never know when self-censorship is applied by the press or broadcasting and we will be prevented from knowing the issue that has given rise to it. The truth never gets out in that way. That is what the Government are afraid of and that is what we are talking about. As the edges are being blurred between the legal apparatus and the state, political truth is the first casualty.

The Government talk about secrecy in the *New Statesman* article. If there were any moles, they are Sir Frank Cooper, the previous permanent secretary, and British Aerospace which first published this. There was nothing unknown in the article. Special branch broke down the door of Duncan's house—I knew him when he was a young lad so I shall call him Duncan——

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): The Home Secretary just called him Campbell.

**Mr. Buchan:** Yes. That is true. When members of special branch broke down his door to investigate him he asked them whether they wanted to see the rest of the programmes. They said, "No. We are concerned only with one programme." Within four days the Prime Minister had altered that situation, or someone had, and the BBC offices in Scotland were turned inside out. They even looked at those aspects that had nothing to do with security. Even the specific film that was supposed to be an issue of security, in fact, had little to do with it.

We can look at the mess that was made of the warrants.

**Mr. Fairbairn** *rose*——

**Mr. Buchan:** We should not look for legal advice from the hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn). He is not really very good.

The warrants were wrong because they tried to make them as wide as possible. I believe that it was because of the attitude of the Prime Minister, as a result of negotiations with the *New Statesman* last week, when she tried to get a statement or an attitude from the magazine that she could iterate from the Dispatch Box and because she was beaten last Tuesday by the intervention of my right hon. Friends the Members for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) and Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan),

*[Mr. Buchan]*

a former Prime Minister. The revenge motive then came to the fore. The other five programmes had to be obtained to try to prove a point.

The Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Scotland yesterday, and the Home Secretary today have been arguing that we are trying to seek ministerial intervention. I have never heard such chutzpah, even from the Secretary of State for Scotland.

**Mr. Winnick:** Translate that for *Hansard*.

**Mr. Buchan:** The Secretary of State understands what that means. It is wrong for the Prime Minister to make a bare-faced attempt to attribute that to us when it is the Government themselves who are using the law for political purposes. The truth is that freedom of expression in Britain has been decreasing. It is under attack and it should be defended. If we need anything now it is a freedom of information Act, abolition of section 2 of the damnable Official Secrets Act and above all some truth and honesty from the Conservative Front Bench. That in itself, without structure or change, would be a massive improvement.

I end with one point. It is an issue that hon. Members will not find surprising coming from me. It is an astonishing coincidence that on the weekend in which the *New Statesman* published an article rubbishing the idea that broadcasting in Britain should be taken from the Home Office and passed to a ministry of arts and the media, it found its own doors being broken in by the police under the control of the Home Office. What an irony that is. In the very week that I was removed from the Opposition Front Bench to the Back Benches in defence of that proposition, Wapping also occurred. Section T1, subsection 7 of the Home Office instructions for broadcasting says that the Home Secretary is responsible, among other things, for the press, especially freedom of speech and the right to reply. That responsibility belongs to the Home Secretary under whom was launched the cavalry charge at Wapping.

The steps we could take would be to introduce a freedom of information Act, abolish the Official Secrets Act and get an intelligent and sensible security charter for Britain. We should shift the responsibility of the freedom of broadcasting and the press to a Ministry that would become supportive of broadcasting and supportive of freedom of expression, and whose first and last purpose would not be just security.

I am glad of the opportunity, after three years of fairly enforced silence from the Back Benches, to make this short contribution to the most serious problem now facing us.

5.27 pm

**Mr. Nicholas Fairbairn** (Perth and Kinross): As this incident occurred in Scotland, perhaps I can say a word or two about it. A court in Scotland was presented with prima facie evidence that a serious crime had been committed. The crime was that of disclosing classified secrets essential to the security of Britain, and nobody should underestimate that. The court granted a warrant in order to obtain the evidence in the same way as it would if the charge had been that there was reason to believe that there were drugs or whatever in the headquarters of the BBC. The police have to take material. They cannot test it on the spot and they cannot identify it absolutely. In any case in which a warrant is properly granted, as this one was, and restricted, as it should be, under the authority of the Lord Advocate in which it was issued, it is a matter not for Ministers but for the Law Officers who acted independently and properly and were approved by the court at two levels.

Let nobody underestimate the other issue that is raised, which is that there is a consistent attack on security and the forces of the law. I do not believe that the television series could have begun had it not been known that classified information would be available. In that situation, it is almost treasonable that such a series should be conducted. If it were suggested that action should not be taken, I cannot see how the law could be upheld.

The attack has been made that this warrant was too wide and was a fishing diligence, which is a term of civil law and not of criminal law in Scotland. I know that the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) and even the chief constable of Strathclyde do not understand the law of Scotland. I should have thought that it was a simple enough term even for somebody representing Devonport, but there we are. If the warrants had been issued against the offices of the National Front or if the charge had been one of multiple assault on a Left-wing journalist on the premises of the BBC, I do not believe that the Opposition would have complained about the process or the warrant, which would have been identical.

I believe that there is a political element, and it is this. No electoral issue has emerged which the Opposition have been able to exploit except when the Government and security are involved. Who has always tried to breach security and raise issues? The answer is Opposition Members and those who operate from their party, whether in the BBC or elsewhere. I believe that this was an intentional challenge to the law. I am glad to say that the law of Scotland was properly carried out by the Lord Advocate, in consultation with the Solicitor-General, without the influence of any Minister, and I trust that that independence will continue to guarantee the safety of this country for a long time to come.

5.33 pm

**Mr. Bruce Millan** (Glasgow, Govan): The hon. and learned Member for Perth and Kinross (Mr. Fairbairn) has just made a ludicrous speech. His allegation that it was the deliberate intention of the BBC, in making these six programmes, to breach national security lies very oddly with the fact that the former permanent secretary of the Ministry of Defence and the former chief scientific officer of the Ministry of Defence, not to mention the RAF itself, co-operated and took part in these programmes. I want to distinguish between the one programme dealing with Zircon and the other five programmes in this series. I have not seen the Zircon programme but I have read the *New Statesman* article.

I find it very difficult to understand why there should be such extreme concern on the part of the Government, so we are told, about national security on the basis of the *New Statesman* article if that is a reflection of the actual television programme. But there may be an argument for taking that view. If my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition has been given additional information which is not available to the rest of us and takes the view that the

Government deserve the benefit of the doubt on that, for the purposes of my argument at least this evening I am willing to agree with that, although I am not convinced.

There was not a single suggestion in the debate last week that the Government had any worries about the other five programmes in this series. Indeed, the Solicitor-General went out of his way to pay tribute to the responsible attitude of the BBC over the Zircon programme. What seems to be at issue is the extreme incompetence and ineptitude of the Government in believing that the programme involved major breaches of national security but being unable in practice to prevent its public showing or to prevent the gist of the programme from appearing in the *New Statesman*.

When we come to the events of last weekend, we move into entirely different territory. There we are concerned with not one programme but the other five programmes in this series. We move therefore from an episode which has elements of farce into an episode which has very sinister overtones indeed. The Secretary of State for Scotland was put up to answer the private notice question yesterday. I wonder whether that was decided within the Government. Incidentally, the right hon. and learned Gentleman misled the House in pretending that the question had been deliberately put down to him. That was not so. The intention was to get an answer out of the Home Secretary, but he dodged the question. The question could have been asked of the Attorney-General, who has some direct ministerial responsibility, and it could have been passed to the Solicitor-General for Scotland, who answers questions in this House on behalf of the Lord Advocate. [AN HON. MEMBER: "He is too light weight."] But unfortunately he is in another place.

The Lord Advocate has direct ministerial responsibility, but the Secretary of State for Scotland was put up no doubt so that he could say, with perfect accuracy but nevertheless misleading the House, that he was not responsible directly for what happened over the weekend. He went further and at different stages in his answers he tried to pretend that there was no ministerial involvement or responsibility. That is simply untrue. Apart from the responsibility of the Home Secretary for security matters, and apart from the responsibility of the Attorney-General, who initiated these investigations, there is the responsibility of the Lord Advocate for Scotland, who is, apart from anything else, not just a Law Officer; he also happens to be a Minister.

There is some misunderstanding in this House about the role of the procurator fiscal. The procurator fiscal is not responsible to the police. He is quite independent from the police. He does not take instructions from the police, whether they come from the Metropolitan police or the Strathclyde police. He does not do their bidding and apply for warrants on the basis of information which they supply to him. He is not only an independent authority but he is responsible directly to the Lord Advocate through the Crown Office. Many cases — not necessarily involving official secrets — are referred by the procurator fiscal, when faced with a difficult problem, to the Crown agent, who in turn refers it to the Lord Advocate or the Solicitor-General for Scotland. Official secrets do not have to be involved.

No procurator fiscal in his right mind would take a decision on a warrant under the Official Secrets Act without passing it upwards. He referred it to the Crown office, which in turn referred it to the Lord Advocate. What happened at the weekend was done under the direct and deliberate authority of the Lord Advocate, who is a Minister. I intervened in the Home Secretary's speech earlier this afternoon to make that point — and the Home Secretary acknowledged it. We are entitled to ask why the warrant was drawn in the terms in which it was drawn. As I understand it it was deliberately drawn in those terms to allow the police to search the BBC offices not just for material relating to the one film but for material relating to all six films.

It is not a question of the police going beyond their authority. The police, of course, may have gone beyond their authority. That is a matter for legal argument, if the warrant had been defective in allowing them to search for material from all six films. But we are entitled to ask the Government directly — and I hope that we will get an answer to this — whether this warrant was deliberately drawn in a form that would allow material relating to all six films to be removed from the BBC.

As I understand it, that was in fact done, not by the Metropolitan police or Strathclyde police — and they may have wanted it — but on the deliberate authority of the Lord Advocate, who is a Minister. The Lord Advocate has certain independent responsibilities in prosecutions and it is certainly true that at the end of the day he does not discuss these collectively with Ministers. It is a travesty of the situation to suggest that Law Officers in any Government live in a cloistered world and never talk to any of the Ministers. The Attorney-General is talking at this very minute to two Ministers on the Front Bench. [AN HON. MEMBER: "He is getting his orders from the Home Secretary."] He is acting for the Conservatives, as my hon. Friend says.

No doubt the Attorney-General and the Lord Advocate acted in this particular matter, whether or not the Lord Advocate consulted the Secretary of State for Scotland or informed him what he was going to do. It would be absolutely astonishing if he did not inform the Secretary of State for Scotland what was in mind and simply allowed the Secretary of State to read about it in the newspapers and hear about it on the television. Whether he formally consulted him, discussed it with him or simply told him, the fact is that he acts in a matter of this sort in a way in which he believes Ministers collectively would wish him to act. Obviously, from what had gone before, from the whole nature of the instigation of inquiries from the Attorney-General, and from the political sensitivity of this matter, the Lord Advocate did not make an error in approving the warrant. I assume that he saw the exact terms of the warrant before approving it. If he did not, I hope that we shall have a specific denial from the Secretary of State.

The warrant was drawn up in terms acceptable to the Government as a whole. The Government decided to intimidate the BBC, not only on the Zircon film but on the whole series and on a number of other matters as well. There has not been an iota of justification for the warrant or for its width. The Home Secretary said that the items of security in the West were interleaved through all of the six films. I have never heard a more puerile or weak excuse for a matter involving fundamental civil liberties. The whole sorry and squalid episode in Glasgow over the weekend was the direct responsibility of Ministers. They have attacked in a fundamental way civil liberties and have attempted to intimidate not just the BBC but, through it, the whole of the media.

5.41 pm

**Mr. Ray Whitney** (Wycombe): The right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) has spent some time confirming what my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said about the role of the Lord Advocate in this case. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by saying that there was not an iota of justification for the warrant. That is a matter for the court which made the judgment. We have to await the evidence. As my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said, it is highly likely that there is a high degree of interweaving of the various films and productions of Mr. Duncan Campbell and his colleagues. At the end of the day, I should not be surprised if that turned out to be the case. The right hon. Member for Govan has no evidence for saying that there is no justification for the warrant, and to say that is to challenge the judgment of the court.

There is no doubt that there is deep anxiety about the implications for the press of what has happened in the past two or three weeks. We all become distinctly unhappy and uneasy when we see on our television screens policemen going into the offices of a political journal or going into the BBC and taking away material. I am sure that there can be no challenge, debate or argument from any part of the House about that. As my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has said, the Opposition's argument is changing. The implication that some special status should be enjoyed by organs of the media was made by the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman). We must challenge and examine that issue. Hon. Members who imply that and people in the media who say it because, understandably, they are defending their own interests are saying that the media are special. They seem to be suggesting bringing back the law of sanctuary that used to reside in our churches but which I believe was abolished by statute in 1623. Until the abolition of that sanctuary, a criminal escaping from the law could find protection once the church door was shut behind him. We are getting precious close to the suggestion that once the office of a newspaper or studio is shut it is sacrosanct and beyond the bounds of the law. Clearly, that cannot be so. From all the prima facie evidence available at present, there is a case for the prosecuting and investigating authorities taking the action that they did take.

**Mr. Buchan:** I am listening carefully to what the hon. Gentleman is saying about the authority of the state and broadcasting. He will know that the warrant was issued on a Friday and was not served until the Saturday. If it could wait for 24 hours, so much for secrecy. The Secretary of State for Scotland visited the BBC on the Friday.

**Mr. Whitney:** The hon. Gentleman totally misunderstands the issues at stake and falls for the tricks of his friend young Duncan, as he calls him—the man that he holds up as a hero, to use the hon. Gentleman's words, but that is not the case. Prima facie, there was evidence on which the prosecuting authorities could act. Sadly, for reasons perhaps best known to itself, the BBC declined to co-operate with the authorities who were investigating an offence under the Official Secrets Act. That is extremely disturbing. It was entirely right for the investigating authorities to proceed. Indeed, it would have been remiss of them not to proceed.

The evidence that they were right to proceed is legion. First, there was the security breach which the Government established in the case of the Zircon film. That was recognised by the Leader of the Opposition, although many of his hon. Friends, including the right hon. Member for Govan, appear to have the greatest difficulty in accepting what their leader has accepted. There was also the clear lie—I say lie—uttered by the *New Statesman* and by Mr. Duncan Campbell about the state of this House and what happened about informing the Public Accounts Committee. According to the *New Statesman* and Mr. Duncan Campbell, this is a £500 million project and has broken the established procedures. Those procedures were established by the House following the failure of the last Labour Government to advise the House about expenditure on Chevaline.

**Mr. Frank Cook** (Stockton, North): Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Whitney:** I shall give way when I have finished this point. Those procedures are now established. The clear testimony by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Mr. Sheldon), given in our debate last week, completely destroyed that assertion by the *New Statesman* and Mr. Campbell. That is the second lie. The third justification for proceeding with the action is the record of Mr. Duncan Campbell and the prosecutions brought against him during the term of office of the last Labour Government. On the basis of the current performance by the Opposition, the country must hope that that was the last ever Labour Government.

It is vital that hon. Members and the country should understand what is at stake. No one can be happy to see policemen appear in newspaper offices or in television studios. The reason for them appearing in such places is because people like Mr. Duncan Campbell—and he is not the only one — are conducting a campaign of political warfare against our organs of state. It behoves not only this House but those responsible for the media to understand that campaign. It was understood in the 1970s but, sadly, it now appears that that understanding is failing. In 1975 the editor of *The Guardian* said to one of Mr. Campbell's associates that he would not run a story about the American CIA. He said that they were our allies and he was not in the business of helping the KGB. That spirit must be returned to the media, and the House must take care that its jealously guarded and hard-won privileges built up over the centuries are not subverted by people like Mr. Duncan Campbell.

5.49 pm

**Mr. Michael Foot** (Blaenau Gwent): The hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. Whitney) has written a number of articles, as well as the speech that he has delivered, in which he has made some comments about Mr. Duncan Campbell. I can only describe his comments as odious; I think that is the politest word to describe them. It is disgraceful that the hon. Gentleman should renew the attack on that basis, particularly in the light of the revelations of the dining and luncheon companions of the Attorney-General. If Duncan Campbell was the figure described by the hon. Gentleman, I hardly think that the Attorney-General would have been so persistent in the arrangements that he made.

If it were not for the serious nature of the debate and the serious nature of the developments for freedom and free discussion in Britain, it would be comic in the extreme that the Government should present themselves as the great exponent, champion and skilful defender of national security. I can recollect no Government who have been so gratuitously absurd in defending national security as this Government. Whenever they have taken steps to try to suppress an official secret they have detonated the affair across the universe; whenever they have said that they would take steps to protect the secret service they have put up a notice saying, "Please keep away. Spies at work". Whenever they have taken the matter to the courts, thank heaven, a British jury gives them the bird. It seems to be the principle of the Government that the secret agreements that they believe in most must be trumpeted across the world whenever they have the chance by the method in which they manage our affairs.

In this case, if it were true that the revelations about Zircon were so serious, the Government have not dealt with it in a way which they should have. *The Independent*, in its leading article yesterday, made the perfectly reasonable recommendation that if the Government had decided last October that they wanted to take action to deal with the problem they could have made some quiet announcement of what was going ahead, allowed some controversy on the matter—I know that controversy is something that the Government do not like—and there would have been less stir throughout the country about this. Then the Russians, if they were watching so carefully, would not have had everything supplied in a single copy of the *New Statesman*.

The Government have no right whatsoever to say that they have protected national security in a sensible manner. They do not have to take it from me, Left-wing journals or Left-wing politicians, because it was stated clearly enough in a leading article in today's *Daily Telegraph*. It said:

> "The position of the authorities has been hopelessly compromised by the fact that they knew that Mr. Campbell knew about Zircon many weeks ago, and they failed to do anything about it. It is doubtful whether they can now recover from this failure."

The *Daily Telegraph* goes on to comment on the honesty and good faith of the Government Front Bench, and the speech of the Secretary of State for Scotland. He usually has a better reputation than the others and we are sorry to see him getting into the same mire. The article says:

> "We should rejoice, Mr. Rifkind was bold enough to imply, that in this country our police act independently and without political instruction. Opposition members found this hard to swallow. So will a great many other people."

In other words, throughout the country, the claims of the right hon. and learned Gentleman are not believed.

I had hoped that the Home Secretary would have said — perhaps he did in the last sentence or two of his speech — that he was deeply concerned about what had happened in Scotland. In my opinion, what happened to the *New Statesman* is just as bad, because the fishing expedition there was just as extensive. As I understand it from articles that have subsequently appeared, many matters that were looked into at the *New Statesman* offices did not directly concern the security question, and many matters could easily have been touched upon by Mr. Peter Kellner, who wrote an article in *The Independent* a few days later, in which he described how his desk, too, was open to investigation from the secret police.

I know that Conservative Members do not care much about those matters, but anybody concerned with freedom and the free press in Britain should be concerned, because that is the way in which forms of intimidation can spread. That is why it would have been a scandal if the House of Commons had not shown the strongest opposition and concern about the way in which the enlarged warrant was issued. The right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) is right to press that issue. It is perfectly clear that some of our freedoms are dependent upon the way in which general warrants are drawn. When Wilkes fought the case he said that a general warrant against him was a warrant against the English nation. He might have included the Scottish nation if he had known what the Government were to be up to. It is an offence against the whole nation and that is why the Government should be brought to a halt and called to account for what they did.

Many of us are not prepared to accept the doctrine of the Home Secretary. I suppose that he includes the Solicitor-General for Scotland in this, although in the shaking of his head the Solicitor-General for Scotland has been a little more forthcoming than the Secretary of State for Scotland. The Solicitor-General for Scotland played some part. He is nodding his head again. I refuse to accept the position outlined by the Home Secretary that he had no power, and that whatever the police did he could not have done anything about it. Supposing the Home Secretary shared the opinion of many of us that the police were acting on a warrant that carried their investigations far beyond anything to do with security. Would he not have any powers to intervene? He would have had powers if it had happened in London. The Home Secretary says not. I do not believe it. The right hon. Gentleman has responsibilities for the way in which the police conduct themselves. If the police had acted in a way that he thought outrageous, he would have been able to intervene. It is a combination of the two. I am not just criticising the police — although there may be criticism of them — but the result is something of which the House must take note if it has any care for freedom at all.

**Mr. Hurd:** I tried to cover that point in my speech. Whether it is myself as the police authority of the Metropolis or police authorities in other parts of the country, we do not have the right or power to intervene in the investigation by the police of a criminal matter. That is a statement of fact and the right hon. Member for Morley and Leeds, South (Mr. Rees) will confirm that.

**Mr. Foot:** If the right hon. Gentleman had listened more carefully to what I said, he would know that I am perfectly justified in what I am saying. Many Opposition Members believe that it was a monstrous invasion of our freedoms that such an event should have taken place in Scotland. Looking at the facts, there was an almost equally monstrous invasion of our freedom, with all the possibilities of intimidation that are involved, by the entry into the *New Statesman*.

It is a combination of those factors that led to this position, and we have a right and duty to disentangle the factors to try to discover how much was due to the general warrant being stated in general terms; how much was due to the police exceeding their powers; how much was due to the failure of the Law Officers to intervene at a much earlier stage and say that we must be constrained about these matters and preserve some respect for our civil liberties in the process of doing it. If the Attorney-General

*[Mr. Foot]*

says that he has no power to intervene, he is saying that we are in a police state because the police can do anything without anybody doing anything about it.

We all want to be brief, but there are many important issues touching on the way in which we conduct these matters. Let us consider the intervention of Ministers. There is no dispute that at one stage the Prime Minister called upon the Foreign Secretary. I do not know what powers he was to assume, but at any rate he was given some authority in the matter. He was given some authority to invite my right hon. Friends to discuss the security questions with him. I do not know what was said and I am sure that my right hon. Friends would not divulge what was said. But I wonder whether in those discussions the Foreign Secretary mentioned some likely later developments. Did the Foreign Secretary mention at those discussions that within a short time efforts would be made to intervene in the way in which the House of Commons conducts its affairs; to intervene in a way quite unknown in our previous methods of doing our business to bring pressure upon Mr. Speaker? Did the Foreign Secretary say that that was one of the courses that the Government were seeking to follow? I doubt it very much indeed. Of course, if he did not, he was also helping to mislead.

Private meetings with Privy Councillors are not banned subjects. We all know what can happen. Did the Foreign Secretary say that not only would there be an investigation into Mr. Campbell and the *New Statesman*, but that the investigation would be carried much wider, that the BBC would be brought into it and that all the programmes might be open to a warrant which would later be issued? But even if words such as warrant were not mentioned, surely such matters should have been properly discussed if national security was so deeply involved. If at that meeting the Foreign Secretary did not mention the attempt to suppress the discussion and free dissemination of information in the House, or how the matter was to be carried further against the BBC, he was not his usual expansive self.

**The Attorney-General:** I can give the right hon. Gentleman the firmest assurance that there is no way in which my right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary could have spoken of any intended police operation initiated by me because I had not discussed it with any Minister.

**Mr. Foot:** In that case, we are asked to believe that the Government decided that the Foreign Secretary was to undertake discussions about national security with the Opposition parties without mentioning the Government's thoughts on how the protection of national security should be followed. I find that difficult to believe. It may be that the Government said that they would talk to the Opposition leaders without saying what they had in mind. If so, that was a grossly misleading way of dealing with right hon. Members at such a major point in the whole conference.

There is a combination of two reasons for our being in such trouble and why our freedoms are threatened. If it were not for the protests made in the House, presumably such events as this could be repeated often on future occasions but the protests will have done something to check that. There is a combination of two reasons why we have been forced into a position so threatening to our freedoms. Partly it is the nature of the law—the Official Secrets Act itself. I agree with all those who say that it must be reformed. We all know that reform is belated. We all know the history of that. Partly this arises from the nature of that law and it is because of that that warrants are so often drawn up in such a shameful, shocking and unworkable way, as I am sure the Government will discover.

But the reason for this situation is not only the nature of the law; it is also the nature of the Government and the way in which they deal with these crises. It is part of the Government's approach to respect for the powers of the Law Officers. I would be surprised if the Attorney-General claimed that he has always had proper respect from the Prime Minister in these matters. It is the Westland way of dealing with the Law Officers which has partly led to his situation. It is the Robert Armstrong method of dealing with the truth which has led to this situation. It is that seedy, shabby amalgamation of the failure of the Government to understand the real principles involved and their record of always searching for the dirtiest way out of a corner. That is what we have seen from the Government, and the sooner we get rid of them the better.

6.5 pm

**Mr. Allan Stewart** (Eastwood): I want to follow the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) on one point, but first let me tell the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) that, of course, the procurator fiscal presented a petition to the sheriff with the authority of the Lord Advocate. That is what my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland told the House this afternoon. The right hon. Member for Govan, followed by the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent, made a most serious charge against my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Advocate. The thrust of his speech was that the Lord Advocate has acted improperly. In particular, he has alleged that the Lord Advocate acted in a political manner rather than exercising, properly and objectively, his function as a Law Officer of the Crown. That is a most serious and wholly unjustified charge.

I represent a Strathclyde constituency and many police officers live there. I speak also with some personal experience as a former Minister with responsibility for home affairs in the Scottish Office. Many comments, particularly those made yesterday by Opposition Members about the Strathclyde police, are outrageous.

Of course, as the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) has said, hon. Members are entitled to criticise particular police operations, but yesterday, one after the other, Opposition Members alleged that the police take political orders. Hon. Members should recognise that that is a serious charge. The idea that chief constable Andrew Sloan of Strathclyde takes political orders from the Scottish Office is preposterous, as anyone who knows anything about the matter will realise. Yet that was the constant theme of question after question yesterday to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State. It was the theme of the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn), the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell), and even the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), who described the police operation as being

"meant as a warning and a form of intimidation".

Even the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Hillhead (Mr. Jenkins) said:

> "the Government must take responsibility for the investigation. . . . who is politically responsible for this operation . . . the Government are . . . running a second-rate police state"—[*Official Report*, 2 February 1987; Vol. 109, c. 692.]

The right hon. Member for Devonport did not repeat today his initial criticism of the police action as being outrageous. However, I end on this note. The right hon. Gentleman and Opposition Members will live to regret some of their remarks. They have made allegations without a shred of evidence. They should have heeded the warning of my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) yesterday, who suggested that they should have awaited first the outcome of these investigations.

6.8 pm

**Mrs. Ann Clwyd** (Cynon Valley): I have seen the film not once but half a dozen times. I must confess that I am totally puzzled about what in the film challenges national security. I have looked at it over and over again until my eyes are sore. The only conclusion I have come to is that the Government must be afraid of the animal lobby because the film has a shot of a monkey being orbited into space. That is the only reason that I can imagine for the Government opposing the viewing of the film by the British public.

Before going to such extraordinary lengths to prevent the transmission of the film and to prevent, apparently, the transmission of the other five films in the series, I wonder why no one asked Duncan Campbell some questions on the record, because presumably the purpose of the whole exercise is to find out who leaked this information which is such a challenge to national security.

No one asked Duncan Campbell any questions. He has never been asked who his mole is, or moles are. The only question that the police asked him was where the transmission master tapes were. It is extraordinary that the security services and the Government should go to such extraordinary lengths when they have not asked the main suspect the obvious question. I imagine that, if asked, his answer would be that all his moles appear in the film which has been banned by the BBC. They are the former permanent under-secretary in the Ministry of Defence and the former chief scientific adviser to the Ministry of Defence. They all appear in the film.

The British Aerospace plc press officer must have released the vital bit of information that, whatever was going to be sent into space, would circle at 53 degrees east. That was the key to the fact that the satellite would orbit over the Soviet Union. Before they go to any other such lengths—they are obviously bungling all their attempts to get at the truth—why not ask Mr. Duncan Campbell directly who his mole or moles were?

There are two alternative versions of events which led, presumably, to the Government's actions and the actions of the security forces. Was investigative journalism used as the pretext for irresponsible and damaging reporting of a politically biased nature or was the term "national security" used as the pretext for obsessive and futile secrecy which apparently broke an agreement to Parliament and was therefore politically biased by nature? Labour Members believe the latter to be the truth.

We have a right to know what was the matter of national security which Duncan Campbell and the film are supposed to have breached. We cannot take that on faith because there are too many examples of the Government using the term "national security" or "confidential" to cover up information which is an open secret in every other country.

Not long ago I asked the former Secretary of State for Defence three questions about air land battle because, at that time, the Government were discussing with NATO ways of modernising battlefield nuclear weapons. To each of those three written questions the Secretary of State for Defence answered "Confidential". Yet exactly three days earlier in Brussels, according to the *International Herald Tribune*, General Bernard William Rogers, the supreme allied commander of NATO, had briefed journalists on the answers to each of those three specific questions. That is why, until we know exactly what the Government's definition of national security, confidential and secrecy is, we cannot take these things on trust.

Since last week, when the Government completely bungled their attempt to prevent Duncan Campbell from publishing what is now a politically embarrassing story about the Ministry of Defence and the Government, they have used dubious and erratic means to cover their embarrassment. They have tried to link investigative journalism and Left-wing politics with the subversion of national security.

The Government are rapidly taking us in the direction of Franco's Spain where people are dragged from their beds in the middle of the night, where people's homes are ransacked and where censorship is the rule of the day, all to cover up by repressive means the Government's political embarrassment. When the Government are prepared to allow Parliament properly to supervise the costly activities of the Ministry of Defence and when they are prepared—there seemed to be some indication this afternoon that they would be—to replace the totally discredited Official Secrets Act with a Freedom of Information Act, we can more easily define what should be kept secret in the national interest and what should rightly be public knowledge. Until that time, if only the Left in politics demand such information in the public interest and to protect the freedom of the press and broadcasting, we are content to assume that role.

6.15 pm

**Mr. Jonathan Aitken** (Thanet, South): The longer this emergency debate has gone on the harder it has been, at least for Conservative Members, to understand what exactly is the principal charge that the various Opposition voices are levelling against the Government.

The hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) echoed the cry that we were entering a police state, with Franco's Spain being the norm in today's society. The mere fact that we are having this debate at all gives the lie to that. I can hardly think of another country in the world whose national legislature would suspend its proceedings for three hours to tackle what is, after all, still a comparatively minor episode of police activity. Then there was the charge that the warrants had been far too wide, but that surely is a matter for the courts and not something which the Government control, eloquent though the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen) was in his efforts to make us all feel that somehow it was the hon. Members on the Treasury Bench who were responsible for that. Then it was suggested that police

*[Mr. Jonathan Aitken]*

action was in some way over-zealous. If that is the case, the remedy for that surely lies in the Police Complaints Authority procedures.

The real issue has to some extent been missed. The real issue is the degree of Government involvement and the judgment that lies behind it. Here we come to a sad legacy of the Official Secrets Act which remains, to some extent, the villain of the whole piece. It has created this curious schizophrenia in the role of the Attorney-General, or the Law Officers of the day, who have to divide their judicial personalities on the one hand from their political personalities on the other. All lawyers believe totally that this is an easy and simple split of the personality. All laymen frankly have their doubts as to whether any politician can ever completely keep political considerations out of his mind when he is in the judicial sector even though he is doing his best to exercise his judicial role.

In a case of this sort some measure of Government involvement is inevitable and totally proper and correct. We start from the point of an Act on the statute book which requires the consent of the Attorney-General of the day and his fiat before a prosecution can be brought. That is what makes an Official Secrets Act activity a completely different type of activity from any other sector of the criminal law.

There is no way in which an investigation of a possible breach of the Official Secrets Act can be triggered other than by the Attorney-General or the Law Officers instructing the Director of Public Prosecutions that a prima facie breach may have occurred and the police must investigate it. That is standard practice but standard practice goes further than that.

From my experience, which was acquired at the sharp end of the Official Secrets Act, the involvement of the Law Officers and the Government is not confined solely to the initial directive to the Director of Public Prosecutions and a final issuing of a fiat. When a public interest issue arises in the course of an Official Secrets Act investigation, the Director of Public Prosecutions or the special branch officers involved normally refer back to their political masters, the Law Officers, for some guidance. For example, and without being unduly personal, the official secrets case in which I was involved — which had no national security implications and which ended, happily, in acquittals — required difficult decisions by the special branch — for instance, whether to raid the offices of Yorkshire Television, whether to raid the offices of the Thirsk and Malton Conservative association, whether to tape record certain conversations and how to approach and investigate certain political figures, such as our late colleague Sir Hugh Fraser and Lord Hartwell. From discussions after the case, I happen to know that with such difficult decisions the special branch referred to higher guidance on what action to take.

With the current position, the question that arises — unless the practice has changed — is whether the Director of Public Prosecutions and his special branch team felt it necessary to refer to the Law Officers before authorising the raid on the BBC offices. After all, a decision to raid the offices of the BBC would not usually be treated as a run-of-the-mill operational matter, to be handled by an ordinary police officer. I am not suggesting that the BBC holds a privileged status in law, far from it, but it is not yet the equivalent of Fagin's kitchen or Ali Baba's cave on which the police might feel free to swoop in the course of their inquiries. The BBC is a law-abiding institution of international repute, and is quite naturally surrounded by public interest considerations. Therefore, the police must have wanted someone's authority to raid the BBC as a matter of public policy.

Who gave that authority and why? The first part of that question was answered in what was, at the time, a rather curiously unquestioned phrase by my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland yesterday, when he said that it was the Lord Advocate. But with all respect to the Lord Advocate in his Highland fastness, is he fully familiar with the national security implications of the Zircon affair? If so, on whose advice was he acting and on what basis?

We come now to the vital issue — that of judgment. The Government do not need to be bashful or defensive when giving the answer. After all, we laymen do not have——

**The Solicitor-General for Scotland (Mr. Peter Fraser):** I wish to make the position clear. As my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland said yesterday, the application to the sheriff in Glasgow for a warrant was made by the procurator fiscal with the authority of the Lord Advocate. As my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary said today, that was done with an officer of the Metropolitan police taking an oath before the sheriff.

It is not directly the responsibility of the Lord Advocate to secure the search warrant. He is there to ensure that, first, the warrant is sufficient to meet its purposes and, secondly, that it does not go beyond what is required. In those circumstances, an application is made — *[Interruption.]*. It is quite clear and the extent of his authority is spelt out. Thereafter—and this may be of interest to my hon. Friend—it was not once, not twice, but on three occasions that the extent of the warrant used was before the court. At that time, the BBC was represented by the senior Queen's counsel at the Scottish Bar.

**Mr. Aitken:** The House will think that a revealing and helpful intervention. If I have it right—and obviously I am not experienced in the Iolanthe-like dance of Scottish legal figures — it appears that there was an element of judgment by the Law Officer. The Government need not be defensive about that and say that it is a matter entirely for the police. We laymen cannot possibly seek to challenge that judgment at this stage. Perhaps the national security implications of the Zircon affair are serious, in which case the Government must say so, and say also that the BBC was raided as a matter of Government policy to protect our national security interests. If such a statement were made, I think that we would all accept the authority of the Government spokesman and take a step backwards, at least until the outcome of the trial—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] However, if such a statement is not made, there will be a lingering impression that the authorities have been engaged in something dangerously close to an intimidating fishing expedition. That would be a bad precedent and would worry me. I seek an assurance from my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland that will calm my fears.

6.25 pm

**Mr. Donald Dewar** (Glasgow, Garscadden): There have been spirited exchanges during the debate, but the test is not simply the concern and anger felt in the House; it is what I detect to be a feeling throughout the country that something has gone wrong and that something rather sinister and unpleasant is afoot. What should have been a discreet investigation carried out with proper regard for the rights of others has, in the view of many members of the public, become marked by bully-boy tactics, and there is something of the smell of a vendetta about it.

I wish to make it perfectly clear that, despite what was suggested, we are not saying that the press should be immune from the legal process and that it should be given a privileged position. However, we contend that events during the past few days, and specifically those in Glasgow, were conducted with an insensitivity that must be challenged in this House and in public debate.

There may well have been an offence committed under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act 1911. Certainly—and I wish to make this clear—if there was prima facie evidence that that was so, the authorities had a right and perhaps a duty to investigate. However, everyone in the House—and it is almost common ground—agrees that the Official Secrets Act can be used by authorities as a weapon to inhibit the curiosity that every citizen has a right to exhibit. The events of the past few days have done nothing to allay the fears.

A number of serious questions arise, and are being properly canvassed. We know that the procurator fiscal played a central part in obtaining the warrants. We know that the Metropolitan police appealed to him for his assistance and that that was given. When the bill of suspension appeared before Lord Clyde, a very senior advocate depute appeared on behalf of the authorities. We have been told quite frankly by the Secretary of State for Scotland and others that all that was done on the Lord Advocate's authority.

The Secretary of State attempted to shrug off all but a rather narrow responsibility. But even within that narrow responsibility a number of questions arise that require answers. We had one or two hints of that in a useful intervention when the Solicitor-General for Scotland at last managed to force his way into the debate.

I wish to know exactly what test was applied by the Lord Advocate when he considered his duty in the matter. Did he satisfy himself that there was prima facie evidence that required the issue of a warrant, or did he merely offer his services and those of his Department without any inquiry? We know from what the Solicitor-General for Scotland said that he at least took into account whether the powers being requested were sufficient for the purpose. It is reasonable to assume from that that he also had the power to consider whether they were too widely drafted for the purpose. In other words, he was the central man who took the decision about how the warrant was to be drafted. Therefore, he carries a direct ministerial responsibility, as a Law Officer, for what happened at the BBC headquarters in Glasgow. That, I think, proves that this is not an unjustified debate and that the Opposition are not errant on this occasion. It shows that we are right to inquire into the circumstances.

For the classical avoidance of doubt and to put the matter on the record, will the Secretary of State tell us whether he was contacted by the Lord Advocate and whether the Lord Advocate notified the Scottish Office of the request made and the decision taken? It is not unreasonable to want answers because the Official Secrets Act is an issue of great sensitivity. A prosecution cannot be mounted without ministerial authority. In those circumstances, it is likely—and, indeed, not unreasonable—that the Secretary of State was informed of what was happening by the Lord Advocate. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is shaking his head. Perhaps he will put his position as he wishes it to be known on the record.

What is clear is that the Law Officers were responsible, or at least their staff were, for drawing those warrants. I make no great point about the confusion that arose and the fact that three different warrants were issued. In fact, one warrant was for Duncan Campbell's flat in the west end of Glasgow. It all added to the atmosphere of black farce. Members of the special branch were tramping in and out of the floodlights, with plastic boxes, shuttling backwards and forwards through the fore hall of the BBC. In fact, on Friday night the Secretary of State for Scotland and myself were in the building and if the warrant had been executed that night we could have ended up in plastic boxes. Perhaps that would have been a good swap, but I will not go into that now.

In view of the direct acceptance of ministerial responsibility from the Secretary of State for Scotland—no doubt he speaks for his Law Officer colleagues—why was the warrant drawn as widely as it was? Was the warrant deliberately wide? Such a warrant should be precise and limited because what is involved is the power of forcible entry and the power to search and seize. Such an operation is a fundamental assault on individual liberties and the House should make sure that such operations are carried out with discretion.

Did section 2 of the Official Secrets Act make the wide compass inevitable? If so, it is an indictment of section 2. The Secretary of State for the Home Department used the strange perjinct phrase "No one is wholly content with the operation of the Official Secrets Act". That is a masterly understatement that will do the right hon. Gentleman's reputation for trenchant debate no good.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** *rose*——

**Mr. Dewar:** When the Lord Advocate was considering his duties—considering what was and was not sufficient—did he consider using some other statutory authority in Scottish law? For example, the Criminal Justice Act 1975 could have been used to draft a warrant that may have been more precise and less of an omnibus, catch-all solution to this problem. Everything would not have been swept up and carried off. It was not a trawl; it was comprehensive, indiscriminate and a mistake.

Why were the master copies, the back-up copies and cassettes taken away? I am told—that is an important caveat—that not just the scripts and research material were taken away but also notes and personal correspondence. I was not present, but that is what I am told.

During the debate I do not believe that it has been seriously maintained that the other five films—apart from the Zircon film—were in any way a serious threat or potential threat to national security. The trouble is that the public have been left, and I believe many hon. Members have been left, with the view that this was an attempt to stamp out any possibility of the series being shown. That is very odd when invitations to view the film were ten a penny in central Scotland in the past few days.

*[Mr. Dewar]*

I welcome the Home Secretary's assurance that that material which is not connected with further proceedings will be returned as quickly as possible. However, I fear that the weekend's action looks like intimidation—a warning shot. It looks like an attempt to inhibit awkward questions from awkward people. There is a place for awkward questions, for that is the way to get to the truth.

There has been the assertion—it is bound to be just an assertion — that Ministers played no sinister part. However, in view of what the Solicitor-General for Scotland has said about the direct involvement of the Law Officers and the personal testimony of the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), there is no clear dividing line. Ministers, in a sense, get involved—perhaps they must be involved—but it is how they use the power to influence future events that is of interest to the House. We shall see what happens because there is certainly more to come.

There is the crucial matter of credibility. I am not in a position to challenge what the Home Secretary has said. If he says he was not involved in an improper or threatening way, we have to take that at face value.

I hope that the Home Secretary will not resent what I say, but what has been said colours my perception of the situation. It has been said that if there had been agreement and co-operation the warrant would have been unnecessary. Certainly, in the early stages, when the offices of the *New Statesman* were searched there was such co-operation and agreement. Why was there a sudden change of pace? Why a sudden change of tactics?

I am told — I stress that — by people who were involved that the authorities were offered copies of the Zircon film but refused them. Perhaps if there had been co-operation on the other side some later actions would not have taken place and the damage avoided.

I understand—this is a paraphrase from people who were there — that when the senior police officer came back with the third warrant he told the senior executives of the BBC, "There is an easy way and a hard way of doing this. The easy way is to hand over the evidence voluntarily, and the hard way is that I will flood the building with police officers and take it apart." I do not believe that that squares with some of things said about the atmosphere in which the search was conducted.

Perhaps it would be helpful if I were to remind the House of what the Secretary of State for Scotland — I want to be fair to him — said, because it gave a very different impression of how the BBC acted:

> "I understand that the BBC technicians were asked whether they would be willing to come in to assist those taking part, and that they voluntarily chose to do so because they were aware of their public responsibilities." — [*Official Report*, 2 February 1987; Vol. 109, c. 695.]

My impression is that the BBC has been aware of its responsibilities. *[Interruption.]* I do not like the sniping coming from the Conservative Benches.

There is another reason for anxiety. The events must be seen against a backcloth of what I can only describe as a vendetta against the BBC. It has been conducted by the chairman of the Conservative party. I would describe it as a ludicrous vendetta if I were not left with the strong, uncomfortable feeling that it was one of the factors that led to the recent decision of the director-general of the BBC to leave. It is a record which breeds a certain cynicism when Ministers appear at the Dispatch Box to protest their innocence.

Earlier today the Prime Minister said—perhaps I did not catch her exact words—that the Opposition would do anything except to help the police. That is not the situation. We are having this debate because we believe that it is necessary. It is not a form of political opportunism. It is not an incompetent debate because of some theoretical lack of ministerial responsibility. The reputation of the police is a public asset and should be carefully guarded. The events of the past few days have damaged that reputation. We will not be put off or deterred. We have a duty to press for the facts and to make sure that, despite the special pleading from the Government Benches, this House ensures that the necessary hard lessons have been learnt from this unfortunate episode and that a damaging precedent is buried for all time.

6.38 pm

**The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind):** During the course of the debate there has been a remarkable transformation in the position of the Opposition. The background to the debate centres on the responsibility for the police operations that took place within the Strathclyde region at the BBC headquarters in Glasgow. The comments of the Leader of the Opposition suggest that the police operation was directly initiated by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. The right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton (Mr. Kaufman) said that it was part of a vengeful, spiteful, fishing expedition and that the Prime Minister had let the special branch loose on the BBC in Glasgow. That was not the charge that we heard from the Opposition spokesman for Scottish affairs, the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar). He was very careful, with his customary attention to accuracy, to confine any question of responsibility to what he suggested was the responsibility of the Lord Advocate —and indeed, as he said, the Lord Advocate acting as a Law Officer. The hon. Gentleman did not make any attempt—he knows perfectly well why—to suggest that the raid, the intervention, the police operation at the BBC offices in Glasgow was in any way the Government's responsibility.

I will comment on the position of the Lord Advocate, because the hon. Member for Garscadden sought to imply and my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) mistakenly sought to suggest that the Lord Advocate in his role is in any way judging the desirability of whether a search warrant should be obtained, and, if so, the manner in which it should be executed. The Lord Advocate's function is simple and straightforward. Having been presented with evidence by the Metropolitan police and the Strathclyde police, it was his duty to ensure that the matter was properly presented before the court. It was for the court and the court alone to decide whether the circumstances justified the granting of a search warrant and, if so, its terms.

**Mr. George Foulkes** (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley): Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am sorry, but I shall not give way.

The hon. Member for Garscadden knows perfectly well that neither the Lord Advocate nor any other Law Officer north or south of the border exercises any judgment about what are essentially the operational decisions of the police or the proper discretion of a court of law.

**Mr. Millan:** It was made clear in the intervention by the Solicitor-General for Scotland that the Lord Advocate authorised the terms of the warrant—in other words, he knew the terms of the warrant. Were those terms deliberately drawn to take in all six films and did the Lord Advocate agree to that?

**Mr. Rifkind:** The Lord Advocate's duty — [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] — and that of the procurator fiscal, who drafts these documents, is to take account of what the police are seeking and then to ensure that the application to the court is in terms that enable the information that the police are seeking to be realised, if the court believes it to be appropriate. I suggest to the right hon. Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan) and others who have questioned the width of the warrant and the matters covered by it that we should all accept the very wise advice that my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir D. Price) gave yesterday—that we should await the outcome of these investigations. Only then will it be possible to judge whether the police, in seeking such a warrant, and the court, in granting it, were acting appropriately.

**Dr. Owen:** Surely the right hon. and learned Gentleman is not saying that the Lord Advocate, any more than the Attorney-General, is a functionary whose sole job is to give legal advice on the terms of the warrant. Surely the Lord Advocate is there in his dual role as a politician and Minister and as a lawyer to give advice and judgment. Surely the judgment that the Lord Advocate has to give is on how wide the warrant should be.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am afraid that the right hon. Gentleman has got it totally wrong. First, as with any Law Officer, in these circumstances the Lord Advocate does not have a dual role — he has a single role as a Law Officer. Secondly, the width of any warrant sought is a matter not for the police or for the Lord Advocate but for the courts. [HON. MEMBERS: "Not true."] As the right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well——

**Mr. Foulkes** *rose*——

**Mr. Millan** *rose*——

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am sorry. I am not giving way.

**Mr. John Morris** (Aberavon): The House would very much like to know whether the Lord Advocate agreed, desired or assisted in the drafting of a warrant which included six programmes rather than one.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The function of the Lord Advocate— [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."] The function of the Lord Advocate was to give his authority to the presentation to the courts of an application requested by the police. It was for the courts then to determine whether that warrant should be granted.

**Mr. Dewar** *rose*——

**Mr. Rifkind:** I shall not give way.

**Hon. Members:** Answer the question.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The right hon. and learned Member is not giving way.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I have already given way more than any official Opposition spokesman. Given that the whole basis of the argument——

**Mr. Dewar** *rose*——

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am not giving way. Given that the whole basis—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. This has been a very good debate so far. There are three more minutes and I ask the House to listen in silence.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The case raised by the Leader of the Opposition and by the right hon. Member for Gorton— [HON. MEMBERS: "Answer the question."]—was simply based on the extraordinary and absurd proposition that Her Majesty's Government sought to involve themselves in the question whether a search warrant should be applied for in regard to particular premises and the execution of that warrant. The Opposition have not produced an iota of evidence to substantiate a very grave charge. When Opposition Members who aspire to be Ministers of the Crown make serious allegations of the kind that they have chosen to make today, the House and the country are at least entitled to assume that those allegations are based on evidence and not on the most disreputable distribution of rumour, innuendo and allegation, unsubstantiated by any evidence. If the right hon. Member for Gorton raised an action in the courts based on the total absence of evidence that we have noted today, I would not fancy his prospects of success and he would probably be found to be wasting the court's time.

As my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary correctly said, we have seen extraordinary confusion among the Opposition. They accuse the Government on the one hand of intervening and on the other hand of abdicating their responsibilities by not preventing the police from initiating the action that they wished to take. I have no hesitation in saying to all hon. Members who are prepared to judge these matters on the basis of evidence rather than innuendo that they should reject the Opposition's charges and show the country their confidence in the independence of our police.

**Mr. Dewar** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Member must have the leave of the House to speak again.

**Hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. John Wakeham** (Colchester, South and Maldon) *rose*——

**Mr. Dewar** *rose*——

*Question put*, That this House do now adjourn:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 200, Noes 351.

**Division No. 77]** **[6.50 pm**

AYES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashdown, Paddy
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*

Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Cartwright, John
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Garrett, W. E.
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Hattersley, Rt Hon Roy
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Janner, Hon Greville

Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kennedy, Charles
Kinnock, Rt Hon Neil
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stewart, Rt Hon D. *(W Isles)*
Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*

Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael

White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Woodall, Alec
Young, David *(Bolton SE)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Sean Hughes and
Mr. Allen McKay.

**NOES**

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Amery, Rt Hon Julian
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buchanan-Smith, Rt Hon A.
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John

Cormack, Patrick
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hanley, Jeremy
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.

Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howell, Ralph *(Norfolk, N)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Jopling, Rt Hon Michael
Joseph, Rt Hon Sir Keith
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Waldegrave, Hon William
Walden, George
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tristan Garel-Jones.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

# Orders of the Day

## Channel Tunnel Bill

*As amended (in the Select Committee and on re-committal to the Standing Committee), considered.*

### New Clause 1

NO GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO RAILWAYS BOARD IN RESPECT OF INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY SERVICES

'.—(1) No obligation with respect to international railway services shall be imposed on the Railways Board under section 3 of the Railways Act 1974 (imposition of obligations in connection with certain Community regulations giving rise to payments by way of compensation).

(2) In ascertaining any relevant deficit of the Railways Board's railway undertaking for the purposes of section 1 of the Transport (Financial Provisions) Act 1977 (power of Secretary of State to make grants in respect of such a deficit) there shall be disregarded so much of the revenue and expenditure properly attributable to revenue account as is referable to the provision of international railway services.

(3) In this section "international railway services" means services for the carriage of passengers or goods by way of the tunnel system.'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

*Brought up, and read the First time.*

7 pm

**The Minister of State, Department of Transport (Mr. David Mitchell):** I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

**Mr. Speaker:** With this, it will be convenient to take Government amendments Nos. 3 to 6.

**Mr. Mitchell:** It may be helpful if I sketch the background to this new clause. The Select Committee's concern was to embody in the Bill the commitment in article 1(1) of the treaty that the tunnel should be built without recourse to Government funds or Government guarantees of a financial or commercial nature. As a result, the Select Committee inserted what is now clause 2 into the Bill. It was also concerned about the danger that Government funds might percolate through to Eurotunnel via British Rail. In the Select Committee, a number of hon. Members expressed anxiety on that point, in particular that British Rail might make advance toll payments to the concessionaires, with the benefit of funds provided by the Government. In response, the Government undertook to require British Rail to omit any provision for advance toll payments from the final usage contract and to examine further the whole question.

The issue was again raised in Standing Committee when concern was expressed about the possibility of Government funds reaching the concessionaires by the back door. I said then that the Government's firm intention was that British Rail's services through the tunnel should not attract any of the Government grants for railway support and that we were currently considering whether specific provision to that effect should be made in clause 2. The references are to be found in columns 176 and 177 of the *Official Report*. New Clause 1 meets that commitment.

Our objective is to ensure that British Rail does not serve as a channel for Government funds to be provided to Eurotunnel. There need be no ban on British Rail investment in Eurotunnel, whether by advance toll payments or otherwise, provided that we can be completely satisfied that such investment does not represent indirect Government funding, and this will be made clear to British Rail. The amendment deals unambiguously with the point by blocking any risk of leakage of Government funds into Eurotunnel. Therefore I am confident that we have now closed the loophole that was rightly worrying members of both the Select Committee and the Standing Committee.

The amendments that we are considering at the same time as new clause 1 are technical amendments to close loopholes and to provide clear remedies for breach of the provision that there shall be no recourse by the concessionaires to Government funds or Government guarantees of a financial or commercial nature.

I said in Committee that the lawyers were crawling over clause 2. They have now finished crawling, and amendments Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6 are the result. I should be happy to explain them in detail to the House, if it is felt that that would be helpful.

**Mr. Peter Snape** (West Bromwich, East): The Opposition do not disagree with the Government about the new clause. The Minister of State will be aware that the Opposition were anxious in Committee that there should be even-handed treatment of the concessionaires and those already providing cross-Channel services.

The Minister said that advance toll payments will not be allowed. I understand that British Rail could receive advantageous terms from the concessionaires, provided that the toll payments were made in advance. Therefore, it will be a little hard on British Rail if it is to be prevented from taking advantage of those terms.

I understand that the other amendments arise directly from the provisions of this new clause, but does the Minister think that it is perfectly fair and reasonable for British Rail not to be able to engage in a little commercial practice that would benefit the taxpayers and show the public sector in a good light?

This Government in general and the Department of Transport in particular want British Rail to be run in a businesslike manner. This is neither the time nor the place for the Opposition to point out the flaws in the Government's detailed approach, but I should be grateful if the Minister could say whether compensation is to be provided for British Rail if it is to be deprived of this commercial advantage. I stress that the Opposition would not like that advantage to be used to the detriment of those who will continue to be competitors of British Rail in the cross-Channel business.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** (Southend, East): Every hon. Member will welcome the new clause, because it blocks a possible subsidy loophole. It demonstrates the determination of Her Majesty's Government to honour the commitment that no public funding should be provided and that no guarantees should be offered that would be the equivalent of a loan. The basic commitment of clause 2 on funding is clear and precise. We should be grateful that, when a loophole was discovered, the Government took speedy action to deal with it and to write this provision into the Bill.

I doubt, however, whether the new clause will stick. My fear is that the firm resolve of the Government, which I do not doubt in any way, might be overturned by the direct funding of the railways from European Community institutions. European laws and decisions take precedence over the decisions of this Government and over our laws, as the 1972 Act makes clear.

I am wondering whether the clause could be adjusted in another place to prevent the promoters from seeking comparable funding, as described in new clause 1, by the back door from the European Community. That is not silly scaremongering. Only this week we saw an example of the way in which clause 2 has been undermined. It provides absolutely clearly that there should be no loans from public funds. However, only a couple of days ago —I am afraid that it was not widely reported—there was the astonishing revelation that the European Investment Bank is apparently in negotiations with the promoters for a soft loan of £1 billion for the tunnel. Quite frankly, if that agreement is concluded it will drive a coach and horses through the Government's pledge of no public funding.

In no sense is the European Investment Bank a commercial bank. Its directors are the Finance Ministers of member states. They get their cash either from loans guaranteed by member states or from direct payments from member states. It was interesting that when the Chancellor announced the autumn statement on public spending he explained that one of the reasons why our contribution to the EEC this year was being increased by £440 million was due to an extra payment to the European Investment Bank. Therefore, the bank obtains its cash from Government, or by raising loans from Government.

**Mr. Keith Speed** (Ashford): I am grateful to my hon. Friend giving way. He will be aware that the European Investment Bank provided a soft loan for the original Dartford tunnel that links his county with mine. Is he, therefore, against that loan and that tunnel?

**Mr. Taylor:** That was not bound by the treaty and was one of the means by which we retained some of the money for payments that have been made. My hon. Friend will accept that this issue is rather different in that, because of the competition with ferries, there is a firm pledge of no Government funding.

**Mr. Snape:** Is it not true that, over the years, the European Investment Bank has lent money for projects such as the airbus, which is causing a little controversy at the moment? Does the hon. Gentleman think that it is fair that he can fly off to the vineyards of southern France —I am sure that he might do so occasionally—on an airbus, some of the finance for which has been provided by the European Investment Bank, but deny that bank the right to invest in a project such as this?

**Mr. Taylor:** I know that people such as the hon. Gentleman would like to have Government funding and subsidies all over the place. They would like to have a lot more public spending and subsidies for everything in the world. We accept that that is the Labour party's view. However, we are considering a Bill in which the Government have made it abundantly clear that they are not allowing any public funding. The point is that this would be public funding. Could it be described as simply a commercial loan?

I draw the Government's attention to their own information document called "Sources of Information on the European Community", which states on page 117 that the loans given by the EIB are medium term, generally from seven to 12 years, and are,

"at an attractive fixed rate of interest."

In other words, the loans have a subsidised fixed rate of interest. Of course, those loans have been concluded not by the Government, but by the European Investment Bank, of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer is a director. That shows that, despite the pledge given in clause 2, public money is already being negotiated to finance the Channel tunnel. The Government may say that they can do nothing about that. However, it is explained quite clearly in the pamphlet that if a loan is given by the European Investment Bank national Governments are obliged to guarantee it against exchange losses. That means that the Government would have to make a direct payment towards any possible financial losses stemming from that.

I am not in any sense accusing the Government of doing that, because the honour and integrity of the Government are absolutely clear—*[Interruption.]* I am sure that hon. Members will accept that when the Government say that there is to be no public funding they mean that there is to be no public funding. I doubt whether anybody would question that, and the fact that the new clause has been tabled is a sign of the Government's goodwill. However, despite the clear commitment that there should be no public funding, it seems that there is to be public funding from European sources with a subsidised loan of £1 billion, presumably because the promoters will find difficulty in getting that money elsewhere.

7.15 pm

**Mr. Mark Wolfson** (Sevenoaks): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way. Is he aware that to lend money to projects that link one or more European countries is entirely in line with the general policy of the European Investment Bank? I appreciate the other line of my hon. Friend's argument, but does he accept that if such lending was denied to this project, Britain would be put at a continuing disadvantage in relation to our competitors in Europe?

**Mr. Taylor:** I accept everything that my hon. Friend has said. I was pointing out simply that the tunnel is not a normal project because it will be in direct competition with the commercially operated ferries. Therefore, because of the danger of unfair competition, the Government have said that there should be no public funding, and no secret, direct or indirect subsidies. However, despite the fact that the Government said that in fairness to the ferry operators, whose jobs and futures will be at risk if there is subsidised competition, it appears that the tunnel is getting that subsidised help, not because of the Government's actions, but because of the actions of a European Community institution over which we have no direct control. It will be very unfair to the ferry operators if the tunnel gets cheap, subsidised loans from the European Investment Bank which gets its funds from the British Government. It will be monstrous if the Government are to be obliged, whether they like it or not, to provide direct finance for any exchange rate losses.

My comments have not been directly concerned with new clause 1, which states that we are blocking the loophole of assistance to British Rail for international projects. As we have had one clear and specific example of cheap loans of £1 billion going to the tunnel from public funding, which goes right against the message and commitment of clause 2, is there not a danger that exactly

*[Mr. Taylor]*

the same thing could happen with the new clause in that assistance could be given to the railway companies, perhaps from the social fund—I doubt whether it would come from the regional fund, but one never knows how such things could be operated — but certainly from another part of European funding?

However, there is one way in which we could avoid that. It could not be done by depriving the European institutions of their rights, because those rights exist, and, of course, are superior to any law of this land. However, surely we can place an obligation on the promoters not to seek any special assistance by way of funding or subsidy from the institutions of the European Community.

I welcome what the Government are trying to do. In this clause they make it clear that when they see a loophole in national funding arrangements they take immediate and effective action to stop it. However, as I regard the tunnel as being not a very viable economic enterprise and as it seems possible, if not likely, that the promoters will run out of money when it has been half built and unlikely that private investors will put sufficient money into it to make it a viable proposition, is there not a great danger in leaving the enormous loophole of European Community funding through guarantees or loans? The one way in which we could avoid that would be for the Government to consider, perhaps in another place, adjusting the new clause to put a statutory obligation on the promoters not to seek special subsidies or funds from the European Community which the Government have rightly said they will not allow the promoters to obtain from Her Majesty's Government or from the Treasury.

I should also like the Government to state whether they will be obliged, under law, whether they like it or not, to make a straight payment to the operators through the funding of possible exchange rate losses on that massive European Investment Bank loan.

**Mr. Jonathan Aitken** (Thanet, South): The new clause is well intentioned and the amendments accompanying it tighten the loophole that existed in the Bill.

I should like to make two short points. The first is in connection with amendment No. 4, which leaves out the words "guarantees of any description". As a man who is in favour of tightening loopholes, I am a little nervous about why the words "of any description" should be deleted from the Bill and merely the word "guarantees" inserted instead. I see at least the possibility of a clever City financier being able to find a guarantee, other than that contained in the clause as amended.

A point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) has taken on a new importance as a result of a press release issued by Eurotunnel about how hard it is working to secure a £1 billion loan from the European Investment Bank. It is surprising to learn that it is trying to secure that new loan. Those of us who have long memories recall that, about nine months ago, Lord Pennock, in a rather ill-judged address on "The World at One" to Mr. Robin Day and his solicitors, advised all Members of Parliament to stop mucking around with the Bill. His justification was that he had banks all over the world to lend him money. Indeed, to give him his due, the Eurotunnel prospectus lists 40 banks from diverse Arabian, Japanese and African sources which are willing to provide £4 billion-worth of loans.

Lo and behold, times are getting difficult at Eurotunnel and we all know that. The various directors are lurching around: Lord Pennock is threatening to quit and Sir Nigel Broakes is up one minute, disenchanted the next and returns two days later. Clearly, there is turmoil and "crisis", to use the adjective on the front page of today's *Daily Telegraph*. Therefore, we understand that Eurotunnel is not shipshape and ready for action.

To borrow an additional £1 billion is most extraordinary. Above all, I should like the Minister to say from the Dispatch Box that, wherever else Eurotunnel finds £1 billion, it cannot be from a source which is prohibited by the treaty. The treaty makes it clear that no Government or public funds of any sort may be used for the project. The Bill and the concession agreement also make that clear. Therefore, the notion that Eurotunnel has studied the documents so little that it can even try to negotiate a £1 billion loan from a prohibited source strikes me as yet another example of the doubtful competence of its management.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** Does my hon. Friend agree that it is shameful for Eurotunnel to put huge advertisements in newspapers, saying:

"it won't cost the taxpayer a penny. The whole project will be financed by private investment",

when at the same time it is negotiating a loan of £1 billion from the EIB, which is public money?

**Mr. Aitken:** Those advertisements prove the truth of the old adage that a fool and his money are soon parted. I understand that the advertisements are to be referred to the Advertising Standards Authority because they are inaccurate in almost every possible way. The only good news is that the albatross which hovers above the storm-tossed waves is symbolic of Eurotunnel's general prospects.

The Government are doing their best to honour the clear pledge that there will be no subsidies, yet, simultaneously, Eurotunnel is issuing press releases and finalising negotiations with the EIB, which is a back-door source of public funds. That is a violation of the no-subsidy rule. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will take this early chance to knock that manoeuvre on the head. Basically, I welcome the new clause.

**Mr. Roger Moate** (Faversham): I endorse the welcome given to the new clause because, like the majority of people, I welcome any underlining of the basic commitment to the pledge that no taxpayers' money will be invested in the project. That is more than just a Government pledge; it is a fundamental reason why the project has got so far. If it were not for the commitment that there would be no taxpayers' money invested in the project, we would not be debating the project today. The belief of the Government in that basic premise has carried the project thus far. That proposition would not necessarily commend itself to many Opposition Members, or, indeed, to passionate tunnellers on the Conservative Benches, of whom there are some.

The funds in the EIB are taxpayers' money and there can be no doubt about that. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will make it absolutely clear from the Front Bench today that there will be no fudging, no doubts and no ambiguity on this, that in furthering their commitment there will be no application to the EIB, and that such an application would be prohibited by the terms of the treaty.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) welcomed the new clause and said that the advance toll payment might have been attractive to British Rail. He was worried, not that Government funds should reach Eurotunnel in that way, but that British Rail would be prevented from making a commercial investment. I can assure him that there is nothing to prevent British Rail from making a commercial investment. It cannot use Government funds for that purpose and it would have to have the approval of the Secretary of State before making such an investment.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East, (Mr. Taylor) welcomed our speedy action to close the loophole. He recognised the Government's clear commitment to no Government funding and asked how we would prevent Euro-funding, particularly funding from the EIB. It is true that the concessionaires are considering raising loan finance through the EIB, but that is not Government investment by another name. EIB loans are not in themselves EEC-financed. The EIB is a secondary financial institution, the sources of its funds being through banks throughout the Community, not through Governments. We have made it clear that the prospect of any loans being guaranteed by member states, as is common with EIB funding, is unacceptable to both the British and French Governments. Any loan finance provided by the EIB will be on a purely commercial basis, supported not by the Government, but by the clearing banks in the member states. They, not the Government, will bear the contingent liability. There is no way that the Government will stand behind any EIB loan.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** *rose*——

**Mr. Stuart Holland** (Vauxhall) *rose*——

**Mr. Mitchell:** One moment.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East quoted from an EEC document and, referring to medium-term loans on attractive terms, suggested that that meant subsidies. EIB loans are sometimes guaranteed by Governments, but not in this case.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** If the Minister is saying that the EIB gets its money from commercial banks, not Governments, why on earth on page 30 of the autumn statement did the Chancellor of the Exchequer explain that a reason why we were having to increase our net contributions to the EEC this year was a payment of £48 million to the EIB? Surely the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not a joint stock bank.

Is the offer of attractive fixed terms of interest based on the fact that the EIB gets its cash from member states or from loans guaranteed by member states and that this is a commercial operation? Surely the Minister cannot accept that it is all money from banks, when the loans are guaranteed by member states and the Government paid an additional £48 million this year, not last year or next year. What on earth is the Chancellor doing paying £48 million extra this year into the EIB?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I can reassure my hon. Friend on this matter. Some investments by the EIB involve a Government guarantee, but this is not one of them. Therefore, any contribution which the Chancellor may have made may have been in respect of other matters. There is no Government guarantee whatever for this EIB loan. Any risks, contingent or real, which may materialise will fall on the banks that put up the money, not on the Government. I hope that my hon. Friend will find that reassuring.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** Will the Minister give us a firm, clear, absolute guarantee that there will be no question of any member state, neither Britain nor France, covering possible exchange losses on these loans? As I understand it, that is built into the framework of the EIB.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I can give my hon. Friend that assurance; no such guarantees will be given.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) expressed concern about Government amendment No. 4. That amendment ensures that it will be clear that the guarantees referred to in subsection (2) are similarly guarantees in respect of the concessionaires' borrowing. My hon. Friend also claims that Eurotunnel is now borrowing an extra £1 billion. He said that formerly Eurotunnel had sufficient funds, but it has now not been able to secure those funds from the initially proposed banking sources and, as a result, Eurotunnel has changed its plans. I am sorry, but my hon. Friend is yet again wrong. The European Investment Bank was always one of the potential sources of borrowing. Indeed, I had the pleasure of attending a reception not long ago given by the European Investment Bank at which this was a matter of considerable discussion.

7.30 pm

**Mr. Aitken:** I have in my hand a copy of Eurotunnel's prospectus. On page 63 there is a list of the underwriting banks. There are 40 of these banks, but the European Investment Bank is not included. Its name is not in the list. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will withdraw his aspersions about accuracy.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The European Investment Bank was on a list for a draft loan. The decision as to whether that draft loan should be firmed up into a firm commitment is under consideration.

**Mr. Aitken:** When a Minister has made a mistake, I believe that he must admit that he has made a mistake. The prospectus is quite clear and it lists the 40 banks. Of course, it is possible that other loans in addition to these are being considered. That was my very point. I was rather surprised that an additional £1 billion-worth of loans was being considered in addition to the £4 billion-worth of loans which are carefully itemised in the prospectus.

I am intrigued at the fact that my hon. Friend the Minister is now so willing to answer on behalf of Eurotunnel when at Question Time yesterday the Secretary of State refused point blank to answer any questions on behalf of Eurotunnel. There is a little confusion here.

**Mr. Mitchell:** It is not that I am answering on behalf of Eurotunnel. I am doing my best to try to help my hon. Friend, who has been misleading himself, and I know that he would not wish to do that.

The European Investment Bank is not referred to in the prospectus. All along, the European Investment Bank has been on the draft loan arrangement document. Moreover, as I have said, that was the subject of a good deal of discussion at a recent reception in the congenial surroundings of the Savoy hotel. We had a great deal of discussion on that subject.

*[Mr. Mitchell]*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause read a Second time, and added to the Bill.*

### New Clause 2

#### *Industrial relations*

'The operators of the tunnel shall be required to submit for approval to the Secretary of State a procedure agreement for the negotiation of disputes between the management and persons employed in the tunnel; and that agreement will require to include a form of contract for employees denying the right of industrial action and an appeal on unresolved grievances to an independent tribunal.'. — *[Mr. Teddy Taylor.]*

*Brought up, and read the First time.*

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

I hope that the Government will be able to make some concessions towards the principle of this new clause. It is basically quite simple. It suggests that there should be a procedure agreement for those employed in the tunnel which would ensure, first of all, that there was no entitlement to take strike action of a disruptive nature and, secondly, that there should be provision for

"an appeal on unresolved grievances to an independent tribunal."

Hon. Members may ask what is it about the operation of the Channel tunnel that is different from other forms of transport, where there is no such requirement about strike action? There is a world of difference between the Channel tunnel and the ferries, railways, airports or any other form of transport. The organisation of a disruptive strike on transport such as rail, air or ships is a lengthy process. Those who use such forms of traffic have the opportunity to prepare for the disputes and there is an opportunity for action to be taken in the courts under the industrial relations legislation, if that is possible.

There is another major difference in that there are usually other alternative means of transport available. If the Channel tunnel project is successful, the tunnel will change that pattern dramatically. For a start, the operators of the tunnel claim that about 50 per cent. of cross-Channel traffic will have to go through the one artery. The second difference is that the alternative form of transport — the ferries — will undoubtedly be decimated if the tunnel goes ahead and attracts the business that it hopes to achieve. The third difference is that one or two key personnel working in the tunnel could bring traffic to a sudden halt by strike action or a work-to-rule.

However, it is fair to say that we must safeguard the interests of employees in the tunnel. How can that best be achieved? The best way to achieve that would be through a sensible procedure agreement such as we have with one or two of the essential public services. That would ensure that justice was given to the employees by means of binding arbitration, binding on employees and the operators.

If we do not have such an arrangement, a strike could have a devastating effect on trade between Britain and Europe. We know that there is considerable trade in both directions across the Channel although, as a representative of the United Kingdom Parliament, I find it sad that there is now a balance of payments deficit of more than £10 billion in manufacturing trade which would almost justify us having two tunnels in one direction and only one in the other direction.

A considerable volume of trade crosses the Channel. If there was a danger of that trade being disrupted by industrial action on the part of a small group of people, that could have a serious effect on the economy. I hope, therefore, that the Government will accept the principle of the clause and that the operators will take every possible step to ensure that a procedure agreement is made with the employees which would not permit the use of strike action, but which would allow appeal to binding arbitration if there was a genuine unresolved grievance. Without such an agreement there could be serious damage to this country if industrial action were taken. I hope that the Minister will accept the principle of the clause and at least undertake to discuss it with the promoters.

**Mr. Snape:** We all know the idea of industrial relations held by the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor). He believes that management should tell people what to do and the people at the receiving end should do it. That is his idea of an industrial relations system of negotiations. The Opposition are less than impressed with the new clause.

I can never understand the argument waged by the anti-tunnellers. On the one hand they claim that the Channel fixed link will be an economic disaster. They say that it will fail in no time at all. The hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) has been saying that in this Chamber and in various press releases for as long as I can remember or at least since June last year.

If these Jeremiahs and prophets of doom are correct, what are they worried about? Why should we be worried about industrial relations? If they are right and the project is to collapse, presumably the cross-Channel ferries will carry on with their cosy quasi-monopoly and things will continue as before. No doubt the hon. Member for Southend, East and the hon. Member for Thanet, South will be highly delighted at that. If they are wrong, however, they are trying to tie industrial relations for this one project in a way that industrial relations are not tied elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

The hon. Member for Southend, East will be aware that long-term discussions and negotiations are taking place between representatives of the railway unions and representatives of Eurotunnel. I would have thought that that was the place where such matters should fairly be conducted. Whatever else the Chamber is, it is not normally the place where we conclude industrial relations agreements on the part of private enterprise companies. Again, we can only imagine the indignation of the hon. Member for Southend, East who is normally incapable of passing the time of day without using at least three "disgracefuls" and one "minor catastrophe" if the Opposition proposed regular and binding arbitration on the nation's private sector. I would not have thought that such a proposition would commend itself to too many Conservative Members and certainly not, in normal circumstances, to the hon. Member for Southend, East.

Goodness knows what the hon. Member for Thanet, South would say. He would probably make the same speech once again, warning us all of doom, disaster and 40 days and 40 nights of flooding if the Minister rejects the clause. Although I do not know the views of the hon. Member for Thanet, South about the new clause, I can imagine his outburst of ire if the Opposition proposed a no-strike deal and a system of binding arbitration among the highly paid technicians of TV-am, to mention but one private sector company in the United Kingdom. We would be told, quite rightly, that such matters are not negoitable on the Floor of the House and that we should keep our noses out of industrial relations between a private sector company and its employees. I can only take that undelivered advice from the hon. Member for Thanet, South and pass it with my compliments to his hon. Friend the Minister. I hope that the Minister, who does not fall too often for the blandishments of his hon. Friends the Members for Southend, East and Thanet, South, will kick this new clause as far into touch as it deserves; with the wholehearted support of the Opposition.

**Mr. David Crouch** (Canterbury): I wonder if I can make a small intervention in this private debate. I have always been in favour of the tunnel, knowing all its difficulties and disadvantages. The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), who has been attacking my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor), has painted him in black terms. He is not as black as that. My hon. Friend and I often disagree about matters in Europe and so on, but for once I felt that my hon. Friend was saying, "The tunnel is going to be built so we had better make a good job of it. Let us see that the trains run on time." Perhaps my hon. Friend is not the best advocate of how to avoid strikes in the middle of a tunnel, or even at the beginning or end of a tunnel. However, his new clause advances what I thought was a helpful suggestion.

Whether my hon. Friend the Minister thinks that it is possible to implement that suggestion is another matter. It might be difficult to implement. However, the aim and ideal of keeping the through passenger trains and through freight trains running on time and in good order is a good objective. I congratulate my hon. Friend on trying to help us through a difficult patch in the tunnel.

**Dr. John Marek** (Wrexham): I should say first that I am a sponsored member of the National Union of Railwaymen. I will not have to say that again, if I intervene later.

I hope that this mischievous clause is resisted by the House because it deals with something that should not be decided by the House. It should be decided by the management and employees concerned. There are no-strike agreements on occasions, but those occasions are when there has been agreement between the employees and the management. On a slightly different plane, although there are problems with widows' benefits, the police by and large are happy with their rates of pay. That is not precisely analogous because the job entails that the police cannot go on strike. However, they have an agreement with which the country is happy and with which the employees are happy. The armed services have the same type of agreement.

I hope that the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) will withdraw his new clause and seek to use his influence with the management, so that when the tunnel is running the management can come together with the employees and voluntarily agree a no-strike agreement. At the end of the day, in a free country, if we cannot voluntarily agree that and we insist on passing it in the House, I fear that we do not have a free country any more.

7.45 pm

**Mr. Aitken:** The concept of no-strike agreements in essential services is gaining attention and perhaps support in the country and certainly on Conservative Benches. Therefore, the clause of my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) does not deserve to be so lightly dismissed by the Opposition.

The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) made what is a familiar point to me, about how it is sometimes necessary to argue for what will happen to the tunnel in the short term and produce one set of arguments and then to look ahead at what might happen in the longer term. I do not regard those two positions as contradictory in any way. My view has always been that the tunnel, in the short term, will go bankrupt and that at some later stage it will be rescued. In the course of the rescue it will be possible to operate the tunnel much more cheaply as a result of having written off the unfortunate equity investors' investment. Thereafter, with the capital costs written off, it will be possible to run the tunnel very competitively, although the process may be repeated more than once and there may be a second bankruptcy and a second rescue.

Once the tunnel is built, I believe that one day it will operate and succeed. That being the case, one should look beyond what I think will be the miserable next five years or so and ask what would be the conditions in which we would like to see the tunnel being run in the event of it becoming the main artery of our communications to Europe. If it is our main artery to Europe, we should treat it as a strategic investment.

**Mr. Richard Caborn** (Sheffield, Central): The hon. Gentleman has suggested that capital should have the right to strike in the tunnel but that we should deny the people who work in the tunnel the right of industrial action if it should become necessary. The hon. Gentleman's scenario is that the tunnel will collapse in five years because there will be a strike of capital, but he is arguing that we now have to control the workers and make sure that they have no right to withdraw the only thing at their disposal, their labour.

**Mr. Aitken:** I have some sympathy with that position —at least I understand it—and I would certainly like to see any no-strike agreement being mutually negotiated.

The reality of the industrial relations suggestion is that at this moment it is somewhat far-fetched. Nevertheless, one should look forward to the day, 30 years or so from now, when the tunnel will have to be regarded as a key strategic interest of Britain when it may be our main arterial link with Europe. If that is the case, the idea that the same industrial relations rule can easily apply to that as apply to TVam or any other company that is operating in the private sector, is not realistic.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East may be ahead of his time. However, although much water may pass under the bridge and many bankruptcies within the tunnel may lie in between, if the tunnel is going to be as pivotal a link with Europe as the optimists predict, we should one day examine a clause such as this.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** The Government cannot accept this new clause, as both the prognosis that it implies and the remedy that it offers are mistaken. However, I am fascinated that my hon. Friend the Member for Southend,

*[Mr. David Mitchell]*

East (Mr. Taylor) is anxious to put Eurotunnel in a preferential position compared to its competitors, which have to manage their industrial relations competently. My hon. Friend painted a lurid picture of the Channel tunnel being so successful and ruthless that it will drive the ferries out of business and control the straits of Dover. As a result, he envisages the trade and economic life of Britain being under constant threat of strangulation.

My hon. Friend's predictions of total dependence on the Channel tunnel are grossly exaggerated. Eurotunnel's forecasts, which the opponents of the project criticise as optimistic, suggest that the tunnel would capture one third of the cross-Channel unitised freight and less than 8 per cent. of the non-unitised freight. That means that 66 per cent. of the unitised freight and 92 per cent. of the non-unitised freight could continue to cross the Channel even if the tunnel service was disrupted. I am sure that those existing modes would rapidly take up any slack caused by the events to which my hon. Friend has referred.

It will be for Eurotunnel to decide whether to negotiate with its employees and their representatives suitable procedures for the settlement of disputes. It would be for the parties to consider whether any such agreement should preclude the right to take industrial action in return for independent arbitration. But if they do decide to include such a condition in their agreement, it would be because both sides are satisfied that it would be in their best interests. A no-strike and compulsory arbitration agreement, freely negotiated, would not require a clause in the Bill to permit it to operate. I hope that my hon. Friend will see the force of these arguments and withdraw his clause.

My hon. Friend claimed that the Channel tunnel was different because, with other forms of transport, there is a certitude of notice. Commuters from Waterloo last week were not especially conscious of the degree of notice they were given. I have recollections, as do other Members of this House, of ferry ports and even airports where strikes have occurred at very short notice. I do not think my hon. Friend has researched that part of his argument quite as thoroughly as he normally does.

I hope I will not damage the reputation in his party of the hon. Member for Wrexham (Dr. Marek) when I say that his argument that this sort of thing ought to be decided by management and employees is one with which I wholly agree. As to my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) fantasising about multiple bankruptcies, the only things missing this time were the references to the Japanese, the Iranians and other middle east people who are going to put their money into this project and lose it.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** I did not find the Minister's reply very convincing, but I think he is enormously underestimating the damage to the economy if, as we now hear, with the help of some public funding from the European Investment Bank, this project goes ahead and is disrupted by small groups. I am also sorry that he has not given even an indication to the promoters that he would personally favour a clause of this sort to protect the travelling public and reduce their inconvenience. However, it is quite clear that there is no support for this proposal in the House. Therefore, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

*Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.*

## New Clause 3

### DISPERSAL OF RAIL TRAFFIC

**'(1) For the purpose of improving communications between all parts of the United Kingdom and France and before their scheduled works are opened for traffic it shall be the duty of the Railways Board to prepare a plan as to action to be taken (whether by way of executing works or carrying out of development by other persons or otherwise) for the purpose of securing that the proportion of cross-Channel passenger and freight traffic to be carried by rail is increased.**

**(2) The plan shall include, in particular, details of the Board's proposals:**

**(*a*) for the dispersal of rail traffic within Great Britain; and**

**(*b*) for the construction and operation of collection and distribution centres and inland clearance depots.**

**(3) The Board shall keep the particulars of the plan under review and shall review the plan at such periods as they consider appropriate.**

**(4) The Board shall publish the plan and any revision to the plan in such a manner as they consider best calculated to bring it to the attention of those who will be affected by its implementation.'.**—*[Mr. Snape.]*

*Brought up, and read the First time.*

**Mr. Snape:** I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

The House will be aware of the provisions of this clause, which places a duty on the British Railways Board

"to prepare a plan as to action to be taken (whether by way of executing works or carrying out of development by other persons or otherwise) for the purpose of securing that the proportion of cross-Channel passenger and freight traffic to be carried by rail is increased."

The view put forward consistently by the Government is that this project provides the railway network in this country with an unparalleled opportunity. That is one of the reasons why, with a great many reservations, we on this side of the House have supported the project. Now comes the time for the Minister to confirm his good intentions by accepting the clause. We believe that the dispersal of rail traffic throughout the United Kingdom is vital.

None of us should be under any illusions about the decline of railway freight traffic in recent years which has been caused by various factors, some of which are well beyond the control of the British Railways Board. Over the past 15 to 20 years productivity within the road haulage industry has improved dramatically because of the motorway network and lorries being allowed to travel faster and particularly with some relaxation of lorry driving hours under EEC regulations.

That increased productivity and those developments led to a great and accelerating transfer of freight from rail to road. Surely the cross-Channel link will provide British Rail with the opportunity of reversing that trend. If we are to accept that the minimum economic distance to carry freight by rail, given the circumstances which I have outlined, is about 250 miles, then British Rail, for the first time, has the opportunity genuinely to compete with the road haulage industry because the cross-Channel link will plug in the British Rail network to the whole of Europe. But that opportunity will be thrown away without proper dispersal of rail traffic throughout the United Kingdom.

The Minister, although he expressed some pious hopes about the future, did not give the Standing Committee or my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) much cause for satisfaction. The first question we must ask is how and where this traffic will be dispersed.

Let us consider cross-Channel traffic which will originate in the Manchester area once the link opens. Over the past 15 or 20 years virtually all the rail freight depots in the Greater Manchester area have closed. There are no facilities that could be provided at the present time to enable people or industrialists to take advantage of the fixed link. Although the picture may be gloomy in Manchester, it is not quite as bad in other parts of the country, but investment is needed if British Rail is to take advantage of its inland competitive position.

In the Birmingham area, although Bescot sidings still exist, British Rail would need additional plans to develop those sidings in such a way that they are best able to take advantage of this traffic. There is still one freight liner terminal in the Birmingham area, a comparatively small one. What hope or financial inducements can the Minister of State hold out to British Rail that prior to the tunnel opening in 1993 the necessary investments will have been provided to the Lawley street freightliner depot in Birmingham to enable it to take advantage of that upsurge in container traffic?

Within the last 10 days, the British Rail subsidiary, Freightliner Ltd., announced the closure of eight freightliner terminals. Let us consider the example of an industrialist in the Humberside area who would wish to take advantage of the Channel fixed link. Because of the latest announcements, the Hull freightliner terminal will have long ceased to exist by 1993. What offer or inducement is the Minister prepared to offer to give those industrialists in Humberside an opportunity to use the rail freight facilities? Will those facilities be provided prior to the opening of the tunnel?

We ask in this new clause that the board prepare and regularly update such plans so that we can see in the years up to 1993 exactly what provision is being made countrywide to take advantage of these opportunities. In Standing Committee we talked about measures that have been taken in northern France. My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central compared the number of inland clearance points in France and Germany with those in the United Kingdom. He talked about France having 240 and Germany having 250 such points, yet he said that the British criterion for the creation of those inland clearance points is a minimum of 30,000 customs entries per hour.

**Mr. Andrew Rowe** (Mid-Kent): The hon. Member may remember that in Standing Committee I made the point, which I think is worth repeating, that it seems entirely sensible that industrialists and others, where they thought it worthwhile, should be allowed to contract for the necessary customs clearance services, and if they did not reach the Government's pre-arranged patterns they should be allowed to buy in the additional ones if they felt it was to their profit to do so.

8 pm

**Mr. Snape:** Unlike his hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale), who is presumably saving his speech for later, the points made by the hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) are normally worth repeating. In the case of the hon. Member for Thanet, North, even though they are not worth repeating, he repeats them anyway. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will get a more sympathetic response from the Minister of State than the one that he got in Standing Committee. I know that my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central, if he catches Mr. Speaker's eye, will say that the provision of customs facilities and proper rail freight facilities are vital if the potential for British Rail from this project is to be realised. It will not do to say that we should leave it to market forces or until 1993.

We are the first to concede that the road transport network is more flexible than rail. It runs from door to door and it is possible within the United Kingdom to load a piece of freight on to a lorry and take it to its destination without the sort of transhipment that would be necessary if such a load were taken by rail. Surely it is necessary to provide facilities a long time before 1993. We are not saying in the new clause that rail freight facilities should be provided full scale from one end of Britain to the other. I have already said that in some parts of the country work could take place right now—*[Interruption.]* As my hon. Friend reminds me, it would be helpful to stop the closure of freightliner depots. That is happening at a time when we are talking about a massive expansion in rail freight as a result of the fixed link. It is vital that the work takes place a long time before the tunnel opens in 1993.

At the conclusion of our debate in Standing Committee the Minister of State said:

"no decisions are needed until nearer the opening of the tunnel". — [*Official Report, Standing Committee A,* 15 January 1987; c. 575.]

We do not accept that, and that is why we have tabled the new clause. Decisions taken now will have an enormous impact on rail freight carriers into the 1990s. If British Rail is not allowed to prepare adequately by not being given the finance to enable it to take advantage of the expected upsurge in rail freight traffic arising from the fixed link, the competitive advantage of road haulage will be maintained into the 1990s. We will see an ever increasing number of heavy goods vehicles—juggernaut lorries—on our roads and will experience the consequent environmental problems.

Given the scale of this project, it would be folly not to provide adequate facilities to enable British Rail to take advantage of the competitive boost that the provision of the fixed link will give it. For those and other reasons, I hope that the Minister of State, who made some sympathetic noises in Committee, will go a little further and will accept the new clause.

**Mr. Stephen Ross** (Isle of Wight): I strongly support the new clause. We are told in the Eurotunnel briefing papers about the tunnel that in the 10 years from 1975 to 1985 freight traffic increased from 10 million tonnes to 23 million tonnes. As the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) rightly says, this month's edition of *Modern Railways* shows a picture of the closing of the freight terminal at Dudley. I think it was Dudley, but perhaps the hon. Gentleman can confirm that. We now have fewer than 20 freight terminals and the figure may be as low as 12. That is daft at a time when we are all hoping and predicting that the tunnel will result in an uplift in freight from many parts of the United Kingdom and will present an opportunity to get into France, Germany and Italy.

One of the most ridiculous things I have ever seen was the withdrawal of the siding into Nine Elms. Nine Elms is the new Covent Garden and all the produce coming there could come by rail. Lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers come from Spain, and at one time there was a huge import of South African oranges into Southampton. The obvious thing to do is to get that produce straight into

*[Mr. Stephen Ross]*

Nine Elms but all the sidings have been removed. Will the same thing be done in other places, and will we be told in four or five years' time, when there is a demand for sidings to be put back in such places as Hull, Sheffield and Manchester, that it would cost millions of pounds to do it and that it cannot be done because of that high cost and an inadequate subsidy?

I accept that for some years Government policy has been to help in the construction of new sidings in various parts of Britain. It would be daft to allow British Rail to continue the process of closing freightliner terminals and sidings. We should at least be putting them into mothballs to make sure that we do not cause any more damage until we have seen what can be picked up when the tunnel is built.

**Mr. Roger King** (Birmingham, Northfield): Having listened to the speeches by the hon. Members for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) and for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross), it seems that they have little confidence in the present British Rail management. They suggest that it is necessary to enshrine in the Bill the necessity to prepare a plan. Presumably that plan will do that which British Rail would normally do anyway to further the commercial interests of the business that it operates.

There is no evidence to show that the British Rail management is not aware of the opportunities that are likely to arise from the Channel tunnel. On the contrary, in conversations with British Rail, in correspondence and in articles that I have read, the management is well aware of the tremendous opportunities that the link will present for the freight system of British Rail.

The problem presently worrying the industry is that the freightliner system has to operate within the parameters of the United Kingdom and that none of the train runs is ever long enough to justify the amount of handling of the containers from the factory on to the train and at the delivery point. Other than by dedicated train loads from factory to factory it is probably far quicker to ship them by road. Most economists suggest that the minimum train run required is 250 miles and very few routes in Britain give that opportunity. The tunnel link will open up thousands of miles, allowing rail freight to be taken throughout Europe.

The dispersal of commercial traffic is best left to the commercial aspects of the market. There is no way in which the British Rail board, in some so-called plan, can go to Nissan in Sunderland and say, "Look, the plan that Parliament has asked us to put into effect requires us to ascertain now whether we can carry your cars in 1993 into the European market." Nissan would say, "There is no chance. We are not interested and not convinced. What are the costs? At the moment we have our own system of shipping the cars direct from Newcastle across to the Continent." The problems that face the management of British Rail in trying to work year by year to a plan like that are immense. It would tie up an army of bureaucrats and administrators trying to decide who wanted a siding here or a siding there.

We have heard that some freightliner depots have been closed. Certainly dedicated freightliner depots have been closed but, as we all know, it is relatively easy to construct or re-install a depot with the aid of a modest crane. A simple rail link can be put into any factory at a small additional cost in seven or eight years' time. It does not necessitate the tying up of vast amounts of capital and resources and the installation of dedicated terminals now on the offchance that at some time in the mid-1990s there will be traffic for them.

**Mr. Stuart Holland:** Quite apart from whether Nissan would seriously be prepared to consider alternative costs for transport by rail rather than by sea, which is suggested by the way that Nissan plans ahead on its production location decisions worldwide, is the hon. Gentleman not aware that the French railways also plan and have forms of planning agreement and a long-term planning perspective? Will we have planning and intervention on one side of the Channel tunnel and free market forces on the other? If we have, God help us, because the French will sweep the market.

**Mr. King:** The hon. Gentleman has made an interesting comparison between the way that the French do things and the way that we are trying to do things. Eventually one will have to decide who gets the better value for the money that is being invested. I have no evidence to suggest that French railways handle their freight better than the United Kingdom, except that they have the opportunity of a European network, whereas we have the liability of a branch line network. Once we have tapped the resources that the Channel link will give us, the commercial aspect of a British Rail freight operation will probably lick the pants off any French state system, which will become bogged down in its own bureaucracy, as we have seen with the airlines today. If one compares our own free enterprise airlines with the state systems in Europe, it will be seen that one receives a better service from our airlines because they respond better to the initiatives in the market place.

**Mr. Snape:** Amidst the comic cuts of the speech of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King)—who represents an area which is an example of the collapse of private enterprise and which has had to be rescued by the state — is he aware that to talk such appalling claptrap underlines the fact that the hon. Member knows as much about running a railway system as I do about who writes his speeches?

**Mr. King:** The hon. Gentleman does not know the west midlands very well. I assume that he is referring to the car industry. If he is referring to Jaguar, Land Rover and Freight Rover, he will see that they are profitable. One of those companies has been privatised and the others are doing nicely. There is a little local difficulty in Longbridge, but we will put that right in the not too distant future.

In my constituency we have a car factory that is turning out thousands of cars per year with a growing expectation in the European market. That factory is available to take on the opportunities given by a dedicated rail system that will enable goods to leave the Longbridge works and be within the continent of Europe within the day. We readily welcome that opportunity, but it does not need the British Rail Board to come along to Longbridge and say that they want to plan something in 1993—it is happening now because it is good commercial sense. That is the sort of system that we want. As a result of the opportunities that a commercially orientated rail network can bring, which British Rail can readily afford, there is no reason why the system should not be privatised and why we should not have Rail Freight plc so that it can freely adapt and take on the opportunities on offer.

**Mr. Robert Hughes** (Aberdeen, North): I am becoming more and more fascinated by the hon. Gentleman's speech with every sentence that he utters. What he is suggesting, if I have understood him, is that normal capitalist enterprises do not plan their investment as far ahead as 1993. If he is right, it explains why the economy of Britain is in such a bloody mess.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** Order. I must reproach the hon. Gentleman for the crudeness of his language. Plain language is not quite the same thing as coarse language.

8.15 pm

**Mr. Hughes:** I apologise for using that word, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and, in the interestes of the delicacy of the House, I shall not repeat it and say that that is why the country is in such a filthy state.

**Mr. King:** I remember that when I was deciding what political creed to follow in the early 1960s my views were prejudiced by a so-called national plan, which seemed to me to set the country on a route to complete disaster because it confined the country to a narrow corridor of development. Since then, all kinds of plans which spread themselves over a decade or so have not appealed to me in the slightest. Of course commercial businesses plan ahead on a 12-month and two-year cycle and indeed a five-year cycle. What this amendment is suggesting is that it is a commitment, a part of the Bill. It should be left to the rail board to draw up its own confidential commercial plan, of which I am sure it is quite capable without the necessity of Parliament having to tell it what to do.

**Mr. Caborn:** The hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) underlines the position with regard to the present Administration and their lack of understanding of what industry wants. The chamber of commerce in Sheffield, along with the local authority, has put its money where its mouth is and tried to devise a scheme or argument as to why we should have inland customs clearance, and we have brought in independent assessment of that situation.

The argument of the chamber of commerce is that people looking to the north of England for investment will look at transport infrastructure as a major element for five, six, seven or eight years in the future. That is extremely important. That is not the flippant speech of some cowboys; serious consideration has been given to it.

The north-south divide has been clearly quantified in the last few weeks. There is genuine and serious concern that the Channel tunnel will bring resources down into the south-east. The Select Committee on Transport looked at that national impact. Its first report on the Channel link was assessed in 1985 and 1986. The minutes of proceedings say in paragraph 121:

> "It has been argued that a fixed link might induce a further drain of economic activity from already distressed parts of the Midlands and the North. In addition, some concern has been expressed that owing to its nearness to continental markets and to French Government and EEC assistance, the Pas de Calais region might benefit unduly. The National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers (NUMAST) has suggested that if a fixed link does encourage investment in manufacturing it will be in France rather than the UK. 'An industrialist who wishes to establish a manufacturing capacity to serve the north-west European market and is faced with a choice of regional incentives from northern England and Scotland and from northern France is much more likely to choose the latter and to treat the UK market as peripheral' . . . the Committee feels it is essential that the UK derives an equal benefit from the link and stresses the need to ensure that there is no unfair discrimination in favour of industry or employment in France."

As my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) has been saying, we went into some detail in Committee. The French are geared up in northern France, not just in transport infrastructure, but in industrial infrastructure and educational resources. Many hundreds of millions of pounds are being spent in that area to make it attractive to industrialists in their long-term planning. That is very serious for the north of England.

It is unfortunate that the way in which the Channel Tunnel Bill has been discussed does not allow us to get any co-ordination across Government Departments — the Department of Transport, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Home Office and so on. The French regional and national councils, the PAL, are co-ordinating their effort to extract the maximum benefits for northern France. We have no like bodies in the United Kingdom, so this narrow Bill has considerable economic and industrial impact upon the United Kingdom.

One example is inland customs clearance. I put it into the context of the reply that I received from the Minister in Standing Committee:

> "If the railways board believes that it can generate traffic that will justify those facilities it is up to it to set out the facts and make the case to the customs authorities."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee A*, 15 January 1987; c. 575.]

Under the criteria laid down by the customs—a Home Office responsibility—it has first of all to show that there will be about 30,000 entries per annum into that particular depot. British Rail's freight organisation tells us that that is about 3 tonnes a wagonload and that that will be classed as an entry.

The hon. Member for Mid-Kent (Mr. Rowe) talked earlier about getting a number of industrialists together to try to develop enough traffic to justify a depot. We are talking about 1 million tonnes of freight having to go through a depot before the criteria laid down by her Majesty's Customs are met. France and Germany look at the matter from a different point of view. They ask whether industry, the community and the development in certain areas require such a depot. They do not have the bureaucratic approach of saying, "We will not put one there until you can bring in that level of freight". It is impossible to meet the criterion of 1 million tonnes a year.

In Committee, the Minister said that the customs authority would require proof. The ground rules laid down for BR are well-nigh impossible. That is the point that we were making to the Secretary of State, yet that has been compounded with the closure of eight depots — in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Hull, Manchester, Nottingham and Swansea. I got that information from an article in the *Yorkshire Post* on 10 January. We are asking for a transport infrastructure which will enable freight to be moved much more effectively by having it cleared at the source of production —I argued in Committee that there should be one in south Yorkshire — yet that is becoming increasingly more difficult.

We must also consider the criteria under which BR is having to work. It must show clearly the return on capital employed. As I said earlier, we have done a feasibility study on that. We are talking about expenditure of about £1·5 million to £2 million in order to put that depot in south Yorkshire. Do we wait to make that investment until

*[Mr. Caborn]*

the Channel tunnel has been opened, or do we say that we shall have a network of inland customs clearance depots and so should have that up-front expenditure? If we do not, it will be catch 22. Investors will not come to the industrial north if it does not have a transport infrastruture to move the goods away quickly to the European markets. That is serious.

To discuss that within the narrow concept of the railways and BR's decision would be to deny British industry an opportunity to have some say in its regeneration. That is why subsection (4) is important. It says:

> "The Board shall publish a plan and any revision to the plan in such a manner as they consider best calculated to bring it to the attention of those who will be affected by its implementation."

That is important, because it is not only BR that is affected. There will be an impact on industry. There may be major benefits for industry, but if industry is not allowed to be part of the discussions and to put forward its ideas to BR, an opportunity will be missed.

I know that you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I might be in some conflict on this. The areas that we represent are in close proximity and I know that you have received some overtures about an inland customs clearance depot for your area. Nevertheless, I hope that, in the light of the Minister's comments in Committee and the comments made in the Select Committee, the Minister will now be able to accept the new clause. It takes cognisance of his reply in Committee about the responsibility of BR. He said that BR was undertaking a survey, and that is welcome. But some direction at least should be written into the Bill. At the end of the day, this is not just a matter for BR. Many people, particularly in the north of England, first, will want to contribute to the report, and, secondly, hope that they will be able to influence its direction.

The new clause has been drafted to reflect the points made by the Minister in Committee and adds that there will be an ongoing dialogue, that the report will be published and will be open for debate and comment. To that extent, it could be made into a much more meaningful exercise than the one described in Committee, which was left solely to British Rail's criteria.

**Mr. Stuart Holland:** I support new clause 3 and I should like to tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the House why. New clause 3 says that British Rail should publish a plan and bring it to the attention of those who will be affected by its implementation. It is clear that, since we first heard of the Bill, British Rail has done no research into the probable social, environmental or planning effects of the Channel tunnel. *[Interruption.]* It is interesting that the Minister should laugh at that. If it has, as a Member of Parliament for a constituency that is directly affected, may I have access to the planning that has been done? The fact that the Minister can laugh raises some interesting questions concerning, for example, consultation, not only with the local community but also with hon. Members. Such issues are not simply a matter of courtesy but come near to the question of the privilege of hon. Members.

I was at a conference on the dispersal of Channel tunnel traffic in Birmingham on 21 January with a Mr. Southgate, a manager of British Rail who is responsible for the Channel tunnel project. Although I was on the platform with Mr. Southgate, he neglected to tell me—I certainly was not told in writing before it occurred—that two days later BR would open an exhibition at Waterloo containing plans for the terminal and its elevation and design at Waterloo on which I have put questions time and again to the Minister in the House. I have asked for the precise specification, when we could see the plans and the elevation and how it works. The Minister, who is smiling again, said that that was a matter for British Rail, not for him.

As a local Member of Parliament, I was not even informed of that exhibition by British Rail, despite the advantage that Mr. Southgate had of meeting me on 21 January. I learned the day before the exhibition opened from Thames Television, which telephoned me to ask what I thought about the new plans and the new model for a terminal at Waterloo which was to be opened the next day. The following morning I had a prior commitment, again to be in Birmingham, and I could not be at BR's opening of the plans for the terminal at Waterloo. I put it to Thames Television that as far as I was aware I had not even received an invitation to view the model or its specifications.

Indeed, not only did I not receive an invitation in advance, but I received a letter today dated 26 January from a Mr. P. C. Trewen, the parliamentary affairs manager of the BR Board. Under the heading "British Rail and the Channel Tunnel Waterloo International Terminal", it says:

> "As you may know British Rail has opened an Information Centre at Waterloo Station . . . The Centre is open from . . . I thought you would like to know of this development. You are very welcome to visit the Centre."

That exhibition, containing information on the terminal at Waterloo on which I had put questions to Ministers without receiving a response, opened on 23 January. The invitation was sent to me on 26 January.

This is not a small or chiding matter. It is, in my view, symptomatic of the whole way in which Ministers have been handling the issue of this Bill and its passage through the House. The reason that the managers of British Rail can actually get away with behaviour of this kind towards elected Members of Parliament, or have done so far, is precisely the attitude that Ministers have towards key questions which have been put on this Bill and which they have not answered on the Floor of this House.

8.30 pm

For example, consultation, which is of course referred to in new clause 3, is covered by the words

> "To bring it to the attention of those who will be affected by its implementation"—

that is, the implementation of a plan.

On the matter of consultation, neither British Rail nor the Government have initiated any proper consultation with the local community in Waterloo, despite the fact that this is supposed to include a flagship terminal for the Channel tunnel traffic. The public consultation with British Rail was initiated by residents in 1981 and aided by Lambeth council in 1983. Its findings have been totally ignored by British Rail in its recent statement on the Channel tunnel terminal at Waterloo. In fact, the siting of a terminal at Waterloo would have major and potentially devastating consequences on the local area and should have been the subject of a major planning inquiry. A plan in that sense already exists—a community development plan for the area. Normally, whether this were a third London airport or a Sizewell reactor, there would be a public inquiry into its implications.

The kind of traffic throughput which we are likely to get at Waterloo has been estimated to be equivalent to that at Gatwick airport. In Committee on this Bill we had a day and a half for local community groups to give their evidence, not much more than half a day for Lambeth council to give its evidence and no answer from Ministers to some of the key questions which have been raised. For example, a case has been made by Lambeth council and the GLC against the siting of a terminal at Waterloo. This charged that British Rail had in fact done no detailed costings of alternative sites. I stand by that allegation. If British Rail has done any detailed costing of alternative sites, we have not seen the figures.

Last year, for example, BR put out a general statement asking, "Why is Waterloo favoured?" In the question and answer format, it said in its answer:

> "There is a clear commercial value in a single city centre terminal with good connections to other rail routes and other modes of internal transport."

Let us just take that point. The underground connections from Waterloo to the rest of the underground network are not especially good. They happen to be far better from Victoria, which goes straight through to some of the key stations to the north via the Victoria line. That is one reason why the Victoria line was built.

We have been told, for example, that the Bakerloo line can easily accommodate the traffic likely to be generated by the additional passengers coming from Waterloo.

**Dr. Marek:** I hate to intervene in my hon. Friend's argument, but he must realise that the Victoria underground line is almost running to capacity at the moment.

**Mr. Holland:** I am most indebted to my hon. Friend for telling me that the Victoria line is running at full capacity at present. That is one reason why I believe that LRT has proposals to increase its capacity. What I presume it is not aware of is that there has been an admission by David Baylis, who is a London Regional Transport board member and planner, that the Bakerloo line extension proposed recently through the Elephant and Bricklayers Arms to West Croydon will itself now be in question because of the take-up of capacity on the Bakerloo line by bringing international traffic to Waterloo. This should be of some interest to those in south London who have recently been given the impression that there would be an extension of the Bakerloo line. The new Bakerloo line is very unlikely to go ahead if Waterloo is the exclusive flagship terminal in London.

This is a major transport and planning policy issue, which has not been addressed by Ministers, not brought by them to the Floor of the House. It is one of very great significance, to which I shall shortly return.

In other respects — for example, in terms of the costing of Waterloo—British Rail said last year:

> "Victoria Station was carefully evaluated as the location for the international terminal but has been rejected on a number of counts."

These include allegedly limiting the number of platforms which can be accommodated, road access, and so forth.

> "What is the comparative cost between the two options?"

It claims:

> "The Waterloo development will cost in the order of £45 million. Victoria, a minimal proposal, would cost £7 million, while a proposal with four platforms would cost £16 to £17 millions and one with five platforms up to £27 millions."

In the exhibition at Waterloo for the public in general there are none of these nuances of figures, saying that Victoria, for example, would cost only £16 million more than Waterloo. Rather, there is the broad assertion that Victoria would cost 50 per cent. more than Waterloo. It would be very interesting to have a discussion about these matters. Unfortunately, we are in no position to challenge these figures unless we know how the figures themselves are composed. What is the premise for those figures? What are the actual detailed costings? What are the implications, for example, having some Channel tunnel traffic accommodated at Waterloo and some Channel tunnel traffic accommodated at Victoria? Why should it not be possible to get on a train at the Gare du Nord, or in Brussels, and know that the train on the hour is going to Waterloo and the train at quarter past the hour is going to Victoria and alternating termini? That would be likely to increase the effectiveness of Channel tunnel traffic, for the very simple reason that a unique load capacity at Waterloo would limit the frequency of the service.

British Rail again told us that it had examined other sites running through Kensington Olympia, West Brompton, Shepherds Bush, Docklands, Warwick road, London Bridge, Blackfriars, Cannon street, Holborn Viaduct and Bricklayers Arms. It was only today, in taking up the invitation in this letter to view the exhibition, that I came to Waterloo station; there, lo and behold, we have a ranking of stations in meeting criteria as the terminus for Channel tunnel traffic. On the first criterion, convenience for central London and the City, Waterloo gets a tick, Victoria gets a tick, Olympia gets a cross. On the second, access from the terminal to other BR routes, they all rate a tick. On the third, additional capacity at the existing station, we then move into three evaluative categories of good, medium and poor. On additional capacity, Waterloo gets "good", while Victoria and Olympia get "medium".

On the fourth criterion — that of additional capacity on approach routes — Waterloo comes out as good, Victoria medium and Olympia good. All three meet the fifth criterion, that of the feasibility of 400m platforms, as they do the sixth, space for four or five Channel tunnel platforms. In the seventh test — of 500 sq m for a passenger terminal—Waterloo and Victoria pass with a tick, but Olympia gets a cross. They all gets ticks in the eighth—other direct rail access or egress. On the ninth —other direct rail access or egress for public transport — Waterloo is rated good, Victoria medium and Olympia poor. They all get ticks on the tenth criterion, that of accessibility to the North Pole maintenance depot —which all railway enthusiasts appreciate is not located where it appears to be. On the 11th point — no disruption to existing commuter traffic — there are straight ticks for each station.

The 12th point — infrastructure costs — indexed Waterloo at 100, Victoria at 150 and Olympia as "not available". Where is the costing for Olympia? Why has it not been done? For the whole range of other stations that British Rail suggested would be considered, there was no evaluation of the feasibility of their use in dispersed Channel traffic. Indeed, there is no quantification of the feasibility of one station rather than another. Item No. 9,

*[Mr. Holland]*

which refers to road public transport access or egress, concludes that the argument is over because British Rail has judged that one proposal is good, one medium and one poor; but that is to deny the very principle of evaluating traffic congestion caused by additional traffic to individual stations.

The traffic estimates are very interesting. British Rail has been very generous, not only by informing me of an exhibition that would have answered, in principle, some of the questions that Ministers would not answer, but in using technicolor publicity—suitably in the colours of France—to launch a campaign against Lambeth council. British Rail does not allow Lambeth council space in Waterloo station to make its case against the Channel tunnel flagship terminus at Waterloo. Nor has it allowed community groups to put their case against the exclusive use of Waterloo as a Channel tunnel terminus.

I stress that both Lambeth council and the community groups have been responsible by accepting the premise that there will be a Channel tunnel fixed link, and in addressing themselves to the issue of where the traffic should go—whether there should be a single terminus or a dispersal outlet.

**Mr. Snape** *rose* —

**Mr. Holland:** I shall give way to my hon. Friend, who I am sure will support me.

**Mr. Snape:** As ever, I am always delighted to support my hon. Friend. Perhaps he would give us a demonstration of Lambeth council's impartiality towards the project by telling the House the contents of a leaflet that I understand went through many letter boxes in Lambeth — and, indeed, as far afield as Streatham—detailing on the one hand the advantage of the Channel tunnel and on the other using three pages to describe the disadvantages of the project.

**Mr. Holland:** It was a very entertaining leaflet, which amused at least one member of the Select Committee when he visited Waterloo. I regret to say that my hon. Friend is wrong—it is not a Lambeth council leaflet, but one produced by an association of Waterloo groups of tenants. They said — quite rightly — that there will be a single main gain from a Channel fixed link, that of cheaper and faster access to the Continent, whether for freight or passengers. There would be considerable disadvantages to the community should there be a flagship terminus at Waterloo rather than a dispersal of traffic both within London and throughout the country.

8.45 pm

On traffic estimates, British Rail held discussions by convening a meeting and taking questions as a substitute for a public inquiry. During those discussions, Channel tunnel traffic was estimated at 13·5 million passengers. However, on another occasion British Rail's estimate of the upper range of passenger traffic likely to be generated rose to 22 million.

British Rail's "Test your knowledge of key facts and figures about the Waterloo international terminus", asks whether the number of passengers using Waterloo station each year will rise by 2003—it forgot to say that that was anno domini rather than an absolute figure—by 7 million, 13 million or 20 million. It states that the answer is 13 million—apparently quite unlike the claims of 15 million or 20 million. The reality is that the upper figure of more than 20 million has been used not only by British Rail but by the tunnel promoters to help float the issue to finance their bid. Thirteen million is an interesting figure because it is not the figure consistently used by British Rail, which has used a figure of 13·5 million on several occasions.

I note that the Minister is absolutely riveted and is about to wet his throat so that he can reply in detail to all my points. The problem is that the differences in the figures are very significant. Anything up to about 20 million passengers means at least 4 million additional vehicles per year, up to 70,000 buses, 3 million taxis and 1 million private cars. Where will they go?

There are important and interesting implications in terms of Waterloo's situation. I am sure that the House will appreciate and enjoy the visual aid that I am offering to support my analysis. However, better than that, most hon. Members are familiar with Waterloo station. Certainly the Minister is familiar because he visited Waterloo station, and we were glad that he did so. He saw that, from the exit to Waterloo east, on the road by the main concourse going to York road, British Rail is planning three-way traffic, whereas currently there is only one-way traffic and a taxi park, with room for the parking of passenger cars. Indeed, I think that the Minister was amazed. He spoke on camera directly afterwards and said that British Rail had not thought through the problem. Rather than having a mystical union with market forces — or the market mythology suggested by the hon. Member for Northfield—British Rail had not thought about the congestion that would be caused by 70,000 buses.

Even if we are generous and refer to only two thirds of the higher passenger traffic estimates, and therefore to two thirds of the number of buses, that is still an additional 48,000 buses per year. Will they be tour operator buses? Will tour operators be allowed to use the link with passenger traffic at Waterloo station?

**Mr. Rowe:** May I inject some flexibility by suggesting that the Polytechnic of the South Bank might be moved to Kent? Kent does not have a polytechnic, but it should have one. London already has seven polytechnics. If the Polytechnic of the South Bank were moved to Kent, there would be opportunities to reshuffle a great deal of the traffic engendered——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. If the hon. Gentleman reads the new clause, he will realise that it refers to the dispersal of rail traffic and the construction of collection and distribution centres and inland clearance depots. I find it difficult to reconcile that with the relocation of a technical college.

**Mr. Rowe:** The hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) referred to buses, and I was suggesting a possible place where those buses might lurk.

**Mr. Holland:** The hon. Gentleman reminds me of a Member of the House of Lords, who dreamed one night that he was speaking there, and woke up to find that he was. The hon. Gentleman's intervention has come at the wrong stage of the debate. It is a little outside the scope of the new clause to connect parking buses and resiting a polytechnic in Kent with the generation of traffic at Waterloo.

However, the problem of where buses will go or where private cars will be parked at Waterloo is a major issue. Where can such vehicles put down and pick up traffic at Waterloo? That problem has not been addressed. There is a car park for up to 140 cars and a new car park has been planned. However, how many cars are likely to have access to or egress from the roads around Waterloo that are already substantially congested?

I am sure you will be riveted to know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this afternoon, at 1.50 pm precisely, I went to the Waterloo area to have the pleasure of examining the exhibition that claimed to give the answers to the questions that the Minister did not give. In coming up to Waterloo from the Baylis road area and going up to the road behind Waterloo, I counted 52 taxis in a queue. That represents a substantial distance—it stretched from the front of the station concourse where people normally catch cabs at Waterloo, right down the side of the station and two thirds of the way along it past one of the sharpest hairpin bends to have escaped alpine history. That bend will take three lanes of traffic if the proposal goes ahead.

On those grounds alone, there can be no way in which Waterloo is likely to be able to accommodate the additional traffic that will be generated by the Channel tunnel fixed link. It is of priority and importance that that traffic should be dispersed. That dispersal should be aimed not only to take traffic beyond London—I shall make some further comments on that shortly—but also to disperse it within London between the different stations. A single terminal at Waterloo will represent a built-in bottleneck.

To stress that argument, I should like to draw attention to the kind of games that British Rail plays with its figures. In the technicolor question and answer sheet, we are told to be confident that Lambeth has got its figures wrong but British Rail has not got its figures right. But those figures are not consistent.

Last year, British Rail assured us that on a normal weekday, outside the domestic rail passenger holiday period of July and August, there will be an additional 21,000 international train passengers a day using Waterloo. Now we are told that there will be an additional 38,000 passengers using Waterloo. You do not have to be a mathematical genius, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although you may well be, to appreciate that the difference between 21,000 and 38,000 is very nearly 100 per cent. British Rail has doubled the estimate of the number of passengers who will use Waterloo.

Then comes the placebo effect on British Rail's figures. It is stated that, in comparison to the total number of passengers using Waterloo in the 1950s and 1960s, the proposed increase in passengers represents a mere 1 per cent. extra. I ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to retain in your mind that figure of 1 per cent. extra traffic. That figure has all the charm—not only the moderation—of almost infinitesimal regression. That 1 per cent. extra is so small that it suggests no one should bother about it.

That was the attitude adopted by British Rail. In practice, British Rail did not bother. It did not make any effective estimate of additional traffic and congestion costs in the Waterloo area. Instead, British Rail studied the Gibbs report. The figure given in that report of passengers using Waterloo was not 13 million or even the higher figure of 22 million, but 6 million. The Gibbs report came to the conclusion that there would be no significant additional congestion at Waterloo and therefore British Rail also decided that there would be no significant additional congestion. British Rail had the nerve to cite findings and studies by Lambeth and the Greater London council concerning congestion that were based on the Gibbs report analysis of 6 million passengers and not the current British Rail figure of some 13 million passengers.

It gets even more interesting. We are now told that the highest forecast for annual day traffic will be about 13·6 million by the year 2003. Waterloo station has display boards that state that, on average, 1,272 domestic trains used Waterloo in 1978. The average number in 1985 was 1,079. Even with the additional number of trains generated by the Channel tunnel programme, there will be only between 98 and 130 international trains using Waterloo in the year 2003. Those figures are displayed in large columns on the display boards for anybody who cannot easily calculate the difference between those figures. It is clear that the difference between 1,079 and 1,272 is more than 130.

I was rather inquisitive about those figures, which other people consider are purely factual. I discovered that the range figure between 98 and 130 trains using the station diverges substantially—the range is so wide—because two estimates are involved. One is British Rail's estimate and the other is the Eurotunnel estimate.

I asked British Rail what was the average number of weekday passengers going through Waterloo in the peak period from March to October. Those figures have also been put up on the display board by British Rail. In fact, British Rail does not put the precise figures on the board; it uses ratios. However, I have checked the figures with Nick Alexander of British Rail — he was most co-operative on the phone this afternoon, and I pay him credit. The figures show that the peak passenger use of Waterloo in any post-war year with 204,000 passengers was in 1971. I asked on what foundation the range of figures at Waterloo had been based, because the words on the display board refer to

> "Average weekday passengers through Waterloo at the peak, March to October".

The hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) has talked about misleading advertisements by Eurotunnel, but I think he should be talking about misleading advertising by British Rail at Waterloo station. I hope that the Minister will intervene to correct the misleading information. I found out to my surprise that the figures, rather than for average weekday passengers in the peak months of March to October, were sample figures for a peak Saturday in August. British Rail is not using an average monthly figure.

If one uses the figures of annual flow, instead of the dramatic collapse in traffic using Waterloo——

**Dr. Marek** *rose*——

**Mr. David Mitchell:** There are peaks of intercontinental traffic at the weekends. The greatest pressure of travel on British Rail Eurotunnel trains is likely to occur on Saturdays. It is therefore appropriate for British Rail to consider how that peak capacity on Saturdays can be handled.

9 pm

**Mr. Holland:** I would not want to deter the Minister from supporting the new clause, although I am sure that nothing I say will persuade him. This is precisely the matter that I want to address. I am well aware of that point. I discussed it with British Rail.

*[Mr. Holland]*

One cannot compare chalk with cheese. What are the comparisons about which the Minister is talking? He is talking about peak tourist traffic in August, but is he also talking about current British Rail traffic? One cannot decide how future traffic will be generated by comparing a rail service that has to go by sea across the Channel with Channel tunnel traffic. In making that comparison, one is undermining the basis of the whole case for the Channel study. As Mr. Alexander said to me on the telephone today, "You know how most market forecasts are done — stick up a wet finger." That is almost what is happening. I appreciate British Rail's difficulties in evaluating market forecasts. I appreciate that the Minister may feel that he is seriously misled by a wet finger. I am not suggesting which finger, on which hand, held in what way or with what intent; but the reality is very similar to gestures that are commonly used. One can have no confidence in these projected figures.

**Dr. Marek:** I support the new clause. I believe that British Rail has considered this matter at length, certainly during the past year. My hon. Friend said that British Rail estimates traffic flow by simply taking a particular day in May or June. My hon. Friend is right—British Rail has been doing this from Land's End to John o'Groats. This example shows no departure from British Rail's normal procedures in establishing statistics.

**Mr. Holland:** I am sorry to hear that confirmation, because it undermines what little faith I have in British Rail's capacity to forecast traffic. I do not know whether that is acceptable to the hon. Member for Northfield, who believes in market forces adjusting supply and demand rather than in planning supply and demand. *[Interruption.]* I am willing to give way to the Secretary of State.

**The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. John Moore)** *indicated dissent.*

**Mr. Holland:** It is a pity to lose the point that the right hon. Gentleman was about to raise.

The breakdown in the number of Channel tunnel trains in the year 2003 — 98 and 130 — shows the great difference in the figures used by British Rail and Eurotunnel. The premise is that peak traffic will be absorbed during the peak vacation or holiday period and that Waterloo will be able to absorb spare capacity because of the decrease in commuter traffic. But that assumes that there will be spare capacity rather than that the Channel tunnel terminal will be a success.

I was interested to learn from my discussions with British Rail today that its latest midweek passenger figures are for 1982. They are five years out of date. We are planning a terminal with the throughput of Gatwick airport based on figures that are five years out of date. Talk about think of a number, subtract those who get off at Ashford, plump for the station thought of in the first place and the answer is Waterloo — that is almost the extent of the statistical basis used by British Rail in pursuing this case.

As I said shortly before the Minister intervened, according to the information that I received today from British Rail, which contrasts with its display on the technicolor boards at Waterloo, the average number of weekday passengers travelling through Waterloo at peak periods was 204,000 in 1971. It was, on average, between 190,000 and 195,000 between 1961 and 1973-74, 181,000 in 1975 and only 178,000 in the last year for which figures are available. That is much higher than the figures suggested by the misleading public display at Waterloo, which is substituting for ministerial answers. I suggest that the Minister obtains those figures. I am glad that a co-operative middle manager at British Rail has agreed to send me copies of the diagrams, the artwork and the figures on which the estimates are based. For this does not suggest a slump in commuter traffic from Waterloo. It suggests that there is much less spare capacity than the Government say. For example, still talking about the 1982 midweek passenger figures——

**Mr. Caborn:** If we continue at this rate, they will be 1988 figures.

**Mr. Holland:** My hon. Friend will appreciate that, unfortunately, I did not have the advantage that he had of sitting on the Select Committee, the Standing Committee or other committees that may have dealt with this matter. *[Interruption.]* Changing one's mind is an act of intellectual imagination, of which I am sure the Minister is capable. But I trust that he will not change his mind but will listen to the figures. They will be the basis of a continuing debate about the feasibility and viability of Waterloo.

In 1982, the number of midweek passengers totalled 179,000. That is the base. If we then consider the additional passenger traffic generated at Waterloo, on British Rail's figures — I stress that I have excluded through trains from these figures because, obviously, they do not count for terminal purposes — there is an additional 62,000 for British Rail and an additional 83,000 on the 179,000 base from Eurotunnel. This is the crunch. If we put those two figures together, we get 241,000 of feasible traffic on the British Rail figures, and 262,000 feasible daily passenger traffic on the Eurotunnel figures. That is way in excess of the maximum passenger use of the peak for the whole of the post-war period of 204,000 daily passenger traffic.

In practice, this amounts to taking the high of the passenger commuter traffic and adding the type of capacity expansion that Eurotunnel hopes to achieve. The Minister may say that this does not take account of seasonal variations, but the figure is way in excess of the 1971 peak. In fact, it is 25 per cent. above peak post-war capacity as opposed to the 1 per cent. increase — the massaging of one's concern—that we heard earlier from British Rail. If the Minister were to say to me that this assumes a phenomenal success for the Channel tunnel because there will never be that volume of traffic, why does he not plan for a use of the tunnel that can generate that volume of traffic? One of the reasons he cannot do so at the moment is that he assumes that all the traffic will go through Waterloo.

If we get the higher figures, it will have major implications for, first, Customs and Excise, secondly, the underground, thirdly, taxis, fourthly, buses. Fifthly, it spells congestion. That is one reason why we have such little confidence in the figures given by British Rail in this matter. In other respects, the case for dispersal of Channel tunnel traffic is well established.

One of the problems about dispersal is whether there will be on-train customs inspections. It is a major issue. We appreciate that the Government will wish to take into account the view of trade unions in Customs and Excise matters. I hope that the Government will be able to persuade the trade unions of the merits of on-train customs inspections.

Certain anomalies arise. I have asked the Minister whether the French or the Belgians, for example, will have terminal facilities at their stations. It is an obvious question. They do not have terminal facilities at the moment. One may get on a train in Brussels and go to Paris. One may have a meal and take advantage of all those features that are so lauded by British Rail in some of its advertising, such as "Think of getting on a plane, stretching your legs, having a wider seat, a bigger window and a meal. We so much prefer the 7.27 to the 707 or the 747." In reality, that is what happens between Brussels and Paris. Will it also happen for British passengers arriving in Paris? Will there be a terminal in the Gare du Nord? It is a basic question. Will there be a terminal at the Gare du Nord for British passengers travelling through the Channel tunnel? The Minister does not appear to know. The probability is that French customs and excise would do the same as they have always done when anybody travels on one of their trains. There is no need for a terminal, therefore, or for the new see-through terminal at Waterloo. I say "see-through" advisedly. The terminal has no elevation, in physical terms. All the floors are of perspex. It is difficult to evaluate what stands where and the implications of the terminal. That is one reason why there will be a very lopsided Channel tunnel service.

I have said in previous debates that, if there is to be competition between rail and air transport, there must be on-train customs inspection. On 23 January 1987, I put down a question to the Secretary of State for Transport about whether the SNCF expects customs inspectors on Channel tunnel trains to travel further than Ashford in the pursuit of their duties and whether any Customs and Excise facilities will be operated at Ashford. That has a direct bearing on whether or not such facilities will be needed at Waterloo. I was told that no decisions had been taken about on-train controls for passengers or freight carried on through services, that French and United Kingdom customs are holding discussions with SNCF and British Rail respectively about controls and that, whatever the outcome of the discussions, there would be the familiar red-green arrangements for passengers terminating their journeys at Ashford or Waterloo. I do not think that there will be any familiar red-green arrangements at the Gare du Nord. If there are not, it will be a singular victory for common sense.

Allowing for the difficulties involved in achieving on-train customs inspection, there is a proposal to abolish all internal customs inspections within the EEC. There have been many EEC proposals in the last 25 years. I remember a proposal that called for a common industrial policy to complement the common agricultural policy. That has not seen the light of day. I remember a proposal for a common European statute. That has not seen the light of day, either.

It is just feasible and not beyond the bounds of imagination that we may not see the abolition of customs and excise within the EEC in the next five to seven years. But what if we do? What shall we do then with the great white elephant of a terminal at Waterloo? Shall we turn it back into a new Musée Pompidou? The old argument about French railways as they used to be was that, like insects, they had all their works on the outside. Perhaps our Waterloo terminal will be a Pompidou in reverse, since our trains always have their works on the inside. Perhaps we shall have a perspex see-through terminal. Next to the national arts complex, that could be quite appropriate, but it would not be very useful if the EEC had abolished internal customs and excise by the time it was completed.

**Mr. Caborn:** It crosses my mind that perhaps there ought to be harmonisation of the length of speeches in the various Parliaments of Europe. Perhaps there ought to be a time limit, but it seems that that will not happen for a few years to come.

**Mr. Holland:** I appreciate my hon. Friend's concern about the length of my speech.

Reference has already been made to the article in *The New Civil Engineer* of 11 December 1986. It drew attention to the fact that for the first time the new Snowhill tunnel going via Blackfriars will lead to inter-city trains travelling right through London for the first time. If we consider that, we shall see that there is speculation——

**Dr. Marek:** Will my hon. Friend give way?

9.15 pm

**Mr. Holland:** No, I am sorry. It may amaze my hon. Friend, but I have had some encouragement to complete my brief remarks on the clause.

If that is the case, Blackfriars becomes a feasible station for people to alight in London. I should like to put the serious point to the Minister that, if we can shake off the flagship concept of a terminal, why is it not possible for people who want to alight in south London to do so, and for there to be three stops in London for through trains? Those who wish to get off in south London could get off at a south London station and those who wish to get off in central London could do so at Blackfriars, with through trains going on to north London and to the north of the country. Surely that is the most intelligent way to approach the matter.

I have already mentioned the implications of this proposal for the local environment and the damage that could result to the local environment in the Waterloo area. I have also discussed jobs and the fact that there is little expectation that the jobs will benefit those in the local community. I shall not reiterate those points, because they were put very well by representatives of the local community and the Waterloo development group in their submissions to the Select Committee. I trust that they will be able to put their case to the House of Lords, because they had so little time to put their case to the Committee about the impact of the proposals on the local environment.

Finally, the Department of the Environment — the oracle — has alleged that Lambeth has exaggerated the difficulties that the proposal will pose for its planning powers and that Lambeth will not be overridden. However, a circular from the Department of the Environment, reference No. LCM(86)6, states:

> "In dealing with applications for planning permission local planning authorities shall have regard to the provisions of the current development plans, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Applications are considered on their merits. As emphasised in Circular 14/85, however, there is a presumption in favour of allowing applications for development."

*[Mr. Holland]*

That is of real concern to those in the local community and I am sure that I shall be able to catch your eye, Mr. Speaker, on a future occasion to explain why.

**Dr. Marek:** My hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) took 45 minutes for his speech. I hope that I shall take four and a half minutes.

I advise my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall that I do not think it possible for through trains to use Blackfriars station to go to the north of London because the tunnels are too small as one gets towards Kings Cross. My understanding is that the tunnels cannot be enlarged because of the pipes and other things in the ground in that area. If I am wrong, I shall be pleased to be corrected.

**Mr. Stuart Holland:** My hon. Friend is wrong.

**Dr. Marek:** That is fine. I look forward to the possibility of a conversation later to clear up that matter.

Without discussing Waterloo and whether it will be suitable as a terminus, like my hon. Friend the Member for Vauxhall, I completely support new clause 3 which is an important clause. We cannot leave this matter to market forces because it affects us all. The clause refers not only to freight, but to passengers. All of us in the House—indeed everybody in the country as a possible passenger—wish to know British Rail's plans so that we can comment upon them and suggest improvements to British Rail.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) said, British Rail talks to county councils and to local authorities. If those local authorities wish to invest and help British Rail to move more goods by rail they will need to know where and how to invest, and what the time scale should be. It is absolutely vital that that is not kept secret.

I completely disagree with the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) that the matter should be left to a confidential study by British Rail. It must be open and we must know the facts—we are all on the same side in this matter—because we want to make the Channel tunnel the success that I am sure that it will be.

I am aware that the new clause is not written as I would have expected it to be if it had been drawn by parliamentary draftsmen. If the Minister cannot accept it now, I hope that he can say that he will introduce an appropriate clause in another place. I strongly urge the Government to accept the spirit of the new clause if they cannot accept its wording.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** The Government fully support the objectives of the new clause. Throughout the passage of the Bill the Government have made clear their belief and intention that the Channel tunnel will benefit not just London and the south-east, but the whole of Great Britain. Likewise, British Rail has made abundantly clear its desire and intention to exploit the opportunities which the Channel tunnel will open up to provide improved services to a variety of destinations.

While British Rail needs to provide a terminal in London to cater for passengers who want to travel to and from London, it is also planning to run direct services to the midlands and the north. These services will avoid central London by using the west London line. Those services will then join the existing radial routes out of London to other destinations. The exact pattern of services has still to be determined. It will depend on British Rail's assessment of the likely pattern of demand. In broad terms, British Rail expects about 20 to 25 per cent. of its passengers through the tunnel to use the direct services to stations beyond London.

British Rail expects to run direct freight services between points throughout Britain and centres in mainland Europe. It believes that freight customers in the midlands, the north and Scotland will stand to benefit particularly from these developments. Rail freight services become particularly attractive for distances over 200 miles and the opening of the tunnel will create enormous new opportunities. There will be time savings of between 24 and 48 hours and it will be possible for freight forwarders to avoid the costs of transferring freight to and from ships.

As in the case of passenger services, the exact pattern of the services to be provided has yet to be determined.

**Mr. Stuart Holland** *rose*——

**Mr. Mitchell:** I shall come to the hon. Gentleman's remarks in a moment.

The services will depend on British Rail's assessment of the likely pattern of demand. British Rail is at present collaborating with Eurotunnel in a regional survey of trade and industry. The survey has my full support. Its aims are to ensure that companies throughout the United Kingdom are fully informed of the exciting opportunities which the tunnel will create for them and to ascertain Britain's likely demand for transport services in the 1990s so that they can be taken into account in planning British Rail services and the infrastructure needed to support them.

**Mr. Holland:** I appreciate that there are pressures on the Minister, as there are on me, and that it may not be possible for him to reply in detail to my points. Nevertheless, he will appreciate that they were made with considerable seriousness because those questions had not been answered by British Rail. There is a great deal of confusion about what will happen. Will the Minister assure me that within the week he will seek to give me written answers to my questions?

**Mr. Mitchell:** If the hon. Gentleman could just contain himself, not for as long as his speech but until I reach that part of my speech, I shall deal with his questions.

As part of the process of planning these services British Rail will determine where best to establish new freight collection and distribution centres and where it would be advantageous to have inland customs clearance facilities. Obviously, these facilities must satisfy the throughput and operational criteria established by the customs authorities.

There is already a great deal of work planned or already under way involving British Rail and its various consultants and experts to achieve the objectives of new clause 3. The merit of the new clause is that it will put British Rail's plans firmly on the public record and increase public awareness of the opportunities that they would offer. That is something that the Government would welcome, and I understand that the board would not be opposed to it.

Hon. Members will have heard the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland)——

**Mr. Caborn:** I wish to ask a question on the criterion for inland customs facilities. If I heard the Minister correctly, he said that there has been no discussion about the entries that are necessary for inland customs. At present I believe the criterion to be 30,000. If there is no movement on that criterion, it will be extremely difficult for British Rail to match those entries. Was I correct in hearing the Minister say that the criterion will remain the same at 30,000 entries?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I did not say that they would remain the same. I said that they were matters for the Customs and Excise. The hon. Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) has made a point which must be taken into account, and I will consider it further and write to him.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall raised two principal questions at the start of his speech and he embroidered them during his remarks. He asked whether British Rail has made proper forward plans and whether it had consulted. The hon. Gentleman's concern over consultation led him to ask me some months ago if I would arrange for consultation with the local community and particularly with representatives from Lambeth council and the associated boroughs that had problems. I did that. I invited representatives from Vauxhall, Lambeth, the neighbouring boroughs and all the London boroughs which would be affected by British Rail's plans to come to a joint consultation meeting in the same way as I have had successful joint consultation meetings in Kent.

In Kent, we sat down together and cross-examined British Rail. We considered the facts and sought a consensus. All the time we tried to maximise the advantages and to minimise the disadvantages for those who would be affected.

The joint consultation meetings in Kent have proceeded on a constructive and useful basis. A lot of information has been brought out from British Rail about its operational difficulties. I am astonished that the hon. Member for Vauxhall should have the effrontery to make a speech in which he claimed that there has been a lack of consultation. How can he be so out of touch? I held meetings. At the first of the meetings, I invited representatives of the local authorities concerned to spell out their anxieties. At the second meeting, I arranged an agenda that would enable the authorities to question British Rail and have discussions about the very points which the hon. Member for Vauxhall has raised today. What happened? Councillor Colenutt of Lambeth council led a politically inspired walkout because I would not turn the consultation committee into a public meeting in the borough.

**Mr. Holland:** Will the Minister give way?

**Mr. Mitchell:** Just let me finish.

The way in which that politically inspired walkout was carried out is something which I hope that the hon. Gentleman will apologise for. It was an absolute disgrace. Many people, including Ministers, officials, and Departments, came together to enable the cross-examination which the hon. Member for Vauxhall has asked for to take place. However, the political walkout was organised by the council representive for Lambeth.

**Mr. Holland:** Will the Minister give way?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I have not finished yet.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall raised the question of Victoria as an alternative and he wanted to know what the costs would be. That is the kind of question that I would have liked to have heard raised at a consultation meeting for cross-examination with British Rail. It would have been useful for British Rail to be under pressure from different ideas and lines of attack which I might not have thought of. However, that opportunity was lost.

All the points that the hon. Member for Vauxhall raised today could perfectly legitimately and properly have been dealt with at a consultation meeting. He could have raised his questions about buses, taxis and coach access to Waterloo. Far from having ignored those problems, British Rail has used Alexander Gibb and Partners as consultants to provide advice and guidance about how to improve the traffic patterns. That would solve the problem that is worrying the hon. Member for Vauxhall.

The hon. Member for Vauxhall referred to Waterloo as a bottleneck. He has failed to recognise that the morning peak hour commuter traffic at Waterloo will be over by the time that the first trains arrive after their three and a half hour journey from Paris with their flood of passengers. They will not coincide in a way that might lead to the problem about which the hon. Gentleman is worried.

9.30 pm

**Mr. Holland:** The Minister did not put it to the House that Lambeth council and local community groups wanted terms of reference for the inquiry that would compare with the public inquiry. They were not able to obtain that. Secondly, and far more importantly in terms of the rights of hon. Members, the Minister may be unaware or have forgotten that I have put the question as the elected Member for the constituency time and again on the Floor of the House and he has constantly referred me to British Rail. British Rail has not answered the questions. It is a secondary matter as to whether his consultation with local community groups and Lambeth council succeeded or did not succeed—I suspect that there are two sides to that. He has not answered my questions here on the Floor of the House. He has passed me on to British Rail, which has failed to answer my questions, or has announced them to the press without even informing me when it is taking place. That comes damn near to contempt of the House.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I remind the hon. Gentleman that matters for British Rail should be addressed to British Rail. What was unique about the opportunity provided by the joint consultation committee, out of which his friends walked, was that they would have had the opportunity to cross-examine British Rail. British Rail's representatives would have been there, as would the people with whom we are dealing and planning the Channel tunnel link in relation to its London terminal. They could have been cross-examined. Indeed, after the walkout they were cross-examined by others who remained, on aspects affecting the other boroughs concerned. Lambeth's representatives walked out and lost the opportunity. That is a shame, and it is a shame that the hon. Gentleman is not on his feet apologising for what happened.

**Mr. Holland** *rose*——

**Mr. Mitchell:** I have dealt with the hon. Gentleman. Other hon. Members have asked questions with which I wish to deal.

The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) rightly drew attention to the effect of increased productivity in lorry transportation on the distance that

*[Mr. Mitchell]*

one has to go by rail with freight in order to be able to compete successfully. The hon. Gentleman has much experience of the railways and he is right to say that the figures have been getting bigger. He suggested that they were up to 250 miles. That is a little too high, but one can certainly see the trend. The Channel tunnel is important because it will make those long distances available to British Rail and give it the opportunity to compete successfully with the lorry in so many cases going to continental markets. British Rail now estimates that 1,000 lorries a day will be taken off the road. I am sure that that is something we would all welcome.

The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East queried the adequacy of the funds available to British Rail for investment. I would put one question to him. Can he tell me one viable project that British Rail has put forward for investment that I have turned down? Can he tell me one, not dozens? I think that he will have difficulty finding one.

The hon. Member for Isle of Wight (Mr. Ross) fears that sidings will be taken up where they are needed. When I was in Middlesbrough a while ago, standing in the tower overlooking the huge, old-fashioned Middlesbrough freight depot with Colin Driver, the sector director of British Rail, I cross-examined him on that matter. I asked him what would be the pattern of his inland clearance depots and the pattern of his freight depots for maximising the advantages to British Rail of the Channel tunnel. He said that it was too early to give the details. I pressed him further and asked when I could expect to have them. He said that he thought that by July of this year he would be in a position to give me his initial indication of what the pattern might be.

I know that the hon. Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) has a special interest because he and his council and others have raised on a number of occasions what that pattern might be. My advice to the House is that one can expect that pattern to emerge next summer. My hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) recognised the advantages of longer distance. He said that once the tunnel is in operation there will be substantial benefits for car manufacturers in Birmingham and other places further north. My hon. Friend is absolutely right and has put his finger on a crucial matter. British exporters and manufacturers now suffer the disadvantage of dragging their goods across the Channel, with double handling at each end. When the Channel tunnel is open they will be able to have a timetable for delivery in 24 hours to any major centre on the continent. I have much sympathy with what my hon. Friend has said, but there are certain difficulties with the clause as drafted, which the hon. Member for Wrexham recognises.

Parliamentary counsel has drawn our attention to oddities in the wording of the clause. I shall not detail them fully, but in one respect the clause seems inexplicably weak. As it is drafted, the board is not required to prepare any plan until just before its scheduled works are open to traffic, perhaps not until 1992. The Government believe that the clause could be much more beneficial if it required the board to produce its first plan well before the opening time. We also need to think about how long the duty upon British Rail to produce up-dated plans should continue. In short, the Government believe that this clause should be improved significantly. We therefore undertake to bring forward in the other place a new clause based closely upon new clause 3 but with the improvements and clarifications that I have just outlined. I hope that on that basis the hon. Gentleman will feel able to withdraw the clause.

**Mr. Snape:** The House will be grateful for some of the things that the Minister has said. I cannot understand how his drafting experts say that the new clause 3 names any specific dates such as 1992, because it does not. It says:

"before their scheduled works are open for traffic"

That does not pin anybody down to 1992, but we would be grateful for small mercies.

**Mr. Mitchell:** That is the trouble. It does not say that it has to be done in July next year or the year after that or at any other time. It leaves it totally vague over seven years. I am sure the hon. Gentleman agrees that that is not his intention.

**Mr. Snape:** In that case, I understand and appreciate what the hon. Gentleman is saying. He has challenged me to name one private project for investment that he had failed to approve. The House is aware, but it will do no harm to remind hon. Members on both sides, that none of those projects which he has approved—East coast main line electrification, locomotive orders, mark IV rolling stock, driving car trailers for the west coast mainline — means any extra money. They are all generated from the British Railways Board's own resources by the sale of assets and by cutting down services in other areas.

It is a distortion of the facts for the Minister to pretend that he is the King Midas of British Rail. Not a penny of new money has come from the Government towards any of these projects. Sooner or later British Rail will run out of assets to sell, and it is devoted to running down the assets it has. When it has peddled all there is to peddle, we shall test the strength of the commitment of the Minister of State and that of his right hon. Friend to British Rail by saying, "Its coffers are exhausted. Will you replenish them or not?" It is to be hoped that there will be a general election before then and we shall not have to worry.

**Mr. Roger King:** That is right. The hon. Gentleman will not have to worry. He will still be sitting there.

**Mr. Snape:** I am glad that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Northfield (Mr. King) has given us that little chirrup to remind us of his return to the Chamber. Despite the praise lavished on him by the Minister of State, the House should not overlook the fact that the hon. Member for Northfield, in his normally ignorant and silly way as far as these matters are concerned, actually spoke against the clause. He asked who needs a clause like this when all we need is a siding here and there. Just spend a few bob and send in a crane. What sort of railway system does the hon. Gentleman think we have in the latter part of this decade?

He told us that his main reason for joining the Conservative party was that he was against the late George Brown's national plan in the 1960s. I have heard worse reasons for joining the Conservative party but not many. I suppose that if one needs a good excuse to join the Tory party that one is as good as any that could be put forward. I can only conclude that the hon. Gentleman's knowledge of railway matters began and ended on the day that he made his commitment to join the Tory party. Rail freight has moved on a bit and one siding and one crane is not the sort of facility that we envisage in new clause 3, the provisions of which were wisely accepted by his hon. Friend the Minister of State.

Some 2 per cent. of British Rail freight and 27 per cent. of the freight carried by SNCF is international. The purpose of the new clause is to bring those two percentages somewhat closer together. Because of geography, unless we can join British Rail's freight network to the rest of the continent that imbalance will be perpetuated. I am grateful to the Minister for much of what he said and especially for his acceptance of the commitments inherent in the new clause. I understand that he will bring forward, as he puts it in his modest way, an even better clause in another place. Therefore, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the clause.

*Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.*

### New Clause 4

### DUTIES WITH REGARD TO NATURE CONSERVATION AND AMENITY

'In formulating or considering any proposals relating to the discharge of their functions under the Act, the concessionaries, the Railway Board, the Kent County Council, the Planning Authorities and the appropriate Minister or Ministers shall have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest, and of protecting buildings and other objects of architectural, archaeological or historical interest and shall take into account any effect which the proposals would have on the beauty of, or amenity in, any rural or urban area or on any such flora, fauna, features, building or objects, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing shall consider in particular:

(i) the effect of any such proposals on the heritage coast of Kent; and

(ii) the desirability of securing that, in the construction of the works authorised by the Act, the movement of minestone from sources in Kent shall, to the greatest extent practicable, be carried out by rail.'.—*[Mr. Snape.]*

*Brought up, and read the First time.*

**Mr. Snape:** I beg to move, That the clause be read a Second time.

**Mr. Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to consider new clause 6—*Disposal of surplus spoil*—

'(1) The Secretary of State and the Concessionaires shall arrange for an independent study to be carried out in order to determine the best means of disposing of surplus spoil produced as a result of the construction of the tunnels referred to in section 1(7)*(a)* of this Act.

(2) In this section "surplus spoil" means spoil which is intended to be disposed of in the United Kingdom, other than the one million tons to be deposited at Cheriton, Folkestone in connection with the construction of the terminal referred to in section 1(7)*(b)* of this Act.'.

New clause 7 — *Restriction on carrying out certain environmentally sensitive development*—

'(1) Notwithstanding that planning permission has been, or is deemed to have been granted under Part III of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971, the Concessionaires shall not, within the Shakespeare Cliff Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, carry out any development in connection with the construction or operation of the tunnel system, unless that development—

*(a)* consists of the construction of any of their scheduled works; or

*(b)* has been approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament.

(2) In this section "development" has the same meaning as in the said Act of 1971.'.

**Mr. Snape:** I shall concentrate my brief remarks on paragraph (ii) of the new clause, the carriage of minestone and other bulk substances from sources in Kent by rail

"to the greatest extent practicable".

The other matters in the new clause are

"flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest,".

I pray in aid the assistance of my expert hon. Friend the Member for the rolling and green uplands of Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) who will entertain the House as he entertained the Committee about this part of the clause.

Those of us who served on the Select Committee on the Channel Tunnel Bill and the Standing Committee will be aware of the importance that the people of Kent attach to the problem of curbing the number of heavy goods vehicles that would be unleashed on Kent roads as a result of this project. Hon. Members on both Committees did what they could to see that as much bulk material as possible was carried by rail in order to reduce the amount of nuisance spoken about at great length by an understandably enormous number of petitioners to the Select Committee.

The Select Committee drew to the attention of local planning authorities and parish councils the likely difficulties that would be caused by the transport of minestone and other bulk fill material. Early in the sittings of the Committee we managed to get an undertaking from the concessionaires that initially all the minestone would be carried by rail. Many petitioners said that a loaded juggernaut is an environmental intrusion whether it is carrying minestone or any other bulk material. To that end, the Committee sought to reopen the matter with the concessionaires. I think that it was on the last day of our public hearings that a supplementary paper on this matter prepared by Eurotunnel was presented to us.

The concessionaires suggested that, in order to increase the proportion of bulk materials to be carried by rail, a railhead might be built a relatively short distance from the terminal with immediate access to the M20, so that lorries would complete the transport of bulk materials to the working sites along the motorway rather than by ordinary roads. We were aware that that assurance conflicted with the earlier assurance to which I have referred that minestone would be moved only by rail. However, the Select Committee rightly felt that the priority was that as little bulk material as possible should be carried by lorries along the ordinary roads of the area. For that reason, the majority of the Select Committee accepted the compromise, and that was behind the drafting of new clause 4.

9.45 pm

There will be difficulties even if, as we hope, the Minister accepts the provisions of the new clause. Both Committees involved in the Bill expect Kent county council to exercise its powers to ensure that as few lorries as possible carry bulk materials by any other road than the M20 to the working sites. The Select Committee emphasised the importance of Kent county council actively enforcing the regime that is agreed with Eurotunnel and its contractors so that it can be made to work properly.

In commending this new clause to the House, I express the hope that it will be possible for lorries engaged on this particular project to be clearly marked in order that their movement can be effectively policed by the residents in the area whose environment and lifestyle will be considerably

*[Mr. Snape]*

disturbed if the provisions of the agreement between the concessionaires and the planning authority are not adequately adhered to.

I hope that the Minister will look as sympathetically on new clause 4 as he did on new clause 3, and if he feels that new clause 4 needs strengthening in a similar way to the previous clause, I can assure him of the Opposition's full co-operation, because we are as anxious as I am sure that he and other Ministers in the Department are to see that, while this scheme progresses, the environment of the people of Kent is adequately protected at all times.

**Mr. Crouch:** When the Bill was considered in Standing Committee I was interested in the constant reference to the Shakespeare cliff and the constant reference by my hon. Friend the Minister of State to Edgar in King Lear. It was picked up, followed and even distorted a bit by the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford). I have sat here the live-long day to make one short intervention on a matter which has concerned me for all the time that we have talked about the Channel tunnel. The House and my constituents know that I have been a supporter of the tunnel, and in some ways they have been dismayed by that. Some of my colleagues immediately around me representing the county of Kent have been dismayed at my enthusiasm for the tunnel.

I shall say something briefly about environmental considerations. New clause 4 is about nature conservation and amenities, and it attracts me. I am not wise enough with words—unlike a craftsman—to say whether the clause is well drafted or strong enough. The last clause came in for some criticism from my right hon. Friend the Minister in that regard. I like the wording of the clause, particularly the first paragraph, because it covers all of my worries and anxieties, and those of my constituents as well as the great majority of people who live in Kent, whether they welcome the tunnel or whether they do not want the tunnel. What they are concerned about is that if we build it we should not destroy what has often been called the garden of England. It is somewhat wrongly named. It is the hop garden of England, not necessarily the beautiful garden of England, but that has come to be the term used to describe Kent, and it is a good one, too.

As we proceed with this great engineering project, I do not want to see the sort of disastrous environmental mistakes that we made between the wars. I can remember the building of the Great West road out of London. It was a great idea to have a good exit from London, but we allowed industrial development to sprawl all along it. I remember the Firestone factory being built. I remember it being nearly destroyed recently, but today it is a building of industrial architectural interest.

In this day and age, when we embark on a major engineering project—this is the biggest in Europe this century—we must get it right, not only in engineering and economic terms—those have been considered in great detail by the House, in Select Committee and in Standing Committee, and rightly so—but environmentally. We can build something big that is economically advantageous, but we could in the process destroy the environment which makes Kent attractive. That is the first sight of England for the visitor from the continent. If we are not careful, we could destroy that. We could allow London to sprawl out all the way down to Folkestone if we are not careful.

In a loose moment the former Secretary of State for Transport, my right hon. Friend the Member for Cirencester and Tewkesbury (Mr. Ridley), told me that my people in Kent need not worry because 100,000 jobs would be created one day. I think that that might be so and I know that that causes dismay in some quarters of the House. Some hon. Members from the north, Scotland and elsewhere fear that the tunnel will be such a magnet that those 100,000 jobs will be a reality in perhaps 30 years' time. I shall not complain, but it will raise problems in other parts of the country, which I respect.

However, I shall complain bitterly if we allow the Bill to go forward without some real protection for our environment and amenities, and we could do so. I have here the briefing papers from Eurotunnel which contain several hundred paragraphs, yet there are only 24 words out of thousands from the engineers on the environment. That is not good enough for me. The Bill runs to 100 pages, yet I cannot find one clause out of the 47, and not one schedule, which covers this important need.

I know that my hon. Friend the Minister and the Secretary of State are not far behind me in supporting the need to protect the environment. I know that the House feels that we must do that. But somehow, in the welter of words that have gone to make up discussion on the Bill, it seems to have been left out of the record. I have studied some of the Committee reports and I have noticed how reference to the environment emerged on the first day. The hon. Member for Fulham raised it and my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) also spoke about it. But they referred essentially to what might happen to Shakespeare cliff if the spoil was deposited there.

I am concerned about what the rich industrial spoil of industrial growth might do to Kent. That is what I want to see protection against. I do not want to lose the flora and fauna and architectural and archeaological interest that exists in Kent today. There is an enormous amount of history there. In my constituency, one can see, if one searches, where Caesar stood at Harbledown, north of Canterbury, and realised that he was on his way to victory. In another part of Kent one can see where the Duke of Normandy landed and went on to conquer our country. One can see those places over the border perhaps in Hastings, but one can see reminders of the landing in Sandwich Bay, too.

I do not want to lose those things and I am sure that we can protect them. There are so many words in the briefing on economic aspects, on employment aspects, on the market for the tunnel, on the link of the British and French rail networks, on land acquisition and compensation, on safety and fire-fighting. Those are all terribly important points. Protection against rabies is mentioned, security, frontier controls, control and protection against the illegal movement of drugs, ventilation and so on.

However, unfortunately, there is no mention in the Bill of environmental protection, except perhaps right at the very end in schedule 7 which contains a list of seven protective provisions for highways, for the railway board, for navigation, for the Dover harbour board, for the statutory authorities, the water authorities, gas, electricity and sewerage, for the Folkestone and District water company and for telecommunications operators. There was a chance to put in a provision to protect the environment. So why was it not put in?

Developers, engineers, concessionaires, builders and planners can and do and have in the past run ahead with their great profits and forgotten about the environment. As a supporter of the tunnel I may have dismayed my constituents, but their main concern all along has been its effect on the environment. I have argued that it is possible to have a modern engineering project and protect the environment. Of course the tunnel will change the environment at the terminal at Cheriton outside Folkestone which is in the immediate vicinity of the tunnel. The tunnel will take 350 acres of land.

The M20 that will lead to the tunnel will be a six-lane motorway. It will no doubt be like the M25 today, packed with traffic, but at least the traffic will be funnelled to the tunnel and concentrated there rather than sprawling on many other roads to that terminal.

This Bill should say something to engineers and concessionaires about protecting the environment as they go along. The Minister and the Secretary of State have frequently stated their interest in this matter. I am sure that the Minister is determined that the environment should be protected. An environment protection requirement should be laid on Eurotunnel in this Bill. I commend this new clause. Whether it is sufficiently well drafted I do not know, but it would do the trick. If my hon. Friend the Minister thinks that it should perhaps be made even stricter, new provisions should be written into the Bill and it should be taken on board in the other place too if it is neglected here. It is an important matter. The whole of the people of Kent would welcome that addition and they would say "Parliament at least stood up for us and for the environment. Parliament protected us. We may not agree with some of the things that Parliament and Government have decided and the fact that Parliament decided to endorse what the Government proposed, but here is something important which we, the people of Kent, have been saying all along. We want protection of our environment which we think is good."

This will perhaps be my last song about the Channel tunnel, the Eurotunnel, but I have made an important point.

**Mr. Nick Raynsford** (Fulham): The hon. Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch) rightly focused on the importance of environmental issues. He may have rather underestimated the extent to which they featured in the work of the Standing Committee. Shakespeare cliff alone was not debated. There were repeated and frequent debates on environmental issues, mostly initiated by Labour Members but with the support of the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken). They were not successful because repeatedly, in Division after Division, the Government showed themselves reluctant to accept amendments which were designed to protect the environment from some of the worst effects of this scheme.

We saw that with the impact on the villages of Newington and Frogholt, on the site of special interest along the north downs escarpment, with the protection of Holywell coombe and Dollands moor, and with a large number of other sites—not only in Kent, but equally in London. It is wrong to suggest that environmental matters relate only to Kent. People in London greatly value their access to relatively small areas of natural land where they can follow the interests——

*It being Ten o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

*Ordered,*

That, at this day's sitting the Channel Tunnel Bill may be proceeded with, though opposed, until any hour.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

## Channel Tunnel Bill

**Mr. Raynsford:** Many people in the London area greatly value the opportunity to make use of areas of natural landscape, where they can follow their interests in birds, flora and fauna. Indeed, one of the small crumbs of comfort in Committee was a minor amendment, eventually conceded by the Government with rather bad grace, designed to protect the interests of wildlife in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Hammersmith (Mr. Soley). Owing to the painstaking and meticulous work of a 16-year-old boy, an extraordinary report was put together on the extent, variety and richness of wildlife in that rather surprising and unpromising area.

Many of those who fought for the environmental issues in Committee were conscious that Eurotunnel was showing little interest in protecting the landscape and environment from the adverse impact of its plans. We know of the enormous struggle that it took to make it accept the logic of a southern access route to the Cheriton terminal, which would greatly minimise environmental damage. Despite all the efforts of local people and the Shepway council, Eurotunnel dragged its heels to the last minute, reluctant to accept the case for an environmentally far superior approach. My anxiety about Eurotunnel's attitude remains strong today.

A matter of even greater concern has been the evidence not so much of the way in which Eurotunnel has subordinated the interests of the landscape and our natural heritage to its economic and financial advantage, but the Government's unwillingness to stand up for a British nature, heritage and natural landscape and protect it against the ravages of Eurotunnel. It has been depressing to watch, time and again, the Government preferring to support Eurotunnel short-term economic advantages rather than ensuring that the landscape and the environment are properly protected.

No greater example of that can there be than the sad story of Shakespeare cliff, which illustrates only too clearly the extent to which private capital seeking financial advantage pushes the interests of our countryside and coastline into a subordinate position. The Government, quite, deplorably, have gone along with that and failed to stand up for British interests.

It is widely accepted that there is a need for a working platform at Shakespeare cliff. However, from the outset it was said that that platform should be kept to the minimum size necessary. Serious environmental damage will be caused by any extension of the platform. That point was made both in the economic appraisal of the schemes submitted by the various companies which tendered for the fixed link and by the Government's independent consultants appointed to consider the matter. They recommended that an alternative site should be explored for dumping all the spoil, other than that which was

*[Mr. Raynsford]*

necessary for the minimum size working platform. They also recommended that there should be a proper feasibility study carried out of the alternative sites. The Government did not take up that recommendation. Instead, the Government simply allowed Eurotunnel to commission a report from Eurotunnel's consultants that inevitably recommended that it was financially advantageous for Eurotunnel to dump the rest of the spoil — approximately 1·85 million cubic metres—at the base of Shakespeare cliff. It will treat the area as a dump for the chalk spoil, dug out of the tunnel, to be deposited simply for financial reasons, irrespective of the impact on the coast line.

It was a question not just of Eurotunnel allowing private greed to get in the way of the public interest but of the British Government going along with its recommendations. That is depressing.

What is even more depressing is that, during the Committee stage, we discovered the extent to which the British Government were prepared to have a far greater amount of spoil dug out of the tunnel than the French. It emerged in Committee that Britain would receive 4·75 million cubic metres of spoil while the French would receive 3 million cubic metres of spoil. That is the result of the Government's willingness to allow an arrangement which would be disadvantageous to this country and, beyond that, their willingness for that dumping to take place where it will have damaging environmental effects on the coastline at Shakespeare cliff.

The clear implication was that the meeting point of the tunnel was not midway through the tunnel as has had been implied initially. There would not be a roughly equivalent amount of spoil dug out at each end—as implied in the original prospectus published by Eurotunnel. The game plan had changed. It was to Eurotunnel's financial advantage to dump spoil at Shakespeare cliff and the British Government ignored the interest of the environment and simply allowed it to proceed to dump greater amounts of spoil on our coastline.

One of the more illuminating experiences in Committee was the extent to which the mid-point of the tunnel was getting nearer and nearer to the French end with every ministerial pronouncement. We heard that the meeting point would be slightly nearer to the French coast. The Minister conceded this on 11 December when he said that the maximum distance would be 2 km nearer the French coast. He said:

> "I can assure the hon. Gentleman that the maximum . . . is 2 kilometres".—[*Official Report, Standing Committee A,* 11 December 1986; c. 128.]

However, by 16 December the Minister was conceding that the meeting point was 3·2 km nearer the French side than the British side. We were left with the impression that, if the Committee had continued to discuss the meeting point, it would have got nearer until it reached the French coast.

That may be rather humorous, but not when one considers the question of the spoil to be deposited on our coastline. However, ultimately national interests have been surrendered to Eurotunnel's economic advantage. The fact is that it would cost Eurotunnel an extra £40 million to move the spoil to a more environmentally desirable place elsewhere. What is sad and depressing is that the financial interests of the private contractors have overruled the national interest. What is even more depressing is that the Government have not stood up for those national interests.

This new clause is essential as it makes clear our concern for the countryside, our national heritage, landscape, flora and fauna, not just in Kent but in London. These are important matters which must override the short-term economic interest of Eurotunnel. It is our responsibility to stand up for the national interest in a way that the Government have lamentably failed to do during the proceedings on the Bill. I sincerely hope that we will ensure that this clause, or something similar to it, is incorporated in the Bill.

**Mr. Aitken:** It is never too late for deathbed repentances. For that reason, I hope that the Government will accept the thinking behind the new clause, even though they managed to reject, with bewildering stubborness, a range of environmental protection amendments which were proposed in reasonable and moderate terms in Standing Committee.

I am a little concerned about whether new clause 4 is a clause of good intentions that will lead nowhere and mean nothing. I should like to know what happens if the concessionaires do not

> "have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty"

and other good intentions. They have not expressed much inclination so far to show their good regard. They have produced only 24 words out of several hundred thousand in their pamphlets. I am concerned that the new clause may not have enough teeth. I am worried about the vagueness of the definition of, for example, "heritage coast of Kent". Although I am a resident of Kent, I am not sure exactly where the "heritage coast" can be said to begin and to end and I doubt whether that is an appropriate legal expression. Nevertheless, the new clause is well intentioned. It remedies the appalling gaps left in environmental protection because of the Government's refusal to take on board any of the amendments suggested in Standing Committee or by the Select Committee. This measure is a marked improvement.

I understand why the Labour party might feel it necessary to propose the new clause—to throw a sop in the direction of the people of Kent. I do not begrudge Labour Members their one amazing success in Standing Committee when, late at night, they persuaded the Government to accept an amendment insisting that the concessionaires and others should take into account the views of a hitherto unknown body, the London Wildlife Trust, about a patch of land encased by three railway lines and two motorways and overlooked by Wormwood Scrubs prison.

**Mr. Raynsford:** The hon. Gentleman should be less modest. It was agreed by the Government not just at the Opposition's instigation but because of the hon. Gentleman's enthusiastic support.

**Mr. Aitken:** I know a bandwagon when I see one.

**Mr. Snape:** Will the hon. Gentleman confirm that he did not vote for this measure because he was under the impression that it was the London Nightlife Trust?

**Mr. Aitken:** My night life recently has been spent listening to the hon. Gentleman speak at about 3 o'clock in the morning or later.

The prisoners of Wormwood Scrubs have been granted a measure of environmental protection by the Bill as amended in Standing Committee, yet so far the law-abiding citizens of Kent, with the garden of England stretching before them, have been granted no such environmental protection. My cry is, "Equal rights for the citizens of Kent as for the prisoners of Wormwood Scrubs." The prisoners are being indirectly consulted on environmental matters and so should the people of Kent.

New clause 4 has been grouped with new clauses 6 and 7, which stand in my name and which are probing measures. Because both were debated so well in Standing Committee, they need not be considered at great length. Before we conclude our consideration of the Bill, we should be aware of the murky—perhaps even monkey—business of the switched consultants who so conveniently changed their minds on the vital issue of the disposal of spoil at Shakespeare cliff. The Government originally commissioned a firm of consultants to advise them on that crucial environmental issue. The consultants, who were called "land use consultants", came up with three recommended sites for spoil disposal. None of them involved Shakespeare cliff. The selected site was a place called Lappel bank. It was an admirable site in terms of the environment, but, unfortunately for land use consultants, it was not convenient from the point of view of the economic interests of Eurotunnel who found it more expensive to transport disposed spoil to that recommended site.

10.15 pm

With a deft manoeuvre, Eurotunnel commissioned some consultants of its own, called Messrs. Environmental Research Ltd. That firm produced a report that — surprise, surprise — recommended that the spoil be disposed of at the cheapest possible site in the interests of Eurotunnel, Shakespeare cliff. So, Shakespeare cliff it is at the moment, and an eyesore it will be — a 68-acre protuberance on one of the most beautiful landmarks in Britain as a result of the switched consultants' manoeuvre. The Select Committee did not think much of this manoeuvring. Its unanimous recommendation states:

> "The Committee remain concerned at implications of the use of Shakespeare cliff as the spoil disposal site. We therefore recommend that Her Majesty's Government and Eurotunnel should re-examine the use of alternative or additional sites before proceedings on this Bill are completed."

So far, if there has been any reconsideration, it has been an empty ritual. Therefore, I strongly urge—if I am able to do so from the Government Back Bench—the other place to look again at the issue of spoil disposal. I see no good reason why, on the basis of one hired consultant cancelling out the recommendation of the Government's own consultants, Parliament should vote for a major environmental change on one of the most beautiful and picturesque landmarks of the country. The matter needs to be studied. I strongly suspect that there has been a degree of dirty work or, certainly dirty spoil, at the crossroads so far over the business of the switched consultants. The matter needs to be looked at afresh by a new pair of independent eyes. Independent consultants should come on to the scene and make recommendations. I hope that is achieved by this new clause.

New clause 7 refers to potential buildings and changes on Shakespeare cliff. This is the first big battle outside Parliament over development and planning permission. There are a number of courageous councillors in the Dover district council. Dover has two parliamentary representatives. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Rees) represents that town, and I represent some of the villagers in the town of Sandwich in the Dover district. Eurotunnel submitted its first planning application, and the Dover district council rejected it on honourable environmental grounds. I salute the mover of that motion, Councillor Bill Henderson of Ash. He is a stalwart farmer who has always strongly defended the environment and all things Kentish and English. I am not surprised that his motion carried the day.

In the course of the Standing Committee proceedings, my hon. Friend the Minister made an imputation against the worthy councillors of Dover. He said that they had ratted on some agreement. I can only assure him, after noting what Councillor Bill Henderson said, that there was no question of him or any others being aware of any previous agreement. If there were any such agreement, it was unauthorised in terms of the knowledge of the elected councillors.

It is a potentially unhappy situation. The Government referred to it as a mere hitch. I referred to it as a derailment of the Eurotunnel gravy train. The truth probably lies somewhere between the two. It will certainly be serious for Eurotunnel if the clause is not amended and if wiser counsels do not prevail. Therefore I have written into the new clause a provision whereby, if Dover district council, the Government and Eurotunnel continue to quarrel, their quarrel will be resolved on such an important issue as Shakespeare cliff by the decision of this House.

Eurotunnel has not helped matters by making an extraordinary announcement about one of its economic plans. In the *Financial Times* of 22 January there was an article under the headline

> "Eurotunnel more hopeful on revenue."

It needs to be more hopeful on revenue, given its disastrous economic position, with directors quarrelling and shareholders vanishing in a puff of white smoke. In a desperate attempt to shore up shareholder confidence, Eurotunnel announced a new break through as a way of increasing advertising revenue. Under the headline to which I have already referred it said:

> "One way of increasing revenue would be through the sale of advertising sites."

That announcement sent a tremor through the environmentalists of Kent. The notion that Eurotunnel's finances could be boosted by erecting more advertising sites all round the county of Kent, particularly on such beautiful sites as Shakespeare cliff, completely justifies the environmentalists' concern. That is one good reason why Dover district councillors, who are perturbed by the environmental eyesores that could be created, have taken such a courageous stand.

If Dover district council and the Government continue to quarrel, their quarrel is likely to be resolved by an appeal to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. The only problem is that the present Secretary of State for the Environment is the proud father of the Channel tunnel project. My right hon. Friend could hardly be expected to sit in impartial judgment on a planning application that could hold up Eurotunnel's progress if that application is not granted swiftly. To expect my right hon. Friend effectively to be the appellate body would be a breach of the rule of natural justice that no man shall be judge in his own cause.

Clause 7 would provide a solution to this problem. The House of Commons and Parliament would vote on such a vital issue as the Shakespeare cliff area of outstanding

*[Mr. Aitken]*

natural beauty. That is not a perfect solution, but it is a great deal better than the present imperfect solution over the impasse between Eurotunnel and Dover district council with the impasse being resolved only by an appeal to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State who, fine and honourable man though he is, is the most committed of people to the Channel tunnel.

The three new clauses try to do their bit towards preserving the environment. It is a necessary step. I hope that the Government will move in the direction of new clause 4 and improve its drafting in another place. All three new clauses are laudable in their intention and I commend them to the House.

**Mr. Peter Rees** (Dover): I intervene with diffidence in the debate, since I was not privileged to be a member of the Standing Committee. In this connection, I pay an unsolicited tribute to the activities of my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), who, not for the first time, proved to be a doughty upholder of the interests of east Kent and of my constituency in particular. I hope that it is not arrogant of me to say that of all the constituencies represented in the House, mine is the one that is perhaps most directly affected by what we are debating tonight.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Mr. Michael Howard):** Oh!

**Mr. Rees:** I beg the pardon of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard). He and I will resolve elsewhere who has the melancholy privilege of representing the constituency most directly affected. Assiduous as always in discharging his constituency duties, my hon. and learned Friend has been sitting through the debates, and we are only sorry that on this occasion constitutional convention prevents him from making a more direct contribution.

I hope that I may comment briefly on the three new clauses. We are debating new clause 4 which stands in the name of the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape). Without sounding patronising, I should like to say that his sentiments are impeccable, although the direction is a little imprecise. However, I warmed to the conclusion of that new clause, which invites all those who are directly concerned to have regard to

"the effect of any such proposals on the heritage coast of Kent."

Like my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South, I am not quite certain who represents the heritage coast. Again, presumptuously, I claim the greater part of it in the Dover and Deal constituency, but again I may be provoking my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe.

I come now to the second specific proposal in new clause 4, which touches on

"the desirability of securing that . . . the movement of minestone . . . shall be carried out by rail."

That alarms me because it suggests that the assurance, which I understood was given to the Select Committee by Eurotunnel, to the effect that minestone would be carried by rail, is not to be regarded as a copper-bottomed, comprehensive guarantee. Therefore, I hope that the Minister will advise us how he regards the status of that guarantee. It is a matter of acute concern to the many villages in my constituency that are located along the roads on which, inevitably, the minestone would have to be carried from the Betteshanger, Snowdown and Tilmanstone collieries to Cheriton or perhaps to some other point of the workings, that such minestone should be taken by rail, and not by road.

**Mr. Snape:** I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman. I do not wish to pre-empt anything that his hon. Friend the Minister will say, but I do not know whether he was present when I moved the somewhat imprecise clause to which he referred. However, I said that the Select Committee of which I was a member accepted Eurotunnel's assurances on the last day of our sitting, that, although the construction of a terminal alongside the M20, might mean that some minestone would be carried by road along the M20, it would, we thought, be environmentally better for the people whom the right hon. and learned Gentleman represents, and for the people of Kent in general.

**Mr. Rees:** We are all focusing on the same point. I hope that I speak for the entire House in saying that we should be grateful for the Minister's opinion about that situation. Should there be any doubt about that point, I must put my hon. Friend on notice that the matter will certainly be raised in another place by many of those whom I have the privilege to represent.

New clause 6 stands in the name of my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South. Again, I echo his perceptive and elegant phrases on the important issue of soil disposal because, on present form, the brunt of that operation, if I may so describe it, is likely to be borne in my constituency. As I understand it, leaving aside the million cubic tonnes which will be deposited at Cheriton, the greater part will have to be deposited at the base of Shakespeare cliff. I do not think that I need comment to such an informed audience as the Chamber comprises—I see many hon. Members who served on the Standing Committee and on the Select Committee—the charms of Shakespeare cliff, with all its literary associations. Again, I warm with admiration to the quotations from "King Lear" and other sources with which my hon. Friend the Minister regaled the Standing Committee. The cliff is a feature of considerable importance to those in my constituency, and, I am sure, to other people living in east Kent and elsewhere.

Although one may have to accept reluctantly that Shakespeare cliff is the best site, by comparison with any other offered, none the less I should feel happier if the matter were considered carefully by the Select Committee in another place. Indeed, having glanced at the report of the Standing Committee, I note that my hon. Friend the Minister said that his Department would make available all the necessary evidence for a further thorough review of this sensitive issue by that Select Committee.

I diffidently suggest that there are two points. First, where can the spoil be placed satisfactorily? My hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Mr. Moate) may have views about that. Secondly, if that spoil is not to be placed in an area close to the workings, how is it to be carted away? That question may generate the same concern as the movement of minestone.

10.30 pm

I now want to consider new clause 7. I was alarmed by the construction placed on the Bill by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South. The principle that Eurotunnel can derive additional revenue by placing advertising hoardings in and around Shakespeare cliff and other sensitive spots underlies the new clause. I must stress that no one has devoted as much thought to these matters than my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South, but, although I do not want to deny Eurotunnel any reasonable sources of revenue, I would regard the placing of hoardings in those areas as an unreasonable source of revenue.

Until I had heard the interesting comments of my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South, on a perhaps inexpert reading of the Bill I had assumed that the planning permisson granted by clause 9 was limited specifically to the works of construction. I do not regard advertising hoardings, restaurants, kiosks or fun fairs sited at the base of Shakespeare cliff on the pan or apron that is to be constructed there, as within the scope of clause 9. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister of State will be able to reassure us about that. I am not claiming that this has not been an extremely useful debate, but if the Minister replies to that point, at least we would have it on record that that is the way in which the Government consider that the Bill should be construed.

If there is any doubt about the point, I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister would want to meet the legitimate anxieties of my constituents and perhaps the constituents of other hon. Members representing east Kent constituencies. That would ensure that the planning consent afforded by the Bill is of a limited and specific character and that any operations outside the scope of the excavation of the tunnel are matters for special and separate planning applications. Although my hon. Friend the Minister might not want to go quite as far as that, I hope that if there were matters of acute sensitivity—if, for example, the scale was considerable—my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment would consider it appropriate to call in such applications in view of the implications in a very sensitive part of the world.

These are three extremely important and useful clauses. Depending upon the reply that the Minister gives, I hope that we will elicit something that will be read and scrutinised with extreme care and which will have a considerable bearing on the way in which the Bill proceeds in this House and in another place.

**Mr. Roger Moate** (Faversham): My hon. Friend the Minister of State will appreciate that the proposal before us has achieved unanimity among Kent Members which has been lacking so far in the previus proceedings on the Bill. I hope that he will understand the significance of that, as it shows that this is a worthy proposal. I hope that he will respond, if he cannot accept the precise wording in the clause, in a way that shows that he supports the principle. I hope that a proposal and protection of this kind will be incorporated in the legislation in one form or another.

It has been suggested that the proposition lacks teeth. It is certainly an expression of good intention. If it were only that, we would welcome it as a benign, albeit toothless, smile. That would be better than nothing. However, I imagine that many lawyers will be able to translate these good intentions in the courts into rather more meaningful protections.

These protections must be of value to all of us. It would be of special comfort to the people of Kent and elsewhere if such a clause could be incorporated. Without having carried out major research into the matter, I believe that there are many precedents in other Bills, expressed in general terms, for the protection of flora and fauna and the the environment generally. I can certainly recall private Bills, not hybrid Bills with which I have been concerned, where the Committee has inserted clauses such as this. I hope that my right hon. and hon. Friends will take heed of that, look at the precedents, if they need to—perhaps they have already decided to accept the clause—and go ahead with it at least in principle.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Rees) was competing with my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) as to who was going to suffer the most. Undoubtedly those Kent constituencies are in the front line. My point is that the damage to the environment potentially spreads throughout the county and beyond. It fans out in a much broader way and the new clause is sufficiently wide to offer some comfort and protection to those areas far beyond the front-line constituencies. That is why I welcome the way in which it is expressed. It does not lay a duty just upon Eurotunnel, it lays a duty upon the

> "Railway Board, Kent County Council, the Planning Authorities and the appropriate Minister or Ministers."

I believe that to be of fundamental importance, because much of the environmental impact will be felt in constituencies such as mine.

I should like to take the time of the House to express my fundamental objection to the tunnel. I have been a Member of the House for 17 years and throughout those years one of my principle concerns has been about the damage caused by heavy lorries to the roads and ancient buildings of Kent. I have been concerned with the damage to our villages and towns caused by impact, vibration or sheer volume.

Most of us — it is certainly not confined to Kent constituencies—have fought long and hard for bypasses for our villages. Many of us have fought hard against increasingly heavy lorries using unsuitable rural roads. We have seen cold stores designed for agricultural use become used for increasingly industrial purposes. We have seen international lorries using depots designed for the horse and cart age.

My concern is what the tunnel will do by the generation of more traffic through the unsuitable roads of Kent. We will be told that it will all go on the M2 and M20, but those roads are virtually up to capacity already. The inevitable result is that we will see more traffic filtering through every highway and byway and every rural lane, using every rat run available throughout the county.

I should like the Minister to address that point. I should like him to say that, by accepting a clause of this kind, he accepts that Ministers, the county council and the planning authorities would have a duty to respond to that threat. They could respond in a number of ways. They could respond by assuring us that they will not increase the lorry weight from 38 tonnes to 40 tonnes, the pressure for that change will be great once we have easier traffic flows through to the continent. They could give us an assurance that they will welcome weight and width restrictions throughout the county. That is hard to achieve at present.

**Mr. David Mitchell**: Is my hon. Friend saying that he favours more smaller lorries rather than fewer larger lorries? I want to understand his argument.

**Mr. Moate:** My hon. Friend will not tempt me into a debate about lorry weights. All the evidence so far is that the heavier the lorry—the more economical the use of lorry transport—the more lorries we get. We do not get fewer. Time will tell who is right on that debate. So far most of the forecasts we made when lorry weights were increased have been proved correct. However, I shall not be drawn into that discussion.

It is within the power of Government, and it would be underlined by this new clause, to ensure that we limit the damage done by cars and heavy lorries on roads through many of the most beautiful villages in our area. Fundamental to this point is whether the tunnel will generate more rail or road traffic. The railway lobby sees the tunnel as a great boon to the railway industry. I see it as a bonanza for lorries. All we are doing is creating a new underground ferry designed to serve the best interests of the car and lorry traffic of this modern age. The interests and profits of Eurotunnel will be best served and secured, not by long-distance freight or by passengers on trains, but by encouraging and maximising the traffic of cars and heavy lorries through our county.

This is my worry. I want my right hon. Friend to deal with and prevent the impact and vibration problems caused by heavy lorries and cars using roads which were never designed for that purpose, and to consider compensation for householders who suffer in that way. A clause of this kind has to be welcomed. It offers protection in specific areas, especially to those affected by the immediate developments, but it offers a broad statement of intent and powers with regard to counties and places far beyond the immediate area of impact.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dover mentioned the constituency of Faversham in the context of the disposal of spoil. Without going into detail, I was disappointed that the concept of depositing much of this spoil on the Lappel bank in my constituency seems to have been abandoned.

At the Lappel bank in the Medway there is land that requires reclamation. We have the opportunity to move this spoil around by sea without causing any traffic problems at all on the roads. There is a strong economic and environmental argument for that and I thoroughly endorse my right hon. and learned Friend's hope that a Select Committee in another place will examine this question thoroughly again to ensure that we make no mistakes in that respect.

I am glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch) and I are in agreement on this issue. I fear that his romantic attachment to the Channel tunnel is totally at variance with his belief that we can in some way secure environmental protection, but I respect his sincerity. I think that there will be environmental damage, but I hope that the House will not lose this opportunity of including in the Bill a general statement of intention and hopefully of giving some powers and duties to the Government to take whatever steps are necessary to protect our environment from the worst effects of this development.

**Mr. Jeremy Hanley** (Richmond and Barnes): I have kept silent during the discussion on this Bill, perhaps because I believe that the Channel tunnel is in the national interest and because it is best to leave the debate on it to Members representing the locality. But on this point I have to make a comment and a plea to the Government. I speak as vice-president of the London Wildlife Trust, a group which has had environmental victories of late, but the most important reason why I speak is that I was a resident for more than 13 years just two miles from Sellindge and seven miles from Folkestone. That area was the site of my formative years. My grandparents lived for 20 years in Hythe. I always regarded that area as home.

My first political experience was gained from joining the Young Conservatives in the constituency of Folkestone and Hythe, although I must admit that my purpose was not political but rather to be an inch closer to the daughter of the then Member for Folkestone and Hythe—and delightful she was.

My sisters were all educated in the area. Regrettably, because of my close interest in the flora and fauna of that area I was sent further away, but I spent many a happy year on the beaches there and indeed explored Shakespeare cliff and stood on the old disused Shakespeare Halt, although in later years I spent a lot of my time on the leas in Folkestone well after the time of day when one could see the local sights.

In spite of the arguments of the Opposition, the Government have an enviable record in this Parliament on the environment. In many areas they have brought a greening to the House. In practical terms they have a better record on the environment than any Government. Therefore, it would be a grave disappointment if they did not express a commitment to this most beautiful area in the south-east of England.

10.45 pm

**Mr. Raynsford:** The hon. Gentleman makes a claim about the Government's environmental record. Has he read the reports of the debates in the Standing Committee and has he any comments to make on the repeated refusal of the Government to accept even the most modest, minor amendment designed to protect the environment from the worst ravages of this scheme?

**Mr. Hanley:** Not only have I read the reports of the Committee but I share an office with an hon. Member who was on that Committee and I have discussed these matters at length with him. If the hon. Gentleman had been listening to my speech instead of trying to rise on environmental issues like a trout to the fly he would have heard me say that this construction is in the national interest. However, I draw a line on the point of the environment. There must necessarily be some damage to the environment with a construction of this size. I ask the Government to renew and improve their commitment to the environment in the way that they have done so many times in this Parliament.

I do not support new clause 4. It is full of precatory words, wishes and hopes. It reminds me of the person who put in his will the clause, "And to my Uncle Harry who wanted to be remembered in my will, hello Harry." The clause does not mean anything—it is just wishes. This area of Kent is one of the most beautiful parts of Britain. I am sure that the Government would not embark on a scheme of this size without a commitment to the environment.

I should like to pay tribute to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard). We have talked a great deal about the beauty of his constituency. When one has a majority the size of mine, it is no doubt believed that my jealousy for his constituency and the position he holds arises purely because of the majority that he enjoyed in the last election. He knows, because of his love of his constituency, that my jealousy is based not only on a beautiful area but on people I remember well, many of whom he knows. My hon. and learned Friend is full of frustration about these discussions. If the Government were to give a commitment to make sure that this development is as sensitive as possible to the environment, and if they can give a commitment to the landscaping and to the lessening of destruction that must occur because of building in some areas, I know that my hon. and learned Friend will be happy. So will I and the millions of people who know this area of Britain.

**Mr. Simon Coombs** (Swindon): I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) will forgive me if I do not follow him down the byways of his youth. I should like to refer to the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Mr. Moate) and remind him that Britain is a trading nation and, if it is to survive, must continue to trade with our nearest partners on the continent.

It is reasonable to assume that by constructing a rail tunnel rather than having a road tunnel or continuing with ferries as the main way of reaching the continent, we increase the chances of getting some of the heavy lorries off the roads of Kent and the roads in the rest of Britain. That must be our objective, and we say to British Rail that it should take up the challenge and try to meet it.

There are those in the House who believe that the Channel tunnel must not be allowed to spoil the environment. Equally, there are those who believe that environmental considerations must not be allowed to spoil the Channel tunnel project. It is my contention that it is possible to bridge the gap between the two and that they are not mutually exclusive.

As a member of the Standing Committee I came into the discussions rather later than some hon. Members, but I quickly came into the arguments about Shakespeare cliff, and it is to that site that I want to direct my remarks.

Members who have not been to the Shakespeare cliff site may find it helpful if I remind them of the fact that it is also known as the Old Colliery site. Coal has been mined in that area since 1890. The original cliff is not that which nature provided but that which was created by the blasting for the railway in the 1840s. A visit to the site will convince most Members that the claims made by some opponents of the scheme that this is one of the more beautiful parts of the United Kingdom can be put to one side.

The platform that was created by the explosions of 1840 created an area stretching out to sea of some 150 m. The proposal to dump spoil on the site will enlarge that some 300 m out to sea. The view from the sea will not be affected, but the opportunity to create an area in that part of Kent for leisure activities should not be set aside lightly. The opposition to the project suggests that all spoil is bad wherever one puts it. The idea that it can be used to create a larger area where leisure pursuits can be followed is a point worth making in this debate. In Committee I suggested that the spoil might be moved to gravel pits around the south of England. At the time that seemed to be a good idea because of the business that it would bring to British Rail. It also seemed to be a good idea to fill in those concavities which litter the south of England.

**Mr. Raynsford**: Does the hon. Gentleman accept that, despite his interpretation of the impact of the working platform and the proposed dump at Shakespeare cliff, the Government's own consultants, appointed to make an environmental appraisal of the submission by the various companies tendering for the Channel tunnel fixed link in relation to the issue of the Eurotunnel proposal to dump spoil at the base of Shakespeare cliff, said:

> "The further use of the lower Shakespeare Cliff site beyond that absolutely necessary for construction would give rise to major concern in terms of it effects upon both landscape and ecology."

**Mr. Coombs**: I entirely accept that that was the opinion of the consultants at that stage. It is reasonable to say that one can take an alternative view of the matter. I do not regard the ecology of the area as being threatened by an enlargement of the platform. It has been there for 140 years, 150 m out to sea. I do not believe that enlarging the platform at this stage will ruin the ecology of the area, and it is reasonable to take the alternative point of view put forward by consultants who asked whether it would be necessary to move the spoil out of the area at all, and whether it would damage the environment of Kent or a larger part of the south of England by moving that large quantity of spoil around that area.

In the interests of brevity, I will merely make the observation that a look at the other site which is of serious consequence—Cheriton—would also show that it is not so likely to be devastated by the proposals of the scheme as many hon. Members have suggested. I will leave my remarks at that.

I turn to the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch). Eurotunnel obviously failed to provide him with the necessary information, because I have a brief on environmental considerations dated 15 December which runs to four pages. It says:

> "In the detailed construction memorandum . . . referred to in paragraph 128 of the Special Report of the Select Committee, Eurotunnel has stated that in recognition of the environmental qualities of this area of Kent, it will adopt measures from the outset to mitigate any adverse environmental impact that the construction operations will cause, and will further nature conservation interests, consistent with the need to maintain the construction programme and project viability."

That is a clear undertaking which we have every reason to think will be maintained.

Environmental protection is a matter for a practical process of discussion and negotiation. I do not believe that it has a place in the Bill regulating the project, and on that ground I regard the clause as unnecessary.

**Mr. Roger Gale** (Thanet, North): I rise to express my shared concern with my hon. Friends from north-east Kent constituencies about the impact of the Channel tunnel on our area. My hon. Friend the Minister knows that I am particularly grateful to him not only for the courtesy and understanding that he has shown in frequently visiting north-east Kent but for the attention that he has paid to the infrastructure and to the concessions and help that he has managed to offer to date. I should like to think that when the final report of the impact study is available to us further measures will be taken to enable us to compete if we have to, as we would like to, with the Nord Pas de Calais region of France.

My thanks and my praise for the Minister's attitude do not extend to the attitude taken by Trans-Manche and Eurotunnel—*[Interruption.]* Despite the comments of Labour Members, I have a fairly great constituency interest in this; rather greater than some Labour Members. Opposition Members are well aware that hon. Members have a variety of duties.

Trans-Manche and Eurotunnel gave two undertakings early on that seem to be in any danger of being no longer honoured. The first relates to local employment. I use this simply as an example because it does not relate directly to the clause. It was an affront to the people of north-east Kent that Trans-Manche, when placing its advertisements for the first labour opportunities in the area, did not see fit to place those first in the local press. That created some scepticism and cynicism among those of our constituents who had hoped to be employed on the project.

There was not only a suggested undertaking, but what was tantamount to an undertaking in the early stages of the project that the construction accommodation would utilise the under-utilised hotel and guesthouse accommodation in the Isle of Thanet, Dover and Folkestone. I was concerned, as I know my hon. Friends were, to read the most recent report available of the consultative committee dated 17 December and to learn that the plans for a construction camp were going ahead, that any foreseeable future use for that camp as a modern hotel was apparently fading into the distance and that we were likely to be confronted with

"a series of two-storey blocks of temporary buildings divided into small rooms, with separate shower/toilet blocks. Such buildings have an estimated life of about 10-15 years."

Speaking now totally on behalf of my own constituents, I say that it is a grave disappointment that the plans for the utilisation of accommodation—the 1,000 bed-nights a week that we in Thanet can offer—are not being developed and that further acres of Kent land are likely to be used to build a temporary construction camp when we already have the accommodation available.

I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to use whatever influence he may be able to exert to ask the promoters to look yet again at these proposals to ensure that our accommodation is used and that not yet more land is wasted.

11 pm

**Mr. Wolfson:** I shall not detain the House for long, but I wish to make two points on this new clause. This gives me the opportunity to air once again the fact that the majority of my constituents are concerned about the pressures on the environment that they fear the Channel tunnel would bring. We are in a position to do something to limit those fears if the Government will make it clear that they are firmly behind—so far the indications have been that they are—the maintenance of the green belt and the structure plan and that, in addition, they will encourage Kent county council to make much more use of the opportunity that it has to restrict heavy traffic to larger roads.

It is interesting—because the Channel tunnel will bring us closer contacts with France—for those who have motored in France recently to see how many areas there are which carry general restrictions on heavy traffic, for instance during the night. Yet I find over and over again that there is great reluctance in our county, on the part of the county council and the police, to put restrictions on heavy traffic. That must be done for two reasons. The first reason is to make proper use of the developed road network that will exist by the time the Channel tunnel is completed. Here I also make a plea for confirmation from the Minister that the money to be made available for completion of the improved road network in Kent will be in place before the tunnel opens, rather than catching up afterwards, to limit the bad effects on the environment that increased traffic from the Channel tunnel would bring.

I also support the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Mr. Moate) in terms of weight restrictions on heavy lorries. I do not fall into the trap that the Minister fell into in arguing that heavier lorries mean fewer lorries. Experience has not shown that to be the case.

Finally, I hope too, that efforts will continue to encourage traffic to utilise the railways and that every opportunity will be given to British Rail management, in whose court the responsibility is, for developing a positive approach to the opportunities that exist now for it to make full use of the Channel tunnel.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I readily acknowledge the environmental sensitivities of this major project and thus appreciate the motivation behind these new clauses. I must say, however, that they are all, in my view, misguided.

To take new clause 4 first, it is of course important that the works should be carried out with due regard to wildlife, countryside and heritage matters. But the right approach is not a general duty but a specific provision.

To this end, we are providing in schedule 3 to the Bill for the Government's statutory advisers on environmental matters — the Countryside Commission, the Nature Conservancy Council and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, or English Heritage—to be consulted by local planning authorities. Eurotunnel has also concluded a memorandum of agreement with the statutory environmental agencies and the Southern water authority on environmental matters.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Rees) and the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) drew particular attention to the movement of minestone.

I readily accept that that is an important issue. However, it is covered by the planning provisions in schedule 3 to the Bill, under which planning authority approval is required of

"the means and routes by which any minerals, aggregates, bulk materials other than minerals or aggregates and tunnel lining segment . . . are to be transported to construction and storage sites."

The Select Committee rightly urged that Kent county council should exercise its powers to ensure that as few lorries as possible carry bulk materials by any road other than the M20 to the working sites. I think that it would be inappropriate to go beyond that.

We have always recognised the importance of the issue of spoil. New clause 6 requires an independent study to be carried out to determine the best means of disposing of surplus spoil. I note that the definition of "surplus" is widely drawn; it does not even accept the need for the expanded working platform at Shakespeare cliff. I have to say quite firmly that I believe that the Government have already in practice met the commitment that the clause seeks to impose.

Hon. Members will not be surprised when I say that all the leading alternative sites had technical difficulties, environmental drawbacks or both, and would have given rise to strong objections. What concerned the Government when they considered the practicability of moving the spoil to a site away from the foot of Shakespeare cliff were two major risk factors, which could have had an unquantifiable and unacceptable delaying effect on the construction of the tunnel. First, the essential continuous flow of spoil could be halted by technical problems or adverse weather conditions that interrupted the transportation operation. Secondly, under certain conditions the spoil could become virtually impossible to handle and thus very difficult to move.

I believe, therefore, that the decision is the right one. It is solidly based on substantial evidence from a variety of sources. I accept that the Select Committee had insufficient time to consider the volume of evidence. We

*[Mr. David Mitchell]*

shall ensure that that is rectified when the Bill comes before the Select Committee in another place. I do not accept that a further study is necessary or helpful.

My hon. Friends the Members for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch), for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) and for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley), who spoke of his early days in the area—all expressed concern about the beauty of the environment of Kent being spoilt. I know that throughout the debate my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) has, because of convention, sat silent. However, he has assiduously followed what has been happening and has, from time to time, had considerable impact behind the scenes in ensuring that the points that concerned his constituents were thoroughly examined by the Government and others with responsibility.

The concern for the hop gardens of Kent and the scenic beauty that will meet new arrivals was echoed by my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury in his fear that industrial and housing development would destroy the essential beauty of Kent, the flora and the fauna. He was worried that places such as the spot where Caesar Augustus stood near Canterbury and looked at the view would be destroyed for all time.

I understand my hon. Friend's worry, which is perfectly natural. However, he has overlooked the fact that, for the areas that are outwith the Bill, the local authorities will retain their planning powers. I am sure that neither Kent county council nor my hon. Friend's local council would give planning consent to something that would destroy the areas of particular beauty to which he has drawn attention.

On the environmental points that are within the Bill's compass, I draw my hon. Friend's attention to schedule 3, under which consultation must take place with the Nature Conservancy Council, the Countryside Commission and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission. Schedule 3(16) will, I think, give my hon. Friend the assurance that he seeks.

The hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) deplored the idea of the Government going along with Shakespeare cliff as a site for depositing spoil. He described this as a surrender of national interests to the interests of Eurotunnel and worked himself up into a generous lather over it.

If one has a scruffy, abandoned colliery site at the foot of a cliff where hardly anybody can see it and one needs to enlarge that area substantially as the working platform for building the tunnel, there is common sense in extending that and in putting the rest of the spoil there, rather than spoiling other sites as well, since none of the sites is without some practical disadvantages.

**Mr. Raynsford:** I urge the Minister seriously to consider whether his hon. Friends representing constituencies neighbouring Shakespeare cliff would agree with his description of this historic part of our coastline as a scruffy colliery site. Does he agree that his independent consultants advised against further dumping on this site and that only Eurotunnel's consultants, who have a financial interest, recommended it?

**Mr. Mitchell:** The hon. Gentleman made all those points earlier and is now being tediously repetitive. Anybody who doubts that the existing site is exceedingly scruffy should go and look at it.

My hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Mr. Moate) said that the Government had commissioned consultants who had come forward with options. In fact, they came forward with a short initial study which had not gone in depth into all the points. Only later did some of the more detailed points come out. It must be remembered that the daily rate is about 14,000 tonnes. When one thinks of moving that lot by train to Lappel bank in my hon. Friend's constituency, one can imagine complaints being made about such work going on 24 hours round the clock and about the noise and vibration and so on.

**Mr. Moate** *rose*——

**Mr. Mitchell:** If my hon. Friend wants to welcome such noise and vibration, I will give way to him.

**Mr. Moate:** My hon. Friend has been, unusually, guilty of a serious error. I specifically made the point that the advantage of using the Lappel bank, which is in need of reclamation, is that it could all be seaborne; it could be taken by barge from the works right round into the Medway estuary.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I apologise if I misunderstood my hon. Friend. But if he examines the weather conditions off Shakespeare cliff, he will find that for a substantial part of the year it would not be possible to barge off, and drilling under the sea cannot be stopped simply because there happens to be a storm on the sea. The option of which my hon. Friend speaks was examined and was found not to be practical. Moreover, when the spoil got to the Lappel bank site it would, in wet conditions, turn into sludge, and the normal process of extending the track on the to existing stuff that had been dumped could not proceed because it would be soft and the equipment would sink into the ground.

My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South raised questions about Dover council and somewhat changed his ground, from what he said in Committee upstairs about the revolt and non co-operation of village Hampdens, and I was glad tonight to hear him refer to that issue in more reasonable terms.

The Government introduced amendments to the planning clause of the Bill to give local planning authorities a considerable say in decisions affecting the tunnel works. We did so on the clear understanding that the local planning authorities would use their powers before and after Royal Assent in a responsible manner. We were reassured when the planning authorities concerned, including Dover district council, signed a memorandum of understanding with Eurotunnel promising a constructive approach during the design work on the scheme. That memorandum was presented to the Select Committee, together with the new planning clauses, as a package. I therefore regard the memorandum as a series of assurances to Eurotunnel, to the other planning authorities, to the Government and to the Select Committee.

Dover district council would be well within its rights if it rejected the Eurotunnel planning application for genuine planning reasons. However, as I said during the Committee, if it rejected the planning application simply because it opposed the project, that would be a breach of faith.

**Mr. Aitken:** How does my hon. Friend know on what basis the council rejected the plan?

11.15 pm

**Mr. Mitchell:** I do not know on what basis the council rejected it, but I recall what my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South said in Committee when he praised the village Hampdens who had raised revolt because they were not prepared to co-operate with the Government or with Eurotunnel on the scheme.

My hon. Friend did modify his language earlier in the evening and I welcomed that moderation. I hope that his intervention now will display that moderation and co-operation.

**Mr. Aitken:** No—on the contrary, I am just about to revert to the inflammatory language. I regard the members of Dover district council as heroes because they stood up for a principle that is absolutely right. It had nothing to do with the ratting insinuations that my hon. Friend has misguidedly made. A few courageous people, not party to any agreement, said that putting an office complex and advertising hoardings on the top of one of the most beautiful landscape sites in England would be environmentally wrong. The council was right.

**Mr. Mitchell:** If there are genuine planning grounds for objecting to the scheme, Dover council is entirely within its rights. But if, as alleged by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South in Committee, the council was indulging in a revolt and a non-co-operation exercise against the whole project, it was breaching an agreement that was given by the council to the Select Committee.

I would be extremely reluctant to ask the House to undo the planning arrangements in the Bill. They give the local planning authorities considerable powers to protect local residents and to influence the final design of the project works. The new planning clause also meets the concerns raised by a number of other petitioners. The planning arrangements are built on mutual trust and if that trust is misplaced the whole edifice will inevitably fall.

I understand that there are strong feelings about the project in Dover but I am confident that the council will find, as the other authorities have done, that it is in the council's best interests and that of its ratepayers to work within the spirit of the memorandum of agreement.

My hon. Friend the Member for Faversham expressed concern about the tunnel generating more traffic on unsuitable roads. Tunnel or no tunnel, the amount of traffic on the roads will double by the end of the century. We are providing a three-lane motorway from the M25 right to the mouth of the tunnel. It would be extraordinary if a lorry driver sought to drive along the unsuitable byroads and lanes of Kent when he had the opportunity to use a three-lane motorway.

Like other hon. Members, I have lived and worked in Kent. I have toured all the parts that will be affected. The Government recognise the beauty of Kent and are committed to leaving existing safeguards intact. The areas that it is absolutely necessary to damage are defined in the Bill, and the Government have consulted their statutory advisers. On that basis, I believe that the House would be right to reject the amendment.

**Mr. Snape:** I think that the House will be disappointed with the tenor of the Minister's remarks.

Some Conservative Members who represent Kent have spoken at length, some passionately, and some both, about the desirability of preserving the flora and fauna of Kent and they gave their support to this amendment. I do not think it is fair of the Minister to attack my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) for correctly pointing out that the land use consultants who recommended the use of the Shakespeare site were those appointed and paid for by the concessionaires. The Minister should abandon the rather scruffy brief with which he has detained the House for 15 minutes and answer some of the questions raised by hon. Members.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg):** He has.

**Mr. Snape:** Well he did not answer them satisfactorily. New clause 4, which the Minister described as "misguided", was described by the right hon. and learned Member for Dover (Mr. Rees) as imprecise. It is hardly the most violent new clause ever tabled in this or other debates. It states:

> "the appropriate Minister or Ministers shall have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty"—

not their natural beauty but the natural beauty of the county of Kent. It states that they

> "shall take into account any effect which the proposals would have"

and that

> "the desirability of securing . . . the movement of minestone from sources in Kent shall, to the greatest extent practicable, be carried out by rail."

That is scarcely the most aggressive new clause to be tabled. It was carefully worded in my customary non-controversial way, the better, I should have thought, to appeal to the Minister.

My hon. Friends will be relieved to hear that I do not intend to refer to hon. Members' contributions. I issue a word of caution to the hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), after listening to the hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) talk about the hon. and learned Member's constituency. I warn the hon. and learned Member to remember the gloomy aftermath of the hon. Gentleman's defeat at the next general election, that tonight we have heard the bid by the defeated ex-Conservative Member for Richmond and Barnes to take over those pastures in Kent where the hon. Gentleman was once photographed wearing only a vest. The photograph appeared in a colour magazine. He was not very old at the time—in fact, it was a baby contest.

**Mr. Hanley:** The hon. Gentleman should get his facts right. I won the beautiful baby contest, aged one, in Beaconsfield, and that is another seat that I desire.

**Mr. Snape:** If the hon. Gentleman desires Beaconsfield, he should use the photograph to which he has referred rather than the present-day one.

It was somewhat churlish, to say the least, of the Minister of State to reply as he did. I hope that those Conservative Members from Kent who spoke so passionately in favour of this fairly innocuous new clause will seize the opportunity to put their votes where their passion was a few minutes ago and will support the clause in the Division Lobby.

*Question put,* That the clause be read a Second time:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 90, Noes 151.

**Division No. 70]** **[11.30 pm**

**AYES**

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Aitken, Jonathan
Allen, David
Anderson, Donald
Ashdown, Paddy
Barron, Kevin

Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Bermingham, Gerald
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Caborn, Richard
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Coleman, Donald
Corbett, Robin
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dewar, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alex
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Foulkes, George
Gale, Roger
George, Bruce
Godman, Dr Norman
Hancock, Michael
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Haynes, Frank
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moate, Roger
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Radice, Giles
Raynsford, Nick
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Rogers, Allan
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Snape, Peter
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Strang, Gavin
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Don Dixon and
Mr. Allen McKay.

## NOES

Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Batiste, Spencer
Bellingham, Henry
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Bryan, Sir Paul
Burt, Alistair
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Chapman, Sydney
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
Dover, Den
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Henderson, Barry
Hicks, Robert
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knox, David
Lang, Ian
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McQuarrie, Albert
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Neale, Gerrard
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Osborn, Sir John
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Ryder, Richard
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Steen, Anthony
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wood, Timothy
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Michael Portillo and
Mr. Tony Durant.

*Question accordingly negatived.*

### New Clause 8

### CONCESSIONAIRES TO BE MANAGED AND OWNED BY EEC NATIONALS

'(1) Subject to subsection (2) below, the Secretary of State shall by order made by statutory instrument make provision for prohibiting—

*(a)* any person from holding the office, or exercising the functions of, Chairman, Deputy Chairman or Chief Executive of the Concessionaires or any of the Concessionaires; or—*[Mr. Aitken.]*

*Brought up, and read the First time.*

**Mr. Aitken:** I beg to move, That the clause be now read a Second time.

The new clause seeks to safeguard the public interest against unwelcome and hostile changes to the financial and managerial control of the Channel tunnel. This is an important issue, which evidently worries the present so-called management of Eurotunnel because it suggests on page 9 of its prospectus the introduction of legislative changes that are similar to those proposed in the new clause. Unfortunately, however, the British Government, probably because of their ambivalent and doubtful ideology about the free-market purity of the Channel tunnel, have so far declined to tackle this issue. However, that must be tackled soon, because it is now public knowledge that Eurotunnel is already embroiled in what I suspect will be the first of several power struggles for the control of its management.

I shall refer in a moment to the devastating series of newspaper articles with headlines such as "Chunnel group in crisis", which was on the front page of today's *Daily Telegraph*, "Chunnel's new blow" on the front page of the business news section of *The Sunday Times* last week, and "Future of Channel Tunnel chief in doubt" from yesterday's *Financial Times*. The gist of those articles is that the chairman of Eurotunnel, Lord Pennock, apparently wants to go, his self-designated successor, Sir Nigel Broackes, is allegedly disenchanted and would like to resign from the board, and there is general turmoil, chaos and a crisis of leadership within the company. That is hardly the sort of boardroom harmony that one expects from a group which is passing the hat round to raise a mere £750 million from the market in a few months.

However, after all those surprises and even a number of threats, the two full pages of Eurotunnel advertisements that were scattered like expensive confetti through every national newspaper in the country, could not prevent the embarrassing revelations from appearing in print.

Whatever the boardroom row really means—I shall suggest later that it is immensely significant—one thing is crystal clear: far from being the solid, reliable blue-chip institution which it likes to portray itself as in its £10 million advertising campaign, in reality, Eurotunnel is a deeply divided organisation that is plagued by internal dissension, defections and public doubts. Those doubts centre on Eurotunnel's ability to manage the Channel tunnel and to ensure its future financial viability.

There are also grave doubts about the sources of finance for this gargantuan project. If those sources exist at all beyond the rather sorry-looking group of construction companies and other punters who, after a long struggle and severe flagellation from the Governor of the Bank of England, have literally scratched together the initial £206 million of equity for this £5 billion project, according to Eurotunnel's own prospectus most of the rest of the money will come from Japanese, far eastern, middle eastern, African and other Francophone sources.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor**: Is my hon. Friend suggesting that the Governor of the Bank of England who, of course, has enormous influence and pressure in financial markets, was actually putting pressure on, or twisting the arms of, organisations to get them to find money for the project against their commercial judgment? Surely my hon. Friend is not suggesting such a scandalous activity on the part of the Governor of the Bank of England?

**Mr. Aitken**: The Governor of the Bank of England is a very fine lord lieutenant of Kent, but I must say that his activities in regard to the funding of Eurotunnel are those of a hyperactive gentleman. Frankly, I have been amazed by his role so far. One of the purposes of my speech will be to suggest that no such role should be played by any official in high places, or by the Governor of the Bank of England in future.

Anyway, with the help of the Governor of the Bank of England, Eurotunnel scratched together the first £206 million, which leaves a mere 96 per cent. of the necessary funds still to be raised.

I shall turn later to the sources of funding for Eurotunnel, because at this stage I should like to make only one preliminary point. It is absolutely vital for the House to understand the importance of the little-noticed clause 32 of the concessional agreement which the Government signed with Eurotunnel on 1 March 1986—incidentally, without any debate in this House. Under that agreement, the Franco-Arabian-African multinational banks, who are putting up at least £4 billion of the money, are given the automatic right to take over the management of the Channel tunnel in what I regard as the highly predictable event of the much smaller sums of equity investment proving inadequate.

Against that background it is not necessary to be labelled a little Englander to have some doubts about whether it is wise to allow a strategic artery of our national communications with Europe—that is how the optimists see it—to be financed in the way that I have described without any safeguards by the potential owners' consortium of 40 multinational banks and investment houses, only two of which are British.

If, instead of the Anglo-French Channel tunnel that we were promised, we end up with what I think will be a Franco-Arabian-African-Japanese tunnel, with, for all we know, the future financial equivalents of Ivan Boesky or Adnan Khashoggi in control of it, let us write into the Bill safeguards that will protect the management and the corporate structure of the company for the benefit of the public interest.

The Channel tunnel has so far proved to be an unloved project, both politically and financially. Politically, even the most ardent tunneller would have to admit that the public reaction to the Chunnel has been at best lukewarm and at worst downright hostile. Yet despite this widespread public and political scepticism, a French President and a British Prime Minister who are sadly infected with the statesman's disease of monumentitis, and a Government majority of 140 in the House, mean that the reality is that the Bill will receive its Third Reading tonight. But it will not be all over bar the shouting. Leaving aside the near certainty of a sticky passage in another place, the real battlefield on which the future of the Channel tunnel will be decided will be in the financial arena and not at Westminster.

In financial terms, Eurotunnel is entering a different and much more desperate ball game. Everyone knows that the Chunnel's fate will be decided by international financiers and not by domestic politicians. Before we consider what safeguards should be written into the Bill it is important to glance at the history and the prospects of the money and management of the Channel tunnel.

The founding shareholders of Eurotunnel, who put up about £43 million, were a group of Anglo-French joint venturers, or joint adventurers, the founders being dominated by construction companies, especially French companies. It is unusual for construction companies to be the founding and dominant shareholders in a project in which they hope to obtain large contracts to be paid for by other shareholders.

The flavour of the construction companies' intentions were rather well summarised by Mr. Francis Bouygues of the Bouygues Construction Company. Mr. James Sherwood, who was then in dialogue with Mr. Bouygues about a rival consortium, wrote a letter on 3 June 1986 which read:

*[Mr. Aitken]*

> "Shortly before the concession was granted, Mr. Francis Bouyges, the spokesman for the French contractors, said to me 'Mr. Sherwood, you have no idea what enormous profits exist in this project for the construction companies'."

The ambiguous and somewhat avaricious role of the construction companies as founding shareholders was one reason why Eurotunnel found the next and rather small tranche of equity fund-raising so difficult. Equity 1 was the petty cash for the project and equity 2 was the seed money for it. Those efforts have so far raised £206 million of equity, and although that sounds a large sum it is a mere 4 per cent. of the £5,000 billion of equity and loans that the Channel tunnel project needs.

Equity 2 was a public relations disaster for Eurotunnel. The financial press used words such as "fiasco", "desperate scramble", "a rescue from the brink of collapse" and "a shambles" to describe the extraordinary story of missed deadlines, postponements, emergency flights to Paris by bankers and the involvement of Downing street and the Bank of England.

To summarise the position of equity 2, I can do no better than to read from an article about which my hon. Friend the Minister of State is sensitive. In fact, it is rather favourable to the Channel tunnel. I refer to the article which appeared in the remarkably well informed *Contract Journal* on 20 November 1986 under the headline "Treading water in the City". The relevant extract reads as follows:

> "When the curtain sticks and the leading actor forgets his lines at the dress rehearsal, it does not necessarily mean that the first night is going to be a disaster. But backers get the jitters and start examining contracts for escape clauses.
>
> Something of the sort has happened to Eurotunnel, whose efforts to raise £70 million in the City last month very nearly ended in embarrassing failure.
>
> Raising £70 million in the UK towards the £206 million second tranche resulted in public humiliation for the financial team which apportioned how much cash Eurotunnel should try to raise in the UK and how much in other leading international markets.
>
> On reflection, the United Kingdom application was over-optimistic. For, while France romped home with its £70 million of shares, and Japan and America stumped up, the UK operation was whipped to the finishing post by the Bank of England, reportedly at the behest of Mrs. Thatcher, who cracked the whip in the City for the last £10 million."

**Mr. Rowe:** I realise that I know a great deal less about the Arab financial world than my hon. Friend, but does it not strike him as ironic that he should quote the private notes of an American president of the company that runs a large slice of what he would undoubtedly describe as a national asset in order to rubbish a scheme that is at present trying to raise money on the international markets?

11.45 pm

**Mr. Aitken:** I do not know what my hon. Friend is talking about. I cannot quite follow his point. I was making my own speech and quoting from the *Contract Journal*, which is actually a quite well-known public magazine.

**Mr. Rowe:** Perhaps my hon. Friend will allow me to explain. My hon. Friend earlier quoted from what must have been the notes belonging to Mr. James Sherwood, an American citizen running a British ferry company, which is surely a national asset.

**Mr. Aitken:** My hon. Friend seems a little sensitive about this. Mr. Bouyges and Mr. Sherwood are well-known public figures who were at one stage nearly partners together. Correspondence was exchanged between them. Mr. Sherwood wrote a letter which has been circulating around dozens of people and that is the letter from which I have quoted. I do not regard that letter as private notes, as it has been in circulation for some time.

Whatever went on between the various tycoons, the House should focus on the really bizarre nature of this fund raising in the United Kingdom for equity 2. After all——

**Mr. Ian Gow** (Eastbourne): Would my hon. Friend remind the House that the baronet, my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) writes for the very journal to which my hon. Friend has referred? Is it true that my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton wrote the article from which my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) has quoted? Or did Dr. Johannes Witteveen write the article?

**Mr. Aitken:** I hesitate to invoke the name of the good doctor, who I think is innocent in this matter. The truth is that, apart from having a vast team of research assistants at my disposal, the devastating quotation came from the magazine *Contract Journal*. My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) passed me a copy of that magazine when he was trying to draw my attention to an article on pedal cycles. He was not the author of the article, but he was the source of the copy. He was as innocent as that. He simply passed me the copy of the magazine as he wanted to draw my attention to an article on pedal cycles.

However, I seized on that quotation which summarises the bizarre nature of the fund raising in equity 2. It really does sound very strange. It was the greatest project of all time, according to its backers. Britain was trying to raise a mere £70 million, yet even that limited target could be raised only after whips had been cracked and arms twisted, No. 10 Downing street had been brought into the fray and that great and good man the Governor of the Bank of England had been required to stop regulating the City and chasing the members of Guinness in order to pass around the hat on Eurotunnel's behalf.

Sir Nigel Broackes was the arch-enemy of Eurotunnel in the past, but he was brought on to the board—again, apparently, on the instruction of the Governor of the Bank of England. The only person who was left out of this frantic whip round was the Secretary of State for Transport. I suspect that he and his Ministers of State were omitted so that they could pop up and deny any suggestion that the Department had ever been involved in any of these activities. That is why they come to the Dispatch Box Question Time after Question Time saying that they cannot possibly answer any questions about Eurotunnel because that has nothing to do with them even though it has a lot to do with the Bank of England and everyone else.

**Mr. Raynsford:** At least they did not send in the Special Branch.

**Mr. Aitken:** They did not send in the Special Branch. We were spared that.

The odd thing is that we have been continually told that the project has nothing to do with the Government. We have been told that it is a free market project which will be decided by market forces and that the Government will stay at arm's length. The reality has been completely different. I believe that the Governor of the Bank of England will have cause to regret his direct involvement when the full facts come out or if the rest of the money is not raised and those who put in the £206 million lose their shirts.

Some of the truth is dribbling out. On 8 December 1986, the back page of the *Financial Times* carried a well-informed story by Andrew Taylor under the heading:

> "Founding shareholders help Eurotunnel to meet funding target."

The article said:

> 'Eurotunnel did not expect the founding shareholders to participate in the October issue."

In other words, the construction companies were anxious not to have to put their hands into their own pockets. The article revealed:

> "the struggle that, the Anglo-French Channel tunnel consortium had in raising £206 million in an international share placing at the end of October is underlined by a full list of subscribers to the issue. It shows that Eurotunnel would have fallen short of its target by at least £12 million if the founding banking and construction shareholders had not decided to increase their stake in the venture. Total purchases either directly or indirectly by the founding shareholders totalled more than £20 million."

As I have said before, that desperate operation reminded me of an old French proverb:

> "It is a sad woman who has to buy her own perfume."

It is a sad and sorry company which, having touted itself all over the world to find new shareholders, cannot find them and has to go back to an unwilling group of founding shareholders and persuade them to pony up for the shares that no-one else would buy.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** Just so that I understand the position, is my hon. Friend quoting from his speech in Committee? Is he reading *Hansard* or is he reading a newspaper?

**Mr. Aitken:** I am reading some of the same quotations, but that was a quotation from the *Financial Times*. I am reading it for the benefit of the whole House.

While the traumatic difficulties were going on, the noble Lord Pennock was exuding confidence and optimism about financing the Channel tunnel. There was a quotation from Sir Robin Day's programme "The World at One", when all hon. Members were ticked off by Lord Pennock. He wished that Members of Parliament would stop mucking around with the Bill because he had got banks from all over the world ready to finance the project. That remark was justified. On page 63 of the rivetingly interesting prospectus put out by Eurotunnel, one finds the list of 40 international banks.

My hon. Friend the Minister was working from some other list, because he was able to reveal at an earlier stage in the proceedings that he knew something about a draft list of other bankers, including the European Investment Bank. I am basing my remarks on the printed prospectus which seems the most reliable source of information, since that is what has gone to shareholders. It lists the 40 international banks that have said that they are apparently willing to lend the £4 billion to Eurotunnel. The willingness to lend is subject to a mass of small print conditions that can be extremely easy to wriggle out of. Let us not cavil; the list of potential lenders is there.

The list of lenders is worrying, because the majority of the 40 banks are from outside the EEC. There are 14 Japanese banks that dominate the field, there are several Arab banks and, apparently, even some African banks are willing to support the project. There are plenty of French banks, some of them are even state-owned banks or financial institutions. Those organisations know a good benefit match for the French state when they see one. The British banks are conspicuous by their absence. Of a total of 40 banks, only two are British. Only the National Westminster bank and the Midland bank are brave enough to join in the £4 billion financing project. A tiny slice of the action is going to Britain.

The British institutions, with the direct encouragement and advice of the Governor of the Bank of England, have been told that they should put their money into the equity of the Channel tunnel. That is why a rather artificially high figure of 43 per cent. of British construction companies at this moment own a very small amount of equity. But that situation could not possibly last. Therefore, as many institutions in the City of London were quick to spot, that advice to go into the equity of the Channel tunnel is likely to prove disastrously wrong. As I see it, the equity investors in the Channel tunnel are the equivalent of the first waves of infantrymen at the battle of the Somme. They will be wiped out. The reason they will be wiped out is that not to be wiped out requires, as the red Queen said in Alice in Wonderland, a belief in six impossible things before breakfast.

To give three of the impossible things that one has to believe before breakfast in order to believe that the equity investors will not be wiped out, one has first to believe that this project will be built on time and on budget, which is a triumph of hope over experience for any construction project of such size and scope and underwater difficulty that the world has ever seen.

Secondly, one has to believe that the figures in the Eurotunnel prospectus and its forecasts are going to come true. If I had to pick out just one statistic which makes me certain that the clock has struck 13, it is the figure which says that the Eurotunnel will capture 67 per cent. of the total car traffic market crossing the channel. That figure can only have been plucked out of the air by someone who has no understanding of the psychology of the English motorist—as indeed Eurotunnel shows by its remarkable advertisements placed at such great expense in the national papers. It pictures the Channel in the middle of a hurricane or a force 9 gale, with foaming billows, an albatross diving into the waves, thunder and lightning overhead. The inviting slogan is:

> "You will travel better when you are under the weather".

I am sure that is true in January and February, but the bulk, something like 80 per cent., of the cross-Channel holiday motoring market travels in June, July, August and September. The psychology of the British motorist is that he enjoys a touch of the briny and a bit of ozone to cross the Channel, especially if he can do it at a lower price.

That brings me to the third point. Another impossible thing one has to believe is that the Eurotunnel consortium will not be badly hurt by the inevitable price war. As soon as the tunnel opens, it is certain that the ferries, in a desperate effort to fight it off, will dip their prices sharply, which they are able to do, and which Eurotunnel is unable to do because it has to carry the heavy capital cost. In the short to medium term, we will see a price war on the Channel and enormous competition, which will result in the ferries doing quite well.

I am sure, unless I am very wrong, that we will see higher than expected construction costs. The possibility,

*[Mr. Aitken]*

if not the probability, of the equity investors' funds proving inadequate, I suggest, is very high. What will happen when those equity investors' funds run out? Here we have to turn to clause 32 of the concession agreement, headed "Provisions relating to lenders". It goes on at some length and begins:

> "The parties to this agreement agree that the new Concessionaires shall be substituted for the initial Concessionaires in the following circumstances".

These new concessionaires are known as "substituted entities".

The substituted entities are, in a phrase, the lenders. This extraordinary concessional agreement gives virtually an automatic right for the banks to take over and run the whole project as the new management. There are grave dangers in this, because when the consortium just changes its whole nature then comprises not the original equity shareholders but the bankers, only two out of 40 of whom are British, Britain and even the EEC will end up having very small shares in this project, which will lead to managerial changes.

Managerial changes seem to be happening somewhat unwillingly in Eurotunnel at the present time. We have already seen a flood of the sort of "Broackes knifes Pennock" headlines — or is it vice versa — but this is going to be nothing to the shock-horror equivalent of the headline "Boesky and Khashoggi unite to double prices on the Chunnel", which we will see if the substitute entities, who will then be the owners, get together. Although some parts of my speech may seem like scaremongering talk, what I envisage is perfectly possible, given the strange financial structure and the concession agreement.

12 midnight

We have here a swaying house of cards over which Parliament and the Government have abandoned all control. The only people who recognise the real danger are the people in Eurotunnel who, in a whiff of panic, decided that they had better write something into the prospectus to cover them for this kind of eventuality. On page 9 of the prospectus there is a note which says:

> "Consideration is being given by the Governments to the introduction of powers which would be in addition to the existing powers under United Kingdom and French Law which could be embodied in a protocol to the treaty and empower the Governments, following ratification, to prevent any person holding the office or exercising the function of chairman, deputy chairman or chief executive who is not a national of a member state of the European Community and to prevent any person from acquiring by transfer or otherwise a beneficial interest of 20 per cent. or more of the voting capital of Eurotunnel."

Eurotunnel thought this thing through. It wants the safeguards. When I raised this matter in Committee the Minister of State at first denied that anyone had ever dreamed of such a scheme. After tremendous correction from the civil servants, he came back and said that they were thinking about it. I am pressing to have these thoughts clarified.

There is a genuine danger that the control of Eurotunnel, both managerial and financial, could shift dramatically away from anything envisaged at present. The Eurotunnel project is of strategic importance to Britain. Certain strategic industries, such as the television industry about which I know something, cannot change managements control or shareholdings without the consent of the governing body—in that case the IBA. In the same way, some safeguards should be written into the Bill to prevent an effective financial or managerial takeover of the Channel tunnel.

Although I do not suppose that Eurotunnel will welcome every word that I have said in moving this new clause, it will see the wording of the clause as the first recorded example of co-operation between the Member for Thanet, South and Eurotunnel. That is because I am trying to write into the Bill exactly what sagacious businessmen who look ahead can see as a danger which needs to be headed off. I hope that the Government will accept the clause now or in the other place, because something like it has to be written into the Bill.

**Mr. Robert Hughes:** I listened with a great deal of interest and delight to the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), who moved the new clause. I am certain that many of his remarks about greedy, predatory construction companies and the disgraceful way in which private capital behaves will be abstracted, not from *Hansard*, because that would not be allowed, but elsewhere, and will appear in close terms from the election manifesto that I expect to produce in the near future. I have rarely heard in the House such a damning indictment of the way in which private companies operate, and to have it from the horse's mouth is absolutely delightful.

Much of what the hon. Gentleman said, especially his quotations from various newspapers, reminded me of quotations from the seedy saga of TV-am, of which I think the hon. Gentleman has some experience. We have to take it that he is speaking with some experience and some credibility. I quarrel with him on one point. He quoted Mr. Sherwood in aid. I know that what I am about to say may not be appreciated in all parts of the Committee, but Mr. Sherwood is not to be trusted as far as he can be thrown —which is not very far. He constantly parades himself as a defender of the ferry industry and many people are naive enough to believe him. He has damaged the ferries that he operates and his predatory activities have sacked more seamen than are likely to lose their jobs if and when the Channel tunnel goes ahead. Some care should be exercised about the sources of evidence.

The hon. Member, who moved the new clause, said very little about it. He constantly repeated — I shall not attempt to emulate his stage accent—various people and he constantly referred to African banks. What a terrible thing that African banks may have money which they wish to invest in Britain. He constantly mentioned Mr. Khashoggi and the fellow who has been suspended from the New York stock exchange as being people that we should be aware of. I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman let himself down tonight. Although he said that he did not want to be described as a little Englander, the whole of his speech was chauvinistic and disparaging of foreigners in a manner that I regret.

I do not understand what the hon. Gentleman is saying about lenders taking over the tunnel. Once the initial capital is raised the tunnel will be built. The company will not go bankrupt in the process of building the tunnel. It may run into difficulties once it is up and running. If the traffic forecasts are not up scratch it will lose money. Presuming the tunnel is built, if, as the hon. Gentleman suggests, the ferry companies sharply reduce their prices to keep their trade, it is possible that Eurotunnel will go bankrupt. What will then happen if these mysterious and sinister foreign bankers take over? What will they do to affect our strategic link with Europe? Is it as the hon. Gentleman suggests? Will they shut it down? If they take it over they will try to make a success of it. The hon. Gentleman says that they will double the prices. They will not double the prices if, because the company has not previously collected enough revenue it has gone bankrupt. They may—I accept that this is a danger—try to use predatory pricing to drive the ferries out of business.

The logic does not stand up. Eurotunnel will go bankrupt only if the ferries are still thriving. It cannot go bankrupt if the ferries go out of business because it will have a monopoly of the trade. The logic in the hon. Gentleman's scenario does not add up.

The hon. Gentleman suggests that there is the possibility of a price war. We have suggested on many occasions that there ought to be a mechanism to act swiftly to prevent a price war, which would have disastrous effects on the ferries, or indeed on the tunnel if it is built and operating. We should set up an office of Channel fair trading which would be specifically charged with acting speedily and directly on prices and competition. We believe that the existing mechanisms for dealing with unfair competition take too long to deal with the problem. Therefore, there should be one specific body to deal directly with it. That would be a better way to go about it.

On the face of it, new clause 8 has some attractions in that only a national of a member state of the European Community can be chairman of the company. The hon. Gentleman made disparaging remarks about the French, so I do not think that he would welcome a French chairman. I do not think that this new clause provides the sort of security for 10 years ahead—which is about the time that we are speaking of—if the hon. Gentleman accepts my logic, which I do not think he does. It does not provide the sort of protection that is desirable to make sure that there is proper competition, that the ferries are not driven out of business, and that we renew our flexibility with regard to our communications with Europe.

In the face of what I have heard so far, I am not persuaded by any manner of means by the speech made by the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** For the first time in these proceedings I am not entirely at one with my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), because it would be unfortunate for the operation of the tunnel, if it proceeded, if someone was barred from the job of chief executive simply because he was a Swiss, an Australian or an American. It would be unfortunate if we were to deny someone a job on merit because of his nationality.

My hon. Friend has given us some horrifying information about the present financial position and prospects of the tunnel. I want to ask my hon. Friend the Minister one basic question. There has been a major change from the situation when we were told that investors were queueing up to invest in the tunnel to the present situation, particularly after equity 2, when it seems we came close to total financial disaster. The £206 million was not raised easily. The investors were not queueing up and the Minister must be aware that there were postponements on what is a relatively minor sum in comparison with the whole operation.

That should not surprise us. Many documents have been referred to, but the most interesting and authoritative was the five banks' review, in which two of our joint stock banks participated and in which it was made abundantly clear that they thought that it was virtually impossible for the project to proceed unless some guarantee was given by the Government or some public authority for the borrowings, and that is what the Government have, rightly, set themselves against.

My basic question, which is relevant to the new clause, is: could the Minister tell us, and particularly the investing public, what happens if, as seems likely, the £750 million, which I believe is the sum involved in equity 3, does not come forward within the required time scale? The Minister will be well aware that institutions have shied away from equity investment in the project. Quite apart from all the arguments across the Floor, my hon. Friend the Minister will be aware that it was a difficult job to get that. Some of us will have been horrified to have heard the suggestion that the Governor of the Bank of England had to twist arms. I know nothing about that, but I think that my hon. Friend the Minister will be well aware that it was difficult to get the investors in the institutional network to give a relatively small sum which, in Britain's case, was about £70 million. That is peanuts for our institutions. In insurance companies, unit trusts and other such organisations huge sums are available and they obviously did not like the idea of an equity stake in this operation.

Now we are going to the general public who are not, as some people think, silly people. They know a good investment when they see one and they know a rotten investment when they see one. They put their money into offers such as TSB and British Gas because they considered, rightly, that those were good sensible investments for their savings.

The Minister will be well aware that bearing in mind that investors could lose all their money that they would certainly not get any return for at least seven years and that the whole project is not regarded as sound by the institutional investors, it is pretty clear that the investing public, the kind of people who invest £500 or £1,000 in a project, will not look eagerly at this despite the flood of advertising.

Will the Minister tell us, and thereby tell the investing public, what will happen if the £750 million is not raised? Will the project come to a complete end so that everything stops, and, sadly, the institutions will lose the £206 million that they have already invested in equity? Or will some other device be found within the framework of the legislation to carry it forward?

Frankly, I was horrified when it was explained earlier by my hon. Friend the Minister that public funds would be used for the project through the European Investment Bank in which the Government have no direct responsibility. They certainly are because, as my hon. Friend the Minister will be well aware, the autumn statement made it abundantly clear that this year the British Treasury is giving £48 million to the European Investment Bank from taxpayers' funds. He also knows that the bank has a board of management consisting only of the finance Ministers of member states. He knows that this is a European institution which is designed, as its prospectus says, to give loans at attractive rates of interest guaranteed by the funds of member states and the sums are borrowed on the basis of the security of member states.

If the £750 million is not raised, will money be provided by organisations such as the EIB, or will money be provided from foreign banks or foreign investors? The investing public, to whom the Government have been fair

*[Mr. Teddy Taylor]*

in their privatisation project, are entitled to know simply what the score is. In other words, if they put in the £750 million they know that the project will go ahead so long as the loan can be secured. That is clear.

What we are entitled to know is what happens if the £750 million is not raised. Does that mean that the project stops or is some other device found to put the cash in? Our understanding in the past was always that a crucial element to progress was the raising of £750 million from the general public.

Therefore, I hope that the Minister will answer what I think is a simple question in a complicated financial situation. The investing public is entitled to an answer because I have a genuine fear that many investors, people with limited savings, are in danger of losing a lot of their money or of putting their money at unreasonable risk. They are entitled to simple information on what the procedure will be if they do not put their money into this project.

12.15 am

**Mr. David Mitchell:** Those who served on the Standing Committee will have been familiar with the rather tired record that my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) played about the Franco, Arabian, Japanese tunnel. We heard it to the point of tedious repetition. He also made references to the difficulties of Eurotunnel in raising equity. It was a remarkable performance for Eurotunnel to raise that money against a background of no measure on the statute book, the concession agreement not in operation and a unique and expensive knocking campaign mounted by competitors and their mouthpieces.

I wonder how my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South would like it if TV-am were raising extra capital on the stock exchange or from its bankers and the BBC ran a knocking campaign of his company designed to undermine the creditworthiness of his operation and to destroy his ability to compete in the market. In short, I wonder whether he would ponder on the business ethics of Flexilink and its spokesmen in using the passage of legislation through this House to try to undermine a new competitor at its birth.

**Mr. Aitken:** I deprecate the references to Flexilink's ethics which have been totally above board, but if I was by any chance raising a capital sum on the stock market for any business of mine I would certainly welcome the support of the Government and the Bank of England and I would welcome my hon. Friend the Minister as spokesman as I am sure that he would do a good job and would completely destroy any enemy propaganda which all businessmen are used to anyway.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Business men are not used to the sort of wholesale advertising on the scale which has been indulged in by opponents of this legislation.

My hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) should not be frightened by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South. I warn him of the dangers of listening too carefully to the flights of fantasy of my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South which tend to divorce themselves from reality. The matter for the House is to pass legislation to facilitate the tunnel. The matter of raising finance is for Eurotunnel and not for the Committee. The amendment sets out to control the nationality of senior officers of the concessionaires.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** Surely this project has a structure set out under which we understood that £750 million equity was an integral part. That, I understood, was a requirement of the Government. Surely the Minster can say what would happen if the money was not raised from the general public. Is not that a simple request to make?

**Mr. Mitchell:** We have made it clear on numerous occasions that it is up to the promoters to raise the money and to set out their stall to do so. If they do not succeed in raising it, the Government will not put money into the project. That is the position as stated repeatedly on previous occasions. It is no different now. This amendment sets out to control——

**Mr. Robert Hughes:** The hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) is entitled to a straight answer. He wants to know whether, if Eurotunnel does not raise the money, the project stops until presumably some new consortium has to negotiate a new concession agreement. In other words, if the money is not raised, the tunnel will not be built.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Within the confines of the paramaters that the hon. Gentleman has drawn, he is correct. Of course, there may be other sources, but I am not in a position to comment on that. It is entirely a matter for the promoters. It would be wrong for the Government to give what would be, in effect, a letter of comfort. We have said all along that this is a private sector operation, and the matter of raising money is for the promoters, not for the Government.

**Mr. Hughes:** Am I right in my contention that, if Eurotunnel cannot raise the money, that is the end of the matter? However, if a new consortium put up a new proposition and could raise the money, would a new concession have to be signed?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I hesitate to give an answer at 12.20 am on a matter that needs careful thought. I think that the hon. Gentleman is right, but I shall write to him and put the matter beyond a peradventure.

The new clause sets out to control the nationality of senior officers of the concessionaires and to limit the acquisition of large shareholdings by individuals who were not nationals of the European Community. It has a number of technical deficiencies—for example, the term "person" in a statute includes legal person, unless otherwise stated, and would catch companies, including the concessionairies' holding companies Eurotunnel plc and Eurotunnel SA. The implication of persons and nationals seems to conflict with that. There is a whole series of other technical defects in the new clause.

The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) rightly drew attention to the non-logic of the case of my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South. The Arabs and the Japanese investors are hardly going to dig up the tunnel and take it to the middle or far east. I am not sure that my hon. Friend has been able to define the alleged damage that such investors might do.

In Committee I said that we were considering with the French Government and the concessionaires whether there should be additional safeguards to ensure that the management of the concessionaires did not fall into undesirable hands. If this consideration shows that some restriction is necessary, and that an amendment to the Bill is required to implement it, the Government will introduce such an amendment in another place.

On that basis, I invite the House to reject the amendment should my hon. Friend not feel able to withdraw it.

**Mr. Aitken:** My hon. Friend's closing words were a gracious sign that the points that I have sought to make were, at least to some extent, valid, even though he quarrelled with certain issues. Indeed, I was convinced by the valid point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) that it would be wrong to exclude for all time, under all circumstances, someone such as a Canadian managing director——

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** He might be a French-Canadian.

**Mr. Aitken:** Indeed, and then we could compromise.

It has been a useful exercise for the House to understand some of the financial problems inherent in this basically unsatisfactory financial structure. I have made my speech and I will not elaborate on the points further. I beg to ask leave to withdraw the motion.

*Motion and clause, by leave, withdrawn.*

### Clause 1

### CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A TUNNEL RAIL LINK BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND FRANCE

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I beg to move amendment No. 1, in page 2, line 34, leave out 'section' and insert 'Act'.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** With this we shall discuss Government amendment No. 2.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Both amendments are drafting improvements consequential on other amendments made in Committee.

*Amendment agreed to.*

*Amendment made:* No. 2, in page 3, line 12, leave out subsection (10).—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

### Clause 2

### NO GOVERNMENT FUNDS OR GUARANTEES FOR THE TUNNEL SYSTEM

*Amendments made:* No. 3, in page 3, line 16, leave out 'for the benefit' and insert

'relating to the performance of any obligations'.

No. 4, in page 3, line 19, leave out

'or guarantees of any description within that subsection'

and insert

'to the Concessionaires, or the provision of guarantees relating to the performance of any of their obligations, if they are provided'.

No. 5, in page 3, line 21, leave out 'power' and insert

'a power or imposing a duty'.

No. 6, in page 3, line 28, leave out from beginning to 'to' in line 40 and insert—

'(3) Where anything in contravention of subsection (1) above is done or proposed by or on behalf of a Minister of the Crown or Government department, any person who has suffered, or may suffer, loss in consequence of it may bring an action against the Minister or department concerned.'—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

### Clause 14

### CONTRACT LAW AND ARBITRATION LAW

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I beg to move amendment No. 32, in page 12, line 32, at beginning insert

'Subject to subsection (3)*(a)* below,'.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** With this we shall discuss Government amendments Nos. 33 to 37.

**Mr. Mitchell:** This amendment appears substantial but in fact merely reflects a change in the presentation of certain provisions for the purposed arbitration agreement between the British and French Governments and the concessionaires.

*Amendment agreed to.*

*Amendments made:* No. 33, in page 12, line 43, leave out

'Without prejudice to subsection (1) above,'.

No. 34, in page 12, line 45, leave out

'arbitration, nothing in Part I of the Arbitration Act 1950 or in the Arbitration Act'

and insert

'the arbitral tribunal—

*(a)* the provisions of Part I of the Arbitration Act 1950 and the Arbitration Act 1979 specified in subsection (3A) below shall apply in relation to that agreement or lease, or to the enforcement of an award on that agreement or lease, subject to the modifications specified in that subsection and except so far as excluded by, and subject to any modifications contained in, the agreement or lease or any provision of the international arrangements; but

*(b)* without prejudice to subsection (1) above, no other provision of Part I of the Act of 1950 or the Act of'.

No. 35, in page 12, line 47, leave out 'any such' and insert 'that'.

No. 36, in page 13, line 2, at end insert—

'(3A) The provisions are—

*(a)* section 4(1) of the Act of 1950 (staying court proceedings on matters subject to arbitration) with the substitution of the words "shall make an order staying the proceedings" for the words from "if satisfied" to the end;

*(b)* section 26 of that Act (enforcement of arbitration award by court); and

*(c)* section 2 of the Act of 1979 (determination by court of preliminary point of law arising on arbitration) with—

  (i) the omission of the words "Subject to subsection (2) and section 3 below", in subsection (1) and of subsection (2); and

  (ii) the substitution of the words "with the consent of the arbitral tribunal" for paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (1);

and any other provisions of Part I of the Act of 1950 or the Act of 1979 so far as affecting the operation of the provisions mentioned in any of paragraphs (a) to (c) of this subsection.

No. 37, in page 13, line 3, at beginning insert

'Subject to subsection (3)*(a)* above and'.

—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

### Clause 16

### SUPERVISION BY INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION AND SAFETY AUTHORITY

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** I beg to move amendment No. 7, in page 14, line 20 at end insert—

'*(e)* to require the operation of procedures of inspection of vehicles entering the tunnel to ensure that the safety of the tunnel and of persons entering it is secured.'.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It will be convenient to consider at the same time the following amendments:

*[Mr. Deputy Speaker]*

No. 28, in page 14, line 25, at end insert

'and in respect of safety, it shall be the duty of the Concessionaires to submit to the Safety Authority detailed proposals for the transport of vehicles through the tunnel system both involving drivers and passenger being aggregated from vehicles, and drivers and passengers remaining within their vehicles, so that the Safety Authority may reach a decision as to which affords the most effective safeguards against fire and other accidents and best protects the safety of persons travelling through the tunnel system'.

No. 8, in page 14, line 29, at end insert—

'(5A) Notwithstanding anything in the international arrangements a supervisory body may give such directions as may be necessary for the purpose of enabling that body to consider whether the interests of safety would be enhanced by ensuring that on shuttle trains road vehicles are conveyed separately from their occupants.'.

**Mr. Taylor:** I raise here one aspect of the broad issue of security. Strong fears have been expressed by the Fire Brigades Union and others about the safety implications of tunnel operations. I trust that the Minister will study with care the papers that have been carefully prepared by the Fire Brigades Union.

Would the Government consider it reasonable to take powers to require the operation of procedures of inspection of vehicles entering the tunnel to ensure the safety of the tunnel and persons in it? In an effort to obtain information on this issue, I wrote to Lord Pennock, chairman of Eurotunnel, about the checking of vehicles entering the tunnel. I took the view before writing that if every vehicle was to be carefully searched—or X-rayed in the same way as happens to luggage at airports—the operation of the tunnel would be a slow business indeed. How could trains move quickly if each vehicle had to be inspected carefully?

On the other hand, if every vehicle was not to be inspected carefully, it seemed there would be an appalling risk of a dreadful disaster. The right hon. Member for the Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) has talked about the tunnel becoming the longest crematorium in Europe. The Minister will be aware of what could happen if one mad person, representing some terrorist organisation and anxious to draw attention to his cause, caused an explosion in the tunnel. There are other problems, such as gas appliances in caravans. Does the Minister think that every vehicle should be inspected? If so, how could that be done consistent with a reasonable flow of traffic?

Lord Pennock sent me a speedy and courteous reply. I wrote saying that I had received a great deal of information—he had issued it to the press—about the comprehensive measures that would be taken to ensure the maximum security and how, to that end, no stone would be left unturned. But I pointed out that I was still in the dark about what would happen to vehicles.

He replied that there was a possibility of a machine being devised into which a car could be placed, rather in the way cases are examined at airports. Sadly, he told me, such a machine had not yet been invented. He thought the operation of the tunnel would encourage manufacturers to invent such a device. In short, at present there is no such device available, although we are going ahead with the tunnel.

I appreciate that the Minister cannot go into the full details of security and that in any case he would not wish to reveal such information to people who might contrive to abuse admission to the tunnel. But the general public are entitled to an answer to the simple question whether every vehicle will be inspected thoroughly. If not, would there not be a terrible danger, as a result of perhaps one or two people wishing to draw attention to their cause, of it being blown up? If the Minister says that every vehicle will be inspected how will that be done when no machine or mechanism has yet been invented to do the job? It is a cause for public concern.

12.30 am

I know that the Minister is an enthusiast for the tunnel and I know that he is well aware that there are some people who do not mind going in a tunnel under a mountain but who are worried about going in a tunnel under the sea. Undoubtedly, there will be some consumer resistance although it may be of a limited nature.

Before the Government proceed with the project the public would like an answer to the basic question. Will every vehicle be X-rayed and searched? If so how? If that is not done how will the Government ensure there is proper security?

**Mr. Terry Fields** (Liverpool, Broadgreen): I do not think that there will be many people in Liverpool sitting up, sleepless, worrying about the Channel tunnel. The figure of £750 million has been bandied about, and that would assist Liverpool city council to continue with its house building programme for the next 12 years and thus keep jobs and services in the city of Liverpool.

I do not wish to make a contribution from a constituency angle but rather as someone who has spent 26 years in the fire service. For most of that period I was active in the Fire Brigades Union as a member of the National Joint Council of Local Authority Fire Brigades and a member of the central Fire Brigades Advisory Council for England and Wales. I am not sponsored by the Fire Brigades Union, but with that background and experience and the fact that I am still a member of that union, I have a duty and responsibility, in the absence of a forum for firemen to raise objections—they have a long, heroic history of preserving and protecting life in Britain — to raise objections on behalf of that organisation.

The Fire Brigades Union, along with other organisations, wish to object to the building of the tunnel. However, be that as it may, I am sure that the Bill will go through tonight. In that event, the union wishes to express concern about the tremendous lack of safety for people using the tunnel. In the event of some catastrophe, it is the fire fighters who will have to go into the tunnel to protect people.

The role of the Fire Brigades Union with regard to legislation covering health, safety and protection of the public goes back a long way. It has contributed to legislation dealing with fire protection and the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act 1963. But how did such legislation get on the statute book? It takes a tragedy, such as the James Watt whisky warehouse fire in Glasgow or the Bradford City football ground fire, involving the loss of lives including those of firemen, before Parliament acts in the interests of the public.

The Fire Brigades Union is seeking to bring to the notice of Parliament and the public some of the problems that will arise in the event of a fire within the tunnel. I do so in the absence of a public inquiry and the refusal of the House to consider the safety implications.

**Mr. Snape:** I apologise for interrupting my hon. Friend, but as a member of the Committee, may I say that it did not refuse to hear safety evidence? At the insistence of my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) and myself, the Committee heard evidence from the chief inspecting officer of railways. The Committee thought that he was competent to talk about railway safety.

**Mr. Fields:** I will discuss the matter with my hon. Friend afterwards.

The Fire Brigades Union has no vested interest in the Bill save the preservation of life. It has a proud record of service, devotion and sacrifice to the public. It will not make millions out of the project; it is not a speculator.

Safety considerations raise the question of cost, and perhaps with that in mind the Government are reticent about involving themselves in safety legislation. Government cuts have already affected fire service jobs and standards of cover. After the tragedy of the Brighton hotel, when Conservative Members were dragged out of the hotel, they paid lip service to the fire brigade. In the aftermath they launched upon a series of cuts that has affected jobs and service to the public. That is hypocrisy second to none. The legislation provides that much of the safety aspect will be left to the concessionaires. That is rather like leaving the City of London to self-regulation —and we have witnessed the results of that decision. The union does not represent a handful of people; it represents about 90 per cent. of all serving officers in the fire service. I have grave reservations about the safety of those members of the public who will travel through the tunnel and of those fire crews who will have to deal with an emergency. The Minister should consider the serious topics that are raised. Accidents will be inevitable, whether we like it or not, if the project gets off the ground.

Certain questions must be posed. Who will provide the fire fighters and the emergency services to combat fires in the tunnel? The Home Office provides for a predetermined attendance by such bodies at high-risk places such as airports and docks. Why is there no information about the procedures to be followed in the tunnel? If the Kent fire authority has a legal obligation under the Fire Services Acts of 1947 and 1959 and is to provide the fire fighters, are the Government willing to offer increased rate support grant to assist the authority? If the concessionaires are to provide fire cover, to what standards will officers be trained and who will train them? Are there any allocated premises on site for fire appliances and fire equipment—in fact, a fire station—to deal with an emergency? What detailed discussions have taken place, or are planned, to ensure that safe working practices in the tunnel meet our French counterparts' arrangements on equipment and safety procedures?

A simple experience in 1974, with the reorganisation of the fire service, led to a great deal of co-ordination because of the different appliances and equipment used by the brigades that came into the metropolitan areas. We need that type of co-ordination for the tunnel. The obvious differences in training and equipment between the British and the French fire services need to be considered. What happens if an incident occurs at the halfway mark or on either side of the dividing line? Who will deal with it? What procedures will be followed? If an emergency occurs, there will be chaos, and firemen and the general public will lose their lives.

There will be other dangers. The smoking rules will be flaunted in vehicles on the trains. Reference has been made to the danger caused by gas appliances in caravans. Legislation provides that people who travel on car ferries must leave their cars below deck and go up on deck, for safety reasons. Why cannot there be such a provision for this project? There is a distinct possibility of a large loss of life on a train in a fire. Narrow aisles will be blocked by persons trying to escape in a vehicle. Perhaps hon. Members have seen on television the panic that ensues among people in a fire, but it is something else to be there. The panic will be exacerbated by the claustrophobic atmosphere in the tunnel and by the darkness.

The Mersey tunnel was built 50 years ago and people are still afraid to go through it in case the walls will cave in and the Mersey will flood in and drown them. To expect train drivers and guards without training — the Bill makes no provision for training — to deal with emergencies is the height of Government irresponsibility. Chemicals transported through the tunnel could become involved in a catastrophe. Drivers on British roads have been conditioned by the Hazchem code, which was brought in by the Fire Brigades Union. Experts are needed.

The Government, through their lack of reference to safety standards or a lack of legal commitment, have shown scant regard for the public interest. The Bill's failure to state precisely who will cover the obligations of the 1947 and 1959 fire services legislation shows that insufficient thought has been given to fire fighting and rescue in the tunnel or its complex.

I could go on telling horror stories about prospects for the tunnel. The Fire Brigades Union and I ask the Government: what value do they put on human life? What provision will be made to ensure that firemen who will have to deal with incidents in the tunnel and the general public will be looked after properly and sensibly? We cannot leave this matter to market forces and to concessionaires. Expert attention is needed. The Government have a major responsibility to ensure that legislation covers the safety factors to which I have referred.

**Mr. Moate:** There is an immense responsibility on Government to ensure that safety standards are achieved. I have no doubt that the Government will accept that responsibility and that the highest possible standards will be written into the legislation. However, the fact remains that the Channel tunnel will be a remarkably potentially hazardous project. *[Interruption.]* Hon. Members are a little glib. We must recognise the potential danger. We would be irresponsible if all possible steps were not taken to counter it.

Immense cost will be incurred in terms of policing, anti-terrorist measures and fire precautions. Will my hon. Friend the Minister assure the House that the cost of those measures will be underwritten in some way by the operators of the tunnel and will not fall on the public purse?

I am sure that one can take anti-terrorist measures to ensure that bombs are not put into the tunnel. It will not only be a terrorist target but, more particularly, a target for bomb hoaxers. Will it not be relatively simple for any lunatic hoaxer, or whatever, almost daily to say that there is a bomb in the tunnel and thereby cause operations to be brought to a halt? What checks will be utilised to deal

*[Mr. Moate]*

with matters such as that? Will a thorough search be made every time a bomb threat or hoax call is made? There is a fundamental problem in that respect.

**Mr. Raynsford:** It is unfortunate that a debate on what is perhaps the most important of all the issues that we shall consider in relation to the Bill should be taken at around half past 12 o'clock. The issue deserves the most serious and thorough scrutiny and should have been considered at an earlier hour, if possible. This matter arouses a great deal of public concern. There is no question that the public, who look at decisions reached in the House, will seek evidence that we have taken seriously our obligation to ensure the safest possible standards applicable to transport through the Channel tunnel system. This matter is also in the interests of Eurotunnel. Quite simply, if the project is to succeed, the British public must be convinced that it will be safe. Far too many people say—many of them state this in letters to me — that in no circumstances would they take their vehicles and travel on the shuttle containers because they do not believe that the system is inherently safe.

If that view is widespread—I have every reason to believe that there is grave scepticism among the British public about the safety of the scheme at the moment—Eurotunnel's proposals will fail. Without public confidence, the chance of operating the scheme successfully, let alone of raising the finance at the stage of the third equity, rapidly will evaporate.

The reason safety is critical is that, inevitably, the tunnel configuration is vulnerable to many possibilities. It is vulnerable to a serious accident. It is vulnerable, as the hon. Member for Faversham (Mr. Moate) pointed out, to terrorist attack or, indeed, to a simulated terrorist attack, or a hoax attack, which could lead to an interruption of service and to a potential problem. The reason why such an attack would be so serious is that the tunnel will be a very long structure through which a large number of people and vehicles will be passing at any one point in time. If anything goes wrong, an enormous number of lives will be in danger.

Quantities of potentially inflammable material being transported through the tunnel add to the risk. Experts also rightly point to the wind forces that will be generated by the transit through the tunnel at high speed of shuttle, freight and passenger trains, which could create a flash fire that would pass at great speed through the tunnel. In the event of an explosion, the safety air locks between the travelling and the safety tunnels could be breached, thereby leading to smoke and poisonous fumes reaching the service tunnel which is the principal means of escape, if passengers have to evacuate the shuttle trains.

12.45 am

Because such serious risks could potentially affect a very large number of people who would be in close proximity to a large quantity of inflammable material and who would be affected by poisonous fumes if a fire were to break out, it is absolutely essential that every possible precaution should be taken to guard against such risks. Those who looked into this question, in the Select Committee, the Standing Committee and elsewhere, heard from highly responsible experts who suggested that risks are involved because of the configuration of the tunnel. The Minister referred to the Alpine tunnels, but they are several thousand feet above sea level and cannot be compared with a tunnel that will be under the sea. One of the safety experts dealt with this point. I refer to Dr. Eisner, the former director of the Health and Safety Executive's explosion and flame laboratory. *[Interruption.]* Dr. Eisner has a great deal more experience of these matters than most of the hon. Members who are braying on the Conservative Benches. He pointed to the specific issues that relate to an underwater tunnel and said:

> "Once started, a tunnel fire can spread very rapidly; most of the heat goes into raising the temperature of the air that passes through it, and downwind temperature of 1,00[illegible] are common. This is passed on to any flammable material in its path, and in this way a fire can 'jump' considerable tunnel lengths. Moreover, in the peculiar vertical configuration of the Tunnel, which runs about 100 metres below its entries, a fire would exert a powerful 'chimney' effect on the ventilation and could cause it to increase, reduce and even reverse."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee A*, 13 January 1987; c. 357.]

Other distinguished experts gave evidence, including Mr. Blackburn, the president of the Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association. He pointed to the very real risks that would be run if a fire were to break out in the tunnel.

For all these reasons, it is essential that we should be satisfied that every possible step has been taken to ensure that the tunnel is as safe as possible. Eurotunnel never ceases to assure us that its system is inherently safe. That is part of its propaganda about the tunnel, in the belief that if it repeats the phrase often enough we shall all come to believe that its system is inherently safe. The problem about that is that it begs the question whether the system can be made safer.

There is one way in which a number of experts have suggested that it could be made safer. That is the key issue of the segregation of passengers from vehicles. I am not alleging or claiming that I know for sure that that would be safer. However, along with many other hon. Members I have heard quite substantial evidence from experts who have good grounds for putting forward their view that it may be safer and that there may be considerable safety advantages in achieving the segregation of passengers from vehicles.

Let us consider some of those possible advantages. First, by taking passengers out of their vehicles, the risk of a fire being created by human error, by people smoking and their cigarettes falling into bedding and other flammable material in the car, is minimised. It would also remove the risk of people fiddling with electrical equipment in or adjoining their car or, as an extreme example, being foolish enough to try to brew up a cup of tea on the calor gas equipment in their car, Dormobile or caravan.

Secondly, segregation would certainly ensure that in the event of a fire breaking out people would not be in close proximity to inflammable material and to petrol tanks where they would be at an obvious risk. If passengers are segregated from vehicles and placed in an environment that has been carefully designed to achieve the optimum safety, in other words, passenger wagons constructed of non-flammable materials and with the maximum fire resistance, without being close to petrol tanks or to materials such as bed clothes and camping materials which might cause poisonous fumes if they were to ignite, it is arguable that the potential for safety will be increased.

Thirdly, by segregating passengers from vehicles, if it is necessary to separate the two quickly and to evacuate the passengers from the tunnel, that is easier to do if the passengers are not in the immediate vicinity of the vehicles where a fire may be taking place. Of course, another aspect of this is that if the two are together, there is less scope for deploying more effective measures to tackle the fire that has broken out. Clearly, one cannot use sprinklers or gas systems to put out a fire if there are people sitting in the cars who could be gassed or drowned by the use of those systems. If there are no people in the vicinity there is some potential advantage in terms of the automatic fire-fighting equipment that could be applied with great effect.

In all those cases, there appear to be grounds for believing that it would be safer to segregate passengers from vehicles. The experts who have given evidence have suggested that there may be considerable advantages in that. That gives rise to a critical question. *[Interruption.]* Conservative Members may scoff, but we are talking about the lives of thousands of our fellow citizens and that should not be treated lightly, even by hon. Members whose sole concern is to support the Government line, whatever the result of doing so may be.

The truth of the matter is that most sensible commentators considering this matter would ask: "Why is the possibility of segregating passengers from vehicles not being examined to see whether that would be safer?" Anybody coming to this country from Mars, or from abroad, without any prior knowledge of this would say, "Surely the sensible thing to do would be to evaluate the alternatives and see which would be the safest option". Early on, that seemed a sensible proposal to me. Indeed, I put it to Lord Pennock in a private meeting that I had with him before Christmas. Not surprisingly—I felt that he was acting reasonably—Lord Pennock said that he thought that that was a sensible proposal. He went on to make a broadcast on Radio Kent, in which he said:

> "under the concession, there is an independent Government Authority that has a responsibility for looking into safety, and deciding what measures we should take, and I am absolutely certain that that independent Government authority will consider . . . what are the pros and cons of the various methods of having passengers in cars or not, as the case may be, and that we will have a first-class authority of experts to go into that, and decide what they think is the best."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee A*, 13 January 1987; c. 375.]

Clearly, he thought that that was happening. Unfortunately, I have news for Lord Pennock and for Conservative Members. That is not happening because the present rules, under which the safety authority operates, will preclude the safety authority from looking at this question. Can that be sensible? Can it be sensible for the safety authority's terms of reference to be limited so that it cannot perform the sensible evaluation that Lord Pennock, the chairman of Eurotunnel, says that he expects it to do? Any reasonable person who comes to this issue with an open and unprejudiced mind would say that the right thing to do would be to see whether significant advantages can be achieved from the segregation of passengers from vehicles.

Why is that not happening? Why is the great Eurotunnel machine, despite the protestations of its chairman, who I suspect may not be its chairman for much longer, not prepared to take this commonsense path? The answer comes down to one simple and rather sordid consideration, and that is cash. Eurotunnel has the idea that it will cost it more to establish a system that involves segregating passengers and vehicles. It does not know how much more because tests have not been carried out. It is not possible to carry out a proper evaluation to determine the extra cost and balance that against the potential gains and advantages to be derived from enhanced safety. That would be a rational and logical approach but we are not allowed to take it.

Undoubtedly, Eurotunnel's fear and anxiety is related to its shaky financial position. It had difficulty in raising the second tranche of equity and it has fears about whether it will be able to raise sufficient equity for the third. Against that background it is trying to push the segregation issue under the carpet in the hope that it will go away. I have news for Eurotunnel; the issue will not disappear. The British public will not allow themselves to have a scheme foisted on them without being satisfied that every possible action has been taken to ensure that it will be safe. They will not travel through the tunnel if they do not believe that that approach has been adopted.

It is a gross dereliction of duty for Ministers to allow the national interest and the interests of the British travelling public and their safety to be subordinated to the purely financial interests of Eurotunnel. It is a further illustration of the failure of Ministers, who are so desperate to get the Bill on the statute book, to consider the national interest and the safety of passengers. It is a dreadful indictment of Ministers that it can be said that they are so desperate to pursue this private enterprise venture that they are not prepared to countenance the possibility of imposing even a modest additional cost on it to achieve greater safety.

**Mr. Rowe:** The hon. Gentleman will remember that this debate was pursued at great length in Committee, and that I pressed my hon. Friend the Minister of State to say whether the safety authority would consider the possibility that the hon. Gentleman has raised. My hon. Friend gave me a reasonable assurance, as I understood it, that the authority would undoubtedly be considering segregation.

**Mr. Raynsford:** The hon. Gentleman's recollection of the debate in Committee is rather different from mine. It was in Committee that we sought, moderately and reasonably, to achieve two objectives. The first objective was to require Eurotunnel to submit alternative proposals to the safety authority that would involve an evaluation of the segregation of passengers from vehicles in the shuttle containers. Secondly, we asked that the authority should assess the safest system and that its decision should be based primarily on safety. That was the nature of the amendments that were tabled in Committee. The hon. Gentleman spoke initially with some sympathy for them but voted against them in Divisions, as he did when we debated and voted on a number of other issues. The amendment that related directly to segregation was defeated by only one vote. That defeat was a tragedy and accordingly we have tabled an amendment that is even more modest than its predecessor. It will be interesting to learn whether, once again, the Government find it impossible to accept the proposition.

The amendment would not require Eurotunnel to advance alternative proposals. It merely makes it clear that the safety authority will have the opportunity to issue such directions as may be necessary for the purpose of enabling it to consider whether the interests of safety would be enhanced by ensuring that on shuttle trains vehicles and their occupants travel separately. The amendment is

*[Mr. Raynsford]*

designed to ensure that the authority will be in a position to probe if it wishes to do so and to require extra information to enable it to carry out a proper appraisal.

I shall be interested to hear the Government's response. The amendment is designed to make it possible for a proper evaluation to be undertaken and I hope sincerely that we shall not hear the feeble and rather lame excuse that the Minister of State offered in Committee, when he said that the scheme would be acceptably safe and that there was no need for any alternative to be considered. It is in Eurotunnel's financial interests to say that the scheme is acceptably safe, but a similar claim was made by the constructors of the Titanic. Many people regretted the arrogance of those who believed that their projects were acceptably safe and who were not prepared to admit that there was a possibility of something going wrong. I hope that it will not take a comparable fiasco affecting the Channel tunnel to make people realise that the short-sighted approach of cheese-paring on policy to allow the financial interests of the Eurotunnel consortium to overrule concerns for people's safety is wrong.

I am

The present position is unsatisfactory. Under current provisions, the safety authority will not be able to make a proper appraisal of the alternatives, including passenger vehicle segregation. The Opposition amendment will make it possible for the safety authority to determine that. This is a commonsense amendment which should be accepted by anyone who is concerned about the safety of passengers and the viability of the project.

**Mr. Gale:** This matter was discussed at great length in Standing Committee. Anyone who came close to the grim horrors of the Moorgate tube disaster will understand why there is so much concern. This matter will, I suspect, be discussed again at equal length in another place and I want to make only a brief point tonight.

One of the objections to the project from north-east Kent has been over the effect that the whole project might have on the economy. The reason for that, as my hon. Friend the Minister is aware, is that the economy is so dependent upon the Channel ports.

We firmly believe that the Channel ports can compete on equal terms with the Channel tunnel—but I stress "on equal terms". The cross-Channel ferries are covered by very stringent safety regulations, as my hon. Friend the Minister is aware. He said that my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) was trying to do a hatchet job on the finance. The advertisement in yesterday's newspapers suggested that we would be better off under the weather. I suggest that that advertisement was seeking to do a hatchet job on the Channel ferries. My hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South does not need me to remind him that the new Sally cross-Channel ferry is as safe and calm in January and February as it is at any other time of the year. Particular care has been taken with stabilisation and with lashing down vehicles on board. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Minister does not need me to tell him that passengers are separated from their cars.

I have only one question to ask my hon. Friend the Minister. Can he give us an assurance that, in order to allow the Channel tunnel to have a competitive advantage over the cross-Channel ferries, there will be no suggestion that the Channel tunnel operators will be allowed to cut corners on safety and that tunnel trains will be subject to the same very high and stringent safety standards as the cross-Channel ferries so that they compete on equal terms and the travelling public are as safe?

**Mr. Snape:** I want to say a few words about the contribution from the hon. Member for Thanet, North (Mr. Gale). It is difficult to compare safety operations in different modes of transport. It is nonsense to say that because people are necessarily segregated on a cross-Channel ferry for obvious reasons—for example, it might be necessary for people to take to lifeboats or to muster at a specific place on the deck of a ferry—it must necessarily be correct for them to be segregated on every other form of transport.

I hope that my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) will acknowledge that while I readily concede that he has valuable expertise in fire-fighting, I have some experience in railway safety. With no Eurotunnel axe to grind, I must say that there is nothing inherently unsafe about travelling by train through a tunnel. If there were, Britain's main lines would be much less used than they are. When my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen goes to Liverpool by train—as I hope he does fairly frequently—if he stays on the fast lines, the usual route through Roade junction means that he passes through Kilsby tunnel just south of Rugby, which is more than two miles long. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) also passes through that tunnel on occasion. However, that tunnel is considerably shorter than the distance involved in crossing under the Channel. I suggest to my hon. Friends the Members for Broadgreen and for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) that the principle is pretty much the same. A tunnel is a tunnel.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** What is the speed restriction?

**Mr. Snape:** The speed restriction through Kilsby tunnel, if it is the same as it was when I was a railway guard used to sign for the stretch of the line, is 100 miles per hour. I understand that that is the same speed restriction as that envisaged for trains passing through the Channel tunnel. Therefore, I do not see what relevance the speed restriction has.

Nobody is going to convince the hon. Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) about the safety or otherwise of the scheme. He is a convinced anti-tunneller and he regards it as perfectly legitimate—I make no complaint about it—to cast aspersions on the project, whether they are based on safety or other factors. He suggests that it is easy to blow up vehicles on a cross-Channel train. It is easy to blow the bottom off a cross-Channel ferry. Presumably all one would have to do is pack the car boot full of explosive and leave it on the ferry.

My right hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Mr. Silkin) is another convinced anti-tunneller. Nothing I say about railway safety will make any difference to him, because he is completely against the Channel tunnel project. I suggest to him, as I suggest to the hon. Member for Southend, East, that if a fanatic was determined to cause as much loss of life as possible, he would do a worse job or better job, as he might see it, by parking a car beneath the deck of a cross-Channel ferry and walking away. If he stayed on the ferry he might go down himself, but presumably that would not bother fanatics too much.

When people have tried to blow up trains, as they have in recent years on the French and Italian railway systems, the loss of life has been comparatively small. I agree that the explosions on the trains have not taken place within the confined space of a tunnel. An explosion in a tunnel might be much more serious. However, in two Committees, as well as during this debate, I have heard many scare stories about what might happen. I must say, redonning my National Union of Railwaymen hat, if I had realised that travelling through tunnels on trains was so dangerous, I would have demanded a pay rise years ago. I do not know why I did it so cheaply if it is so inherently dangerous.

My hon. Friend the Member for Broadgreen rightly reminds us that the Fire Brigades Union has warned about the danger of fires in tunnel. However, I read the last issue of "Firefighter" and I hope that he will concede that many of those views were expressed at a conference where a political decision was taken that the Fire Brigades Union was against the construction of a Channel tunnel. I make no complaint about that. Unlike some Conservative Members, I do not complain about trade unions taking political decisions. However, it was pointed out at the conference that going ahead with the project might lead to job losses among Britain's seamen. It was in the context of that resolution that the question of fire safety was discussed.

We said in Committee—we had a similar debate in Committee, and we seem to have been having similar debates ad infinitum—that the evidence about the likely carnage in any tunnel is lacking. Regrettably it is not unheard of over the years for people to die in train fires. Until about the time of the first world war, when most passenger trains were lit by gas lamps, in the event of a collision the gas pipe in the coaches often fractured and the coaches, in those days predominantly wooden bodied, caught fire and occasionally considerable loss of life occurred. However, that took place 70 or 80 years ago. Modern railway rolling stock—no one has yet suggested that the stock used on cross-Channel services will not be the most modern rolling stock—is known to be fairly fire-resistant and extremely strong.

We heard in Standing Committee that a few months ago at Colwich junction, on the west coast main line of British Rail, a virtual head-on collision took place between two passenger trains. The only loss of life in that collision, tragically and regrettably, was a member of the crew. Not one passenger was killed, despite the fact that those trains were travelling at over 100 miles per hour. The inherent strength of modern-day rolling stock is apparent. On no other mode of transport could such an accident occur with such low loss of life. The evidence is somewhat lacking. As recently as 1975 five people died in the Taunton sleeping car fire when someone left blankets next to a heater causing smoke, flames and fumes.

That accident led directly to the complete redesign and replacement of British Rail's sleeping car fleet. We are not inexperienced in correcting the faults that might lead to deaths. Railway history over the past 150 years has shown that a recommendation has been made by the railway inspectorate after every tragedy, which hopefully has helped to prevent similar tragedies.

**Mr. Raynsford:** My hon. Friend rightly focused on the considerable improvement in railway rolling stock over the years, which now is of greater strength and fire resistance than ever before. Will he agree that, while this is the case for railway rolling stock, it is not quite the same where that rolling stock is full of vehicles with petrol tanks and other flammable materials, and that that makes a case for evaluating the possibility of segregating passengers and vehicles as a means of enhancing safety?

**Mr. Snape:** Indeed; that is why my name and the name of my hon. Friend appear on amendment No. 8.

First, let me look at the whole question of the inflammability or otherwise of the average private car which would be taken on a cross-Channel train. If it is true that the average private car is an extremely inflammable object, why are there not more warnings? I gave up smoking about three years ago. I used to be a regular smoker while I was driving my car. I cannot think of an incident where a former regular smoker like me managed to set fire to his car while the car was in motion, yet the car was switched on, the electrical system was working, and petrol was being pumped around the engine.

I do not know of any case where that happened, yet we are told in this debate that there is some terrible danger in allowing passengers to sit in a car in which the engine is switched off, the electrical system is dead, and smoking is not allowed. There will be attendants, if not on every single coach, passing through the train the whole time to enforce the no-smoking regulations. In addition, there will be a fire-proof curtain at the end of each coach. I would have had great difficulty convincing railway management in my NUR days that they ought to pay danger money to train crews in those circumstances. I may lack the negotiating abilities of some of my hon. Friends but it does not seem to be a tenable proposition.

I appreciate the genuine fears that have been expressed, but most of them are exaggerated. Segregating passengers from their cars would have the effect of slowing down considerably the rate of boarding and leaving the trains. I do not suggest it is our job on this side of the House to worry about the profits of Eurotunnel. I would much rather see this project funded by public money and run as part of British Rail and SNCF, without the terminals and the shuttles, but we do not have that option before us. We should not overlook the fact that the segregation of passengers and vehicles, as demanded by some of the most vociferous opponents to the scheme on the ground of safety, would cripple the project financially. I do not suggest that that motivates anybody in this debate. I am not by nature a particularly suspicious person, but as a member of the Select Committee I saw and heard a prominent member of the management of Sealink giving evidence about the effect of segregation on those trains and alarm bells rang. That was because I thought that perhaps, just perhaps, this prominent member of Sealink's management was not quite the impartial witness I would have liked to hear giving evidence about passengers sitting in their cars and being conveyed by train.

1.15 am

There are just two bodies best qualified to discuss safety. One is the body which has been entrusted for over 150 years with the investigation of every railway accident that takes place in Britain. That is the railways inspectorate. It is now almost 30 years since I had the opportunity to see the inspectorate in action after a minor accident at Slade lane junction just outside Manchester when a driver misread a signal and one train ran into the back of another. No one saw the inspectorate in action at

*[Mr. Snape]*

that time—management, railwaymen, signalmen, drivers or anybody else—could have failed to be impressed by the thoroughness with which the investigation was carried out and by the promptness with which the inspectorate's recommendations to prevent a further accident were published and accepted as the right way forward by both management and unions.

The chief inspecting officer of railways was cross-examined by my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) and by others when he gave evidence to the Select Committee. He commented on segregation and said that the last time the project was under discussion, in the mid-1970s, the railways inspectorate was, provided other assurances could be received, quite relaxed about the prospect of rail passengers travelling with their cars.

The other and perhaps equally important body which will be responsible for safety is the intergovernmental commission and safety authority. It will contain the chief inspecting officer of railways about whom I have already spoken, and the chief fire officer of Kent and his French counterpart. The chief inspecting officer of railways gave the Select Committee his assurance that if any of the inspectorate's recommendations about safety were rejected by the Government, the safety commission or anybody else, the members of the inspectorate would resign en bloc. That is a fairly strong view for the chief inspecting officer of railways to express, and surely the most cynical among us would feel that an assurance like that given with the sincerity with which it was given is worth accepting.

I appreciate many of the fears expressed by hon. Members. My own experience in rail matters is somewhat dated because, as some hon. Members might say, I have been here too long. However, no one has come up with a single shred of evidence about dangers to passengers travelling with their vehicles. There is, of course, the good Dr. Eisner about whom my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham spoke. We found in Standing Committee that Dr. Eisner was not quite the impartial person that some of us wanted. He had applied for a job with Eurotunnel as an adviser on safety matters and was not accepted. I do not doubt his expertise.

**Mr. Gale:** I hope that the hon. Gentleman will accept that even those of us who have opposed this project would prefer, if it goes ahead, to see it succeed. If it is to succeed it must do so with safety. My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Transport is in his place. A fortnight ago he visited the scene of a multiple accident on the M2, where three lorries and four cars collided and burned out, leaving one man incinerated. I hope that the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape) will accept that petrol surrounded by people is extremely dangerous, and that on impact petrol ignites. There is a genuine fear that if that were to happen in the tunnel the carnage might be appalling.

**Mr. Snape:** I accept that there is a genuine fear, and I accept that if it were to happen in the tunnel the carnage would be appalling. I have to repeat to the hon. Gentleman that motorways are dangerous where individual drivers are supposedly responsible for individual vehicles. The cross-Channel link will have the best railway safety devices that are known in any country. The possibility of one train colliding with another—bearing in mind that we have two separate rail tunnels and a separate service tunnel—is so small as to be almost discountable. There are no recorded instances that I am aware of in recent years, given a proper modern signalling system, of such collisions occurring. While I readily concede the dangers that the hon. Gentleman rightly draws to our attention, I have to say that the chances of them happening are minimal. Nevertheless, we on the Opposition Benches feel that nothing should prevent the evaluation of the two modes—that is, passengers travelling with their vehicles and passengers being separated from their vehicles. We want to give the intergovernmental commission and safety authority the right, if that commission so decides, to look at the alternative recommended under amendment No. 7. We want the commission to make that decision. We feel that its members and not Members of the House, are the right people to make that decision.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** Early in the debate my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) raised the question of the terrorist threat. We are seven years from the opening of the tunnel. One would make an assessment of the threat at that time. It is impossible currently to foretell what the threat may be. It might be less serious than it is now or it might be more serious.

Subsection (3)(a) of clause 16 confers a wide range of powers on persons authorised by the intergovernmental commission and safety authority to carry out

"any inspection, examination or investigation with respect to any matter concerning the construction or operation"

of the tunnel system. My hon. Friend will agree that that is sufficient power to deal with that point.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** Does that give them the power to require the operation of procedures for the inspection of vehicles in the tunnel?

**Mr. Mitchell:** If I say it more slowly, my hon. Friend may have the opportunity of ascertaining that it covers the point that he wants:

"any inspection, examination or investigation".

I think that that is pretty conclusive.

The hon. Member for Liverpool, Broadgreen (Mr. Fields) asked who will be responsible. The safety authority will be responsible. On that safety authority will serve the chief fire officer of the Kent county fire brigade.

The hon. Gentleman asked what will happen about people who ignore rules on smoking in cars. There will be attendants to check. That would be a breach of the byelaws, and there will be heavy penalties.

The hon. Gentleman asked about people in caravans who light primuses to brew tea. The hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) also raised this point. People will not be allowed to travel in caravans. They will have to travel in their car.

**Mr. Raynsford:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Mitchell:** It is very late. This has all been said a dozen times in Committee.

The question of claustrophobia was raised, as it was raised when the London Underground was built. People travel in the Underground without suffering from claustrophobia, but if they suffer from claustrophobia they can travel by ferry if they wish.

I reject the suggestion that fire prevention will not be given proper attention. The Fire Brigades Union is continually asking questions, but it does not seem to listen to the answers which have been repeatedly given.

My hon. Friend the Member for Faversham (Mr. Moate) asked about fire fighting. There are two stages in fire fighting. The first is that Eurotunnel will have fire-fighting equipment and staff trained in its use on the trains. If there should be a more serious incident which requires the attendance of the county fire brigade, it will be called for in the normal way. Since the contribution from the rates made on the tunnel operation will contribute to the Kent county council's finances, that will be the usual way in which the Kent county council's fire brigade's costs will be recovered.

**Mr. Dave Nellist** (Coventry, South-East): The Minister is no doubt aware that the Home Office sets standards for emergency vehicles covering both ambulances and fire engines. For example, under the 1974 analysis the ambulance service is required to respond to 50 per cent. of all incidents within seven minutes and 90 per cent. of all incidents within 14 minutes. In the fire service there are gradings of five, eight or 10 minutes, depending on the degree of risk. Will the Minister give an assurance that, particularly in the light of his latter remarks about whether further vehicles and assistance would be called to a serious incident, those minimum standards set down for the Home Office operation on the mainland will apply during the construction and operation of the tunnel and will not be breached?

**Mr. Mitchell:** The hon. Gentleman will well know that those standards do not apply to a train moving through the countryside. He is stretching his illustration too far. I shall write to him on the details of his point.

**Mr. Moate:** I understood my hon. Friend to say that basically the county council will have to have standby fire-fighting facilities and additional police and security arrangements. I think that he said that the cost of those would have to be met from the ratepayers' funds. Does not that contradict the general undertaking that the project will not be a burden on public funds?

**Mr. Mitchell:** My hon. Friend is forgetting the substantial rate income which will come from the operation. Indeed, the addition to the revenue of Kent and the district council which will come from the rateable value of the project is something that my hon. Friend will find comforting when he looks at the figures involved.

The hon. Member for Fulham raised yet again the risk of fire in a tunnel, although the Swiss experience shows that that is not a genuine risk. He raised the question of wind forcing a fire to extend beyond the vehicle in which it started, but there will be fire doors or fire curtains between one vehicle and another, so that that problem does not arise. He then raised the possibility of the service tunnel doors being blown in. Since the service tunnel will be pressurised, the air will go into the main tunnels, not the smoke from the main tunnels into the service tunnel.

Let me deal with the important point of segregation. I think that I shall carry even the hon. Gentleman with me if I say that the safest way to ensure that any fire which breaks out in any vehicle being carried on a tunnel train is spotted will be if attendants watch each vehicle. A driver sitting in the vehicle will be the best possible attendant watching that vehicle. He will respond immediately if anything happens that is likely to damage it. The idea that because segregation is carried out in vessels at sea it can be transported to the Channel tunnel arena is simply to use a wooden horse to advance an argument which will damage the economics of the Channel tunnel on the pretext that it is a safety improvement. It is nothing of the sort.

1.30 am

**Mr. Raynsford:** Does the Minister accept that, rather than continuing to push ideas or views from one side of the Chamber to the other, it may be right to allow what is suggested in the amendment—that is to leave the safety authority with the freedom to choose to look at the alternative if it thinks it has advantages and let it reach a decision on that?

**Mr. Mitchell:** There seems to be a misunderstanding about the extent of the powers of the intergovernmental commission and the safety authority. There is nothing in any of the international arrangements or in this Bill which prevents them from considering any matter relevant to safety in the tunnel. Therefore, if they need to look at the implications of segregating occupants from their vehicles they already have all the necessary powers to do so. On that ground, I ask the House to reject the amendments.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor:** In the hope that we have created the good will necessary to persuade the Minister to consider the arguments advanced tonight and to reflect on them, I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

*Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.*

## Clause 18

### OPERATION BY THE CONCESSIONAIRES

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I beg to move amendment No. 9, in page 16, leave out lines 2 to 6 and insert—

> '(3) The Concessionaires shall make provision for the conveyance by means of shuttle trains of pedal bicycles and of motorcycles of which the cylinder capacity of the engine is less than 50 cubic centimetres.'.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** With this we may discuss amendment No. 14, in clause 23, page 19, line 12, at end insert—

> '(2) Any such approval under this section shall only be given where the rolling stock can adequately convey the appropriate classes of traffic, including in the case of shuttle trains and through international passenger trains, pedal cycles.'.

**Mr. Mitchell:** The effect of the Government's amendments is to replace the amendment moved successfully during the Committee stage by the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) with a provision which fully meets his objective while eliminating serious drafting defects. The hon. Gentleman was concerned to ensure that the concessionaires are required to carry pedal cycles although they are not among the categories of vehicle that the concession agreement requires the shuttle trains to accept.

The hon. Member for Fulham said:

> "The amendment is prompted primarily by members of the cycling fraternity".

He went on to say:

> "The amendment merely adds pedal cycles. That is the only change."—[*Official Report, Standing Committee A*, 13 January 1987; c. 422.]

Although the hon. Gentleman meant to provide only for pedal cycles, his amendment would have had other consequences which are not acceptable.

**Sir George Young** (Ealing, Acton): I very much welcome Government amendment No. 9. My hon. Friend has gracefully accepted his defeat in Standing Committee at the hands of the cyclists and has introduced a Government amendment drafting out the impurities which existed in the original amendment moved by the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford). I have one question to ask the Minister about his amendment. Why he has chosen the wording:

"shall make provision for the conveyance"

rather than simply using the word "convey"? Is it because there are subtle distinctions between "making provision for the conveyance" and "conveyance" and, if so, what are they? Will the Minister confirm that there will be a legal obligation on Eurotunnel to provide a service for those who present themselves with their bicycles?

I shall briefly speak to amendment No. 14 and say that the appetite of the cyclists has now been whetted by the provision being made on the Eurotunnel shuttle service. But, of course, that is just one part of the problem. The position at the moment is that the cyclist will have to cycle to Cheriton to get his bicycle on the train. For those of us in middle age who live in Acton that is a very long way to go indeed. What the cyclist wants is the ability to put his bicycle, not just on the Eurotunnel shuttle, but on the ordinary British Rail trains that will run from Waterloo and other terminals. That is the impact of amendment No. 14. If I may say so to my hon. Friend, what happened in Standing Committee has undermined somewhat any argument that he might put forward to resist this amendment, because those of us who served on the Standing Committee will remember that he resisted the modest amendment to make provision for bicycles in the Eurotunnel with a whole string of arguments, for example, that cyclists would fall from some high platforms, that they would fall under the wheels of motor cars, and all the rest. The Minister lost the Division and then, blow me down, within a few days the Government had tabled an amendment of their own which had exactly the same impact as the amendment he had resisted.

My amendment is much more straightforward. We want the cyclists to be able to take a pedal cycle on to a train at any British Rail station, so that the whole problem about high platforms and intermingling with cars driving at speed into the Eurotunnel simply do not arise. British Rail's record of negotiation with cyclists is not a good one. We do not believe that it has any intention of making any provision for the bicycle, and the 15 million cyclists in Britain simply will not be able to get to the continent with their bicycle unless they cycle all the way to Cheriton.

**Mr. Wolfson:** Does my hon. Friend agree with me that, as well as there being 15 million cyclists in Britain, there are probably even more in France, where cycling is a most acceptable form of recreation? If British Rail wants a two-way traffic to the maximum extent it should be much readier to accept cyclists than it is at present.

**Sir George Young:** I agree with my hon. Friend, whose moving speech in Committee about cycling for softies is one that we shall all remember. There is a real market available—amounting to some £10 million—to British Rail if only it would abandon its hostile attitude to the cycle and instead embrace it.

Is it really the case that the rolling stock being designed by British Rail makes no provision for the bicycle, and that there is a real prospect of the project going ahead without one being able to put a bicycle on a train? If that is so, it is indefensible. I hope that the Minister will reassure us that the very modest demands of the cycling community will be met.

**Mr. Anthony Steen** (South Hams): When my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) approached me to share this amendment with him, had I known that it would be discussed at 1.35 am the following morning, I would not in any way have changed my mind about supporting it.

The amendment is extremely modest — indeed, so modest that I am almost embarrassed about putting it forward. All that we are asking British Rail to do is something that, for the past 10 years, it has said it wished to do—namely, to help the cyclist. The first thing that it did after saying that it wished to help the cyclist was to build rolling stock that excluded any possibility of a cycle being carried. After a great deal of campaigning by my hon. Friend and others, British Rail was persuaded to allow bicycles on its trains. It is well known in the House that, as a result of the pressure put on British Rail by myself and other hon. Members in the all-party friends of cycling group, it increased its revenue by more than £1 million a year.

All that we are suggesting tonight is that the Minister helps British Rail to create more profit, more revenue and more business. We are not suggesting that trainloads of bicycles should go under the Channel. We are suggesting only that instead of expecting octogenarians to cycle from Charing Cross to Cheriton, and arrive in a very poor condition before crossing to France, we should facilitate the increasing number of people who enjoy cycling for leisure. They should be encouraged to get on a British Rail train, which should provide a small space for a small bicycle in the guard's van or in the coach.

I should be happy if the Minister said that he would like to encourage British Rail to put in collapsible bicycles and reduce the space by saying that bicycles should be small, not large, wheeled. We would be quite agreeable to the Minister taking away the amendment and coming back with a slightly improved one. The Minister likes to take away amendments and then reintroduce them in virtually identical terms, but in his way. We would be happy for him to do that with this amendment.

It would be scandalous if the French built their trains with space for the bicycle, so that they can come here and be stranded at Cheriton, while the English have to cycle to Cheriton before they can cross the Channel. There will be an imbalance of bicycles between Britain and France.

Having spent many hours with the Minister on the Select Committee considering the question of buses, I know that he is reasonable and will want to do his very best for cyclists. However, he will probably say that it is not for the Government to interfere with British Rail's running practices. But the Minister is always interfering with British Rail's running practices." If he is not, he should be. With a little simple drafting, the Minister could please the whole House, many of whose Members are latent cyclists and many of whom do not confess to cycling because they think it slightly eccentric and strange to want to get on a bicycle. In Britain it is regarded as somewhat strange that people should want to jump on bicycles, but, as we know, when the House adjourns tonight many hon. Members will jump on bicycles and make their way home.

I hope that in a spirit of good will the Minister will make a gesture that would please hon. Members in all parts of the House. Let a little space be made available on BR trains so that octogenarians and others—people will be retiring much earlier—can get on their bikes and go to France.

The French always manage to gain an advantage from situations. At present BR rolling stock is carrying exclusively French mineral water. If we could have—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. I cannot see the relevance of mineral water to this series of amendments.

**Mr. Steen:** I had intended to suggest that it would be on the bicycles, but in view of your ruling, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will not pursue the point. I think I have said enough to convince the Minister of the rightness of our case.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I am asked to explain the significance of the words "making provision for". The only point I need make is that the phrase includes the opportunity for a van service to be provided for cycles. Reference was made to international trains being compelled to carry cycles. The international trains represent a fully commercial joint French-English operation. Unlike the trains on the rest of the BR network —where the PSO is a relevant factor; there is no PSO operating here — there is a clear commitment by Government that no Government finance will be going into the venture, and it is therefore placed in a different category.

I appreciate the anxiety that my hon. Friends have voiced about octogenarians cycling from Charing Cross to Cheriton, and I am as anxious as they are to ensure that that does not happen. The position is simple. Cyclists can get to France either by catching a train and using one of the ferries or by catching a train to Folkestone and cycling about half a mile to the Cheriton depot where they will use the facilities that will be provided by Eurotunnel for the conveyance of cycles through the tunnel.

I hope that, on the basis of that reasonable arrangement, my hon. Friends will allow the matter to rest.

**Sir George Young:** I listened with interest to the Minister's reply. Cyclists seek no subsidy. We are happy to pay should there be a problem over whether the service pays for itself. The ferries carry bicycles free of charge and I do not see why BR should make such heavy weather over a modest request for a van for bicycles.

Unless my hon. Friend is prepared to use his influence with BR to take another look at this whole issue, I shall have to ask hon. Members, many of whom sympathise with the case we have made, to divide the House.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I should make it clear that the debate is taking place on Government amendment No. 9. If the hon. Gentleman is asking for a separate division on amendment No. 14, I am prepared to grant that, and we will deal with it at the appropriate place on the Order Paper.

*Amendment agreed to.*

### Clause 20

### CONFIRMATION, VARIATION AND REVOCATION OF BYELAWS BY SECRETARY OF STATE

*Amendments made:* No. 11, in page 17, line 32, leave out 'in such manner as may be approved by the Secretary of State.

No. 12, in page 17, line 35, at end insert—

'*(a)* in such newspapers circulating in the City of Canterbury, the borough of Ashford and the districts of Dover, Shepway and Thanet, in the county of Kent; and

*(b)* in such other manner;

as may be approved by the Secretary of State.'

No. 13, in page 18, line 3, at end insert—

'(5A) The Secretary of State shall not confirm any byelaw submitted to him for confirmation unless he has consulted the Kent County Council and the council of any district in which it appears to him that the byelaw would have effect.'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) wish to move amendment No. 14 formally?

**Sir George Young:** When I spoke a few moments ago, I was trying to give the Minister the opportunity, if he so wished, to say whether he was prepared to pursue the matter. I resumed my seat because I hoped that the Minister would rise again and say whether he could meet, in some way, the request that I made for a further initiative from British Rail.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** We are really past that point now, but, if the Minister is very anxious, I am prepared, exceptionally, to jog back as it were.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** It was my intention to rise when my hon. Friend sat down but simply to say that I cannot give him a positive assurance that British Rail will install such arrangements in its trains and Anglo-French trains, because I do not know the costs involved, or the commercial consequences. I am prepared to help my hon. Friend and to undertake to raise the matter with British Rail.

### Clause 46

### INTERPRETATION

*Amendment made:* No 17, in page 32, line 8, at end insert—

' "nature conservation" means the conservation of flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features;'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

### Schedule 1

### THE SCHEDULED WORKS

*Amendment made:* No 18, in page 39, leave out lines 9 to 11—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

### Schedule 2

### SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS AS TO THE SCHEDULED WORKS AND OTHER AUTHORISED WORKS

*Amendment made:* No 20, in page 46, line 32, at end insert

*'Works Nos. 25A and 25B: Nature Consultations*

10A. The Railways Board shall not begin to construct Work No. 25A or Work No. 25B until they have consulted—

*[Mr. David Mitchell]*

(*a*) the councils of the London borough of Ealing, the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham and the Royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea; and

(*b*) the London Wildlife Trust;

as to the likely effect of the construction of the works on nature conservation.'—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

### Schedule 3

PLANNING PERMISSION

*Amendment made:* No 21, in page 64, leave out lines 22 and 23.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

### Schedule 5

SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS AS TO ACQUISITION OF LAND

*Amendments made:* No. 24, in page 77, line 50 leave out '21 days after' and insert

'the period of two months beginning with'.

No. 25, in page 78, line 6 leave out '21 days after' and insert

'the period of two months beginning with'.—*[Mr. David Mitchell.]*

### Schedule 7

PROTECTIVE PROVISIONS

**Mr. Peter Rees:** I beg to move amendment No. 31, in page 92, line 40, after 'operations,' insert

'which for the purposes of this schedule shall include the disposal of any spoil from any such works or operations'.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** With this it will be convenient to take the following amendments: No. 30, in page 93, line 2, at end insert—

'(3A) The construction of the specified works shall when they are respectively commissioned be carried out with all reasonable dispatch in accordance with the plans, specifications and programmes approved by and to the reasonable satisfaction of the Harbour Board.'.

No. 29, in page 93, line 17, at end insert—

'6. Nothing in this Schedule shall deprive the Harbour Board of any remedy available to the Harbour Board for damage or loss whatever sustained whether at common law or otherwise.'.

**Mr. Rees:** I hope not to detain the House for long on these three last amendments to this important Bill. I am covering ground that was well tilled, once again, by my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken) on the last day of the Committee.

The House will be aware that it was thought proper by the draftsmen of the Bill—I commend that decision—to include part IV of schedule 7 for the protection of the Dover harbour board. I hasten to add that Dover harbour board is not the only body that has a special provision in the Bill designed for its protection.

Because of the lateness of the hour, I do not wish to stress the importance of the Dover harbour board, first to the economy of the country and secondly, to my constituency. The Government thought that, during the initial operation of the tunnel—if indeed it achieves the approval of both Houses of Parliament — the Dover harbour board should have special protection.

On closer inspection, the Committee decided that those measures should be strengthened in the harbour boards favour. My hon. Friend the Minister had much to say about that during the Committee sitting on Thursday 22 January and his splendid lapidary words can be found in columns 760-761 of *Hansard*. I am sure that I do not need to read them out because the Minister will have those words in his mind, as will every hon. Member who has read *Hansard*.

The Committee decided to hold its hand, on the understanding that further matters should be brought forward. Eurotunnel — in a moment of candour — and the Government agreed that the Bill should be strengthened in the harbour board's favour. It was, however, decided that the matter should be left to Eurotunnel and the harbour board to consider if those matters could be thrashed out, if not agreed.

I commend the Minister's sanguine outlook after 22 days of what, judging by some of the contributions tonight, especially those of the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford), must have been rather taxing debate. In one of his moments of optimism, he said that he understood that

"negotiations between Eurotunnel and the harbour board are still in progress, but a good measure of agreement appears to have been reached so far." — [*Official Report, Standing Committee A*, 22 January 1987; c. 761].

My information is not as roseate as his. The matter was raised before the Select Committee and we are therefore entitled to expect something concrete to have been hammered out. I assume that, if the Bill receives the approval of the House tonight, it will move with some rapidity to another place. This may not leave all that long a time for a measure of agreement to be achieved between Eurotunnel and the harbour board.

I do not expect my hon. Friend the Minister totally to accept the three amendments. I would not, therefore, be disposed to press them to a conclusion tonight, provided my hon. Friend assures me that, if no proper agreement is embodied which the Select Committee in another place could consider reasonably, the Minister responsible for the Bill in the other place will be prepared to table at an appropriate stage a suitably strengthened series of provisions to protect the interests of the Dover harbour board. I hope that on that basis we shall be able to conclude our consideration of the Bill.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** Negotiations between Eurotunnel and the harbour board are still in progress. I understand that the parties have moved considerably closer together. There is no reason to believe that the negotiations will not reach a successful conclusion before the Select Committee in another place completes its proceedings. It is entirely normal for protective provisions in private Bills to be settled quite late in the Bill's passage during proceedings in the second House.

I have listened carefully to the points raised by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Rees) in support of the harbour board's position and, no doubt, Eurotunnel will have noted them also. However, I am sure that my right hon. and learned Friend will accept that it would be wrong for the House to anticipate the outcome of the negotiations between the parties by approving piecemeal amendments at this stage. I trust that my right hon. and learned Friend will therefore agree to withdraw his amendment.

**Mr. Rees:** I made the position clear. I know that my hon. Friend must be tired. There was a long, taxing and probably irritating Committee stage, but he is giving precisely the same answer that he gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken). I feel that, in the interests of progress, my hon. Friend might make a slight concession. I have not pressed my hon. Friend on Report. He knows my position on the Bill. I feel that he can do just a fraction more. If no satisfactory agreement is available to be considered by the Select Committee in the other place and my hon. Friend says that he will consult the Minister in charge of the Bill in the other place to ascertain what can be done, I am sure that common ground will be found between us.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I think that I can assist my right hon. and learned Friend to find the common ground that he seeks and give the assurance that he requests.

**Mr. Peter Rees:** I beg to ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

*Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.*

*Order for Third Reading read.*

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That the Bill be now read the Third time.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

1.52 am

**Mr. Robert Hughes:** I pay tribute to those hon. Members who were on the Select Committee and on the Standing Committee. The duties have been especially onerous on my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), who carried a heavy burden in leading for the Opposition with, I am sure hon. Members agree, his normal charm, humour and tact, and on my hon. Friends the Members for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) and for Worsley (Mr. Lewis), who served on the two Committees and who, since last June, have spent almost every waking moment dealing with the Channel tunnel.

I have been, and remain, critical of the Government's approach in using the hybrid Bill procedure — for example, the inclusion of the A20 proposals is purely a sharp practice, because they have nothing to do with the Channel tunnel. We should not slip into putting measures into hybrid Bills simply for the Government's convenience to save them embarrassment.

Therefore, I make it clear that if the treaty is not ratified before a general election intervenes, an incoming Labour Government will hold a public inquiry into the tunnel. Secondly, I make it clear beyond doubt—to this extent I agree with the Government—that should Eurotunnel go bankrupt either during the construction of the tunnel, although bankruptcy is unlikely at that stage, or when it is in operation, an incoming Labour Government will not bail out the investors. The project stands or falls as a private capital venture.

It would be foolish to pretend that the Channel tunnel project does not raise great passions for and against. I do not doubt the sincerity of those who regard this as a matter of great principle. From the outset, my approach has been primarily to examine the transport implications. I frankly concede that the tunnel is not a matter of great principle for me. I strongly believe that potential benefits may become available to British Rail and to those who work for it. As my hon. Friend the Member for West Bromwich, East pointed out, only 2 per cent. of British Rail's freight is international, whereas 27 per cent. of SNCF's freight is international. That is a simple matter of geography. But the tunnel provides an opportunity for British Rail to claim a larger share of international freight traffic in a competitive market. I wish that I could be sure that BR is looking far enough ahead.

It is inexplicable that BR should close down eight primarily east-coast freight liner depots when it should aggressively tout for business. It seems to be wholly inconsistent with the need to increase freight traffic.

Although I welcome the Government's acceptance of the principle of new clause 3 regarding dispersal, I regret that they did not accept the amendment about safety and the separation of people and vehicles. Apart from the safety angle, Eurotunnel has got the market strategy wrong. A system more akin to Motorail would be more attractive. Vehicles could be driven on to separate cars to be taken across the Channel and people could travel in what may be called a club car or in an open-plan vehicle, in which they may journey, if not in luxurious conditions at least in comfort. Eurotunnel tells me that that would not be commercially viable. Commercial viability must not compromise safety. I hope that this point will be addressed more seriously than it hitherto has been.

The Minister's earlier remarks about the safety clause are at odds with the evidence given to the Select Committee by the chief inspecting officer of railways, Major Rose. He said that the safety commission that he represented was concerned only with propositions that were put to it and was not inclined to examine other matters. I hope that that matter will be taken care of.

Apart from the issue of principle, many people believe that only the French will benefit economically from the tunnel. That belief arises from the planning that is going on on the other side of the Channel. I confirm that such planning [illegible] going ahead. A couple of weeks ago, I paid a visit to the city of Lille and had discussions with its Socialist mayor, M. Pierre Mauroy, and selected members of the region of Nord Pas du Calais. They are planning ahead. After that visit, I do not draw a wholly negative and defeatist conclusion from their planning. We have the ingenuity and the capacity to match anything that the French can do.

I am not satisfied that the Government are capable of harnessing the resources to meet the challenge, but an incoming Labour Government can provide the enthusiasm to maximise the benefit to the country. We need to do this if for no other reason than that we cannot lightly disregard the job potential in the construction phase. Nor can we disregard our duty to the deprived regions of the nation that deserve our protection and support. Therefore, despite my reservations about the Government's handling of this affair, and despite the doubts that still exist about the possibility that capital will not be raised, I do not recommend voting against the Third Reading. I trust that their Lordships will make further improvements to the Bill, which in my view is still deficient in many respects.

1.59 am

**Mr. Aitken:** As the proceedings on the Bill draw towards their close, I feel enormously cheerful. It has become more and more obvious during our debates that the chances of this mistaken project ever being built are diminishing almost daily. It is a strange paradox that what began as a great economic project is not proving to be economically viable. That is why the punters will not put their money into it.

*[Mr. Aitken]*

This is a political project. The treaty puts transport and communications way down the list. The object of the project is to strengthen and develop political links with Europe. Nevertheless, the politicians, hard though they have tried, have conspicuously failed to achieve that objective. It may be churlish to say that at Third Reading, but during the last few months the project has steadily lost ground. It has no real support in the country, and in Kent hostility to it is growing.

Furthermore, there seems to be little warmth for the project among hon. Members. One only had to listen to the exchanges between my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Dover (Mr. Rees) and my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) to understand that this project is largely friendless, despite the brave support of my hon. Friend the Member for Canterbury (Mr. Crouch).

The pivotal factor in killing off the project is its lack of financial backing from the city. The Government are the prisoner of their own ideology. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister had a long and honourable record of hostility towards the tunnel, but she changed her mind after discussions with President Mitterrand just over two years ago. The project might have been viable if it had had real political will behind it and Government funds to accompany it. However, I should still have been against the project. It would have done tremendous damage to our maritime industry, to other Channel ports and to employment.

Looking back, we should ask why Parliament has worked so hard and so long to deliver this project. The politicians have tried but basically have faied, whereas Eurotunnel has completely failed. Although this project is not yet a dead duck, it is a dying duck.

2.3 am

**Mr. Stephen Ross** (Isle of Wight): I congratulate the Minister on his diligence and devotion to duty in guiding this legislation through the House and on the trouble he has taken to present the case to the people in Kent. Nobody could have done more than he.

I do not take the gloomy view of the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken). I want the Bill to succeed. I hope that it will be not long delayed in the other place and that it will be on the statute book before the Prime Minister calls the next general election. I want Britain to succeed and to pay its way in the world, and the tunnel can play a constructive part in that endeavour. Exports to the European Community must travel there as cheaply and as quickly as possible. The tunnel could play a vital role.

Also I want our hard-pressed but nevertheless extremely important railway network to be given a heaven-sent opportunity to expand and extend its services. If common sense is to prevail and if our roads and airports are not to become more jammed than they already are, we must make much more use of our railway system. We should have built the tunnel 20 years ago, but it is not yet too late.

I ask the Minister to consider the introduction of concessions for cyclists, even though no satisfactory answer has been given by him on this point. If I could squeeze a concession out of Sealink to carry bicycles to the Isle of Wight, surely British Rail ought to be able to carry them free from Rugby, Birmingham and elsewhere through the tunnel. The authority of the EEC will not apply to the tunnel. Perhaps the Minister will look again at that point.

I should like to congratulate the hon. Member for West Bromwich, East (Mr. Snape), who has stood up for his belief in the tunnel. I was quite interested to see the cross-voting that took place in Committee. In 13 years in the House, I had not experienced that before. The hon. Member for West Bromwich, East served for a long time on the Select Committee, as did other hon. Members, and they have lived with this issue for a long time. How on earth can they go through another public inquiry? God help us, is all I can say. I do not want to be around if that is going to happen.

Of course I should like to see those who will be adversely affected, principally in Kent, given proper compensation. On the whole, the evidence to date confirms that that is already happening.

I fully understand the actions of those hon. Members who represent the constituents who will be hurt the most, and incidentally of the prospective candidates for those seats, some of whom have called me many names under the sun. However, I have stuck to my guns. It is a long tradition of this House that in such instances hon. Members should put the fears of their constituents first. I should have done the same for the Isle of Wight.

Nevertheless, my party has long supported the building of the fixed link, although we always saw it as a public sector project. The fact that we saw it as a rail-only tunnel, built by the public sector, does not mean that we should change our attitude now. As I have said before, I should like to see the tunnel built in my lifetime so that I can enjoy travelling to the continent in comfort, from Waterloo to Paris, and I long to do so.

2.7 am

**Mr. Rowe:** I should like to make just two points. First, despite the malediction from my hon. Friend the Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), I should like to say that many people in Kent are looking forward to the Channel tunnel as a real opportunity to increase their prosperity and job opportunities. Although some of my constituents are nervous, most will welcome the completion of the Channel tunnel

Secondly, I should like to advise the Minister that nobody in Kent will welcome the Channel tunnel if the various roadworks, junctions and road widenings that have been promised are not completed before the Channel starts to operate. That is a matter of the utmost importance everywhere in Kent, and I feel that it is important that I say so tonight.

2.8 am

**Mr. Raynsford:** This important project has been handled in a way that, quite honestly, suggests a tragic failure by the promoters and the Government to afford it the procedures and seriousness that such a project should receive. I do not wish to dwell on the failures of Eurotunnel, because we have heard enough about them tonight and on previous occasions. I am afraid that the company's blundering and ineptitude may be its downfall.

However, I wish to say a few words about the Government's failure to ensure that the people affected are properly consulted; a failure which will undoubtedly cost the Government dear in the county of Kent and elsewhere in the general election. Many people feel that they have not been given a fair opportunity to express their undoubted hostility to the scheme, and their concern about the impact of the scheme on their homes and environment. The Government have also failed to allow a proper public inquiry.

I should also like to comment on the rush that has been characteristic of the Bill's passage through Select Committee, Standing Committee and tonight on Third Reading, without a proper opportunity for hon. Members to debate issues such as safety, which is crucial. Also, misleading statements of Ministers have implied that the safety authority is free to consider alternative options when we heard the evidence, on oath, of Major Rose in the Select Committee:

> "I do not see at the moment that it is the function of the safety authority, which I represent to do other than examine the proposition that has been put to us."

I should have appreciated it if the Minister had given some clarification as to how that could be reconciled with his assurances that the safety authority can look at other alternatives.

Frankly, many of us are left with the suspicion that the Ministers and the Conservative Members who support them have been more concerned with promoting the financial interests of Eurotunnel that with looking after the national interests, the safety of the people who will travel through the tunnel and the environment of the areas affected by it.

It is a sad and sorry story and I only hope that the other House will give the Bill closer, more detailed and more serious scrutiny than this House has done.

2.10 am

**Mr. Gale:** The Bill will leave the House with a number of questions from north-east Kent unanswered. These questions include compensation for farmers, the construction camp and the impact study. We await eagerly the report that will follow the study.

I hope and believe that those who represent north-east Kent have represented their constituents' views correctly. I hope and believe also that we have reflected those views in the House. I am sure that my constituents would wish me to express their thanks to my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the manner in which he has addressed their problems and for the action that he has taken on their behalf.

In the expectation that the impact study will deliver the rest of what is needed to meet the needs of north-east Kent, I shall support my hon. Friend the Minister and the Bill's Third Reading.

2.11 am

**Mr. Robert C. Brown** (Newcastle upon Tyne, North): I oppose the Third Reading of this pernicious Bill. I believe that it will spell the economic destruction and ruination of the north-east of England. Ministers have told us in Newcastle of the glorious opportunities that the Channel tunnel will provide for the north-east. We have been told about direct access into the heart of Europe for the commodities that we produce, but after seven years of the ravages of the present damned Government there is precious little industry left in the north-east to produce goods to send to the centre of Europe.

The British Railways Board has recently announced that the freightliner depot just outside Newcastle is to be closed, so even if our industry were intact we would not have much hope of getting products quickly to the centre of Europe by rail. I am told that freightliner depots down the east coast of Scotland and England are to be closed by the board and that the nearest depot to Newcastle will be Leeds. If we are to enjoy the benefits of the great adventure that is described as the Channel tunnel project, we shall have to transport goods 120 miles by road to Leeds to the nearest freighliner depot.

There is no doubt that the soft underbelly of London and the south-east of England will benefit at the expense of the already denuded industrial north. The two-nation society and the north-south divide that we know now will be nothing compared with the conditions that will prevail in the post-Channel tunnel era.

What will happen if the required £750 million is not raised? Let us say that there is a shortfall of £100 million. Everyone knows that the Prime Minister is paranoic about and obsessed with having her name carved in a tablet of stone along with that of Mr. Mitterrand as a founder of the project. Is anyone bold enough to suggest that, if private enterprise should fall £100 million short of raising £750 million, the Prime Minister will not commit the taxpayer to find the money? That would be adding insult to injury in the north of England, because in effect she would be demanding that the taxpayers of that region should contribute to the digging of their own graves.

I hope that those in another place, who have given the Government a bloody nose on many occasions, will continue repeatedly to draw blood from the Government as they consider this pernicious Bill.

2.14 am

**Mr. Allen McKay** (Barnsley, West and Penistone): I wish to express the views of Yorkshire and Humberside while telling the House about my fears for industry in the north if the Channel tunnel project goes ahead. I have read nothing and heard nothing that leads me to believe that the construction of the tunnel will assist the region, part of which I represent. There is 21 per cent. or 22 per cent. unemployment in my constituency and I must consider seriously the well-being of the area. Over the past few years there have been no signs that conditions will improve.

At this late stage, the Minister could give an assurance that the customs sheds will be built in the north of England, in the Sheffield area. That small item in this project could help the rejuvenation of that area. When the Minister replies, he might influence the way in which I will vote tonight.

As an engineering concept and as a vision of the future, I believe that the Channel tunnel project is great. The project will lift the country and it is something for the country to look forward to. However, I must look to my constituents and ask, what is in it for them? Unless the Minister can give some assurances that the customs sheds will be considered for the Sheffield area, I will have to vote against the Third Reading tonight.

2.15 am

**Mr. David Mitchell:** There is a saying, "Third time lucky." Work on the Channel tunnel has been started twice before — indeed, this year marks the centenary of the introduction of the first Channel Tunnel Bill into this House. Those who have alleged that the project is being rushed might like to reflect on that. After the "longest

*[Mr. David Mitchell]*

pregnancy in the world"—as Lord Palmerston described it—we are about to witness the birth of the greatest civil engineering project ever undertaken in Europe.

The hon. Member for Aberdeen, North (Mr. Hughes) was somewhat ambivalent in his support for the Bill. However, already the benefits to Britain which will come from the construction of this project are beginning to be felt. Eurotunnel has placed advance orders for £30 million, a third of that in Scotland. In all, it is anticipated that British companies have the prospect of winning £1 billion-worth of orders, bringing wealth and employment to our factories.

As with all great projects, it is not the starting but the completing that will bring the lasting benefits—benefits for British industry no longer disadvantaged by the cost, delay and unreliability of a sea frontier when competing for that lucrative European market, which already takes 60 per cent. of our exports, and still has enormous potential.

It is our good fortune tonight, as Members of this House, to play a significant part in turning a vision into a reality. While little men and little Englanders will stay out of our Lobby, I invite the House to give a Third Reading to this Bill and thus send the Channel tunnel on its way with a fair wind.

*Question put,* That the Bill be now read the Third time:

*The House divided:* Ayes 94, Noes 22.

**Division No. 79]** **[2.17 am**

AYES

Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Bevan, David Gilroy
Blackburn, John
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Peter
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brooke, Hon Peter
Burt, Alistair
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Couchman, James
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dover, Den
Durant, Tony
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Freeman, Roger
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Hawksley, Warren
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hunt, David *(Wirral W)*
Jessel, Toby
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Lang, Ian
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lester, Jim
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maude, Hon Francis
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moore, Rt Hon John
Neubert, Michael
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Osborn, Sir John
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pollock, Alexander
Powley, John
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Roe, Mrs Marion
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowe, Andrew
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Wallace, James
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wolfson, Mark
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Michael Portillo and
Mr. Richard Ryder.

NOES

Aitken, Jonathan
Clay, Robert
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Corbett, Robin
Dixon, Donald
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McNamara, Kevin
McWilliam, John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Moate, Roger
Nellist, David
O'Brien, William
Pike, Peter
Raynsford, Nick
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Spearing, Nigel

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse and
Mr. Robert C. Brown.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.*

## Basildon

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Boscawen].*

2.28 am

**Mr. David Amess** (Basildon): On 1 April 1986 the new town assets of Basildon were transferred from the development corporation to the Commission for the New Towns. This was the thirteenth such transfer of a new town's assets and I believe that it will be lucky for my constituents and for my constituency. The town lies just 30 miles from the heart of London and is probably one of the best located towns in Britain, a feature which helps to explain its success in attracting more than 400 industrial and commercial organisations from Britain, Europe, north America and elsewhere.

By road, rail, air and sea, Basildon's access to its national and international markets shows clearly why it was selected for designation as a new town in the immediate post-war period. Thirty minutes from Fenchurch street station, it is also within a few minutes of London's orbital M25 motorway. This important new high-speed route puts the town within easy reach of the capital's three international airports at Stansted, Gatwick and Heathrow, as well as linking it to the rest of Britain's motorway network and thence to the channel ports. First-class roads connect the town's new industrial areas to one of the world's largest container ports at Tilbury docks and the increasingly important continental ports at Harwich and Felixstowe.

It is hardly surprising, then, that so much has happened at Basildon. As hundreds of companies have already discovered, Basildon offers a major opportunity for growth in one of the most strategic locations in the south-east, as well as all the social and environmental advantages of a well planned and carefully designed community.

The impact of recent developments in the national communications network means that for this town the future is just beginning. I pay tribute to the chairman of the Commission for the New Towns, Sir Neil Shields; his deputy, a former Member of this House, Mr. Arthur Jones; Sir Gordon Roberts; all the board members; the chief executive, Mr. David Woodhall; the executive manager, Mr. Douglas Galloway, and all the local commission staff. All these people have worked and will continue to work, towards firmly establishing Basildon's position as the finest new town in Britain. I and my constituents are extremely grateful for that. We are also grateful for all the help and encouragement given to us by my hon. Friend the Minister and the noble Lord Skelmersdale.

Just before Christmas my hon. Friend opened an extremely successful exhibition in the House. That exhibition was entitled, "Basildon means business — Basildon, a town of opportunity." My hon. Friend was also instrumental in arranging the "purchase back" agreement for defective properties in Vange. Spurred on by this, I shall now ask him for some further help for my constituency. He will be aware of the problems encountered by tenants using the district heating systems in Felmores and Langdon Hills. Indeed, when he visited my constituency he met leaders of the Felmores heating action group. The case for an alternative system of heating has been made and I hope that individual gas-fired heating systems can be installed in those properties as soon as possible.

A substantial number of building programmes are under way in Basildon and many fine houses are being built and quickly sold. However, as a matter of urgency, I ask the Minister to urge that much of the remaining land be zoned for housing for shared ownership schemes to help young married couples and for schemes for small units for single people. There is a real need for such homes and I ask my hon. Friend to look closely at the options that I have mentioned.

I shall now turn to the main issue that I wish to bring to the Minister's attention — the future of Basildon's shopping centre. There is no doubt that the new Eastgate international shopping and business centre is the jewel in Basildon's crown. Yesterday we had the splendid news that TOPS, the company purchasing the town square, has agreed to put a roof over the adjoining centre, thus ensuring that we will have the largest shopping centre in Europe. The stage is set for a grand opening of the centre and the prospect of increasing prosperity for Basildon.

A shadow has been cast over all this by a proposal to site a regional shopping centre in West Thurrock, a short distance away. The centre would be just 12 miles, or a 20-minute drive away. A vast array of individuals and organisations have expressed objections to this proposal. The only bodies in favour are the company which wants to build the rival centre, Thurrock borough council and Essex county council. I met and addressed a gathering of local traders and I can tell the Minister that feelings are running extremely high. At the moment a public inquiry is being held so that all views can be heard before the Secretary of State makes his decision.

The Commission for the New Towns supports the recommendation of refusal made by its predecessor, the Development Corporation. The grounds for this objection are that the proposed development is contrary to the provisions of the approved Essex structure plan, notably those policies to concentrate retail development in sub-regional and district centres and, conversely, not to permit such development outside the built-up areas or settlements. This is a classic example of shifting the goalposts. Given that the proposed development is contrary to the approved Essex structure plan the scheme, if allowed, would affect the retail trading structure throughout the region, as no supporting residential development is proposed. In those circumstances the scheme would have a serious adverse effect on the existing sub-regional and district centres in south Essex and north Kent.

The need for further shops can be met adequately and more satisfactorily in existing centres. In that respect, attention is drawn to the Eastgate Mall, which will provide an additional 500,000 sq ft of retail space in Basildon town centre. The proposed development would most certainly undermine the social and economic investment in neighbouring town centres, including Basildon.

Norwich Union has invested £50 million in our town centre, and would have been reluctant to do so had plans for another shopping centre so close by been known. Norwich Union and Allders proceeded on the undertaking that there would not be another major centre similar to Eastgate nearby that would compete in the same population catchment area.

*[Mr. David Amess]*

Allders, as the anchor store, is one of the most important traders in the Eastgate shopping centre, and thus is important to the community of Basildon. The original feasibility studies showed that Allders would be successful. However, as a new store it would be five years or so before it began to be successful, as was proven by its store in Chatham. Thus, in 1991—which is when Allders expected to begin to do well—the Lakeside centre would open, diverting, at Thurrock's own estimate, £2,180,000 from Allders or £9·9 million from Basildon as a whole. That would affect shops and jobs at Allders department store and in the retail outlets throughout the town centre.

I must tell the Minister that if Thurrock affects Basildon to the extent projected by both sides—for and against—the investment in Basildon may be so seriously affected that Allders, the anchor tenant, may consider closing its business and disposing of its interest.

The philosophy of Norwich Union is to support the social fabric of the communities from which its policy holders come. It is concerned about out-of-town shopping centres since, although experience of these in the United Kingdom is limited, the American experience has been such that it is strongly convinced of the need to retain the major retailing functions within town centres. The removal of trade from the centre of the community dissipates the well-being of the community by depriving it of its life source. Once shops become run down or boarded up for lack of business, this sets the tone and the neighbourhood can rapidly deteriorate.

It is clear that there would be a knock-on effect from Allders department store suffering a downturn in its trade. Small retail outlets may have to close quickly.

There may be a reluctance from investors to invest in town centre and refurbishment schemes because of the danger of investment being whittled away by out-of-town centres such as Lakeside. That may be a serious consequence if a precedent is set by allowing this development to go ahead.

I am proud to represent Basildon, a town with what should be an extremely bright future. If the Thurrock development is allowed to go ahead, it will strangle at birth Basildon's shopping centre—a monstrous act. The jewel in our crown can be preserved. Basildon's future would be assured by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment throwing out this planning application, and that is what I ask him to do.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** I gather that the hon. Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) has the consent of the hon. Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) and of the Minister to intervene.

2.38 am

**Mr. Ken Hargreaves** (Hyndburn): It may seem unusual for someone from the north in the so-called north-south divide to take part in a debate on Basildon, but there is a connection because I sponsored the exhibition which the Commission for the New Towns put on in the Upper Waiting Hall in December. I had originally arranged the exhibition for Hyndburn borough council, to demonstrate how it uses the various Government grants and aid that it receives, and to promote the borough generally. I believe that it would have been good for the borough; much work had been done to prepare it, and it may have brought much needed jobs to our area. Sadly, at the last minute, Hyndburn's Labour-controlled council decided that it no longer wanted to be involved.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The subject of the debate is Basildon shopping centre. I hope that the hon. Gentleman will confine his remarks to that.

**Mr. Hargreaves:** I want to congratulate the Commission for the New Towns on picking up the vacancy which then occurred. It seized the opportunity that had been created and, despite the short notice that it had to prepare it, mounted an impressive exhibition that my hon. Friend the Minister opened.

I congratulate the Commission on its achievement that week and on what it has done for Basildon. My hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess) is fortunate to have such a hard-working body of people working with him for the benefit of Basildon and I am envious of him. There is no doubt that if they continue to work as they have and to grasp the opportunities which they did in mounting the exhibition at short notice, they will continue to bring great benefit to Basildon and I wish them every success.

My hon. Friend is right in saying that to allow the planning application to build a regional shopping centre so near to Basildon will not only destroy the new town shopping centre but will seriously jeopardise Basildon's future and undermine the excellent work of the Commission for the New Towns.

2.40 am

**The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. John Patten):** This is turning into a lively debate at 2.40 am. I am glad to hear my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn (Mr. Hargreaves) making his own voice heard and the important issues that we are discussing relating to Basildon which have been raised so forcefully by my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Mr. Amess).

Hyndburn's loss was Basildon's gain. I can remember being asked, and I did so with great pleasure, to open the Basildon Means Business exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall. My hon. Friend and his constituents were extremely fortunate to have that exhibition which was due to the deplorable short-sightedness of the Hyndburn council which did it and its constituents some damage.

None the less, the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Hyndburn is support of our hon. Friend the Member for Basildon in his aim to see a successful shopping centre in Basildon are well taken. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon would support a change of heart, albeit a last minute one, on the part of Hyndburn council if it chose to come again to promote Hyndburn in the Palace of Westminster.

My hon. Friend has always represented his constituents in a clear and forceful manner. I spend a certain amount of my time dealing with matters Basildon. A post-mortem examination would probably find the word "Basildon" engraved deep on my heart, if there is such an organ in my or any other Minister's body. I have answered a good many debates and questions, visited Basildon with my hon. Friend and seen delegations, all of which have given me great pleasure because the way in which my hon. Friend has represented his constituents has been a model of the way in which any hon. Member should try to represent his constituency, particularly booming Basildon. He has demonstrated again tonight his commitment to securing the future of Basildon new town.

Let me start with an aside, although it is an important aside to the people in Felmore, about their district heating system for fear that time in this lively debate will run out before I have a chance to deal with the issue. I can remember on my last visit to Basildon in the company of my hon. Friend meeting some of the leaders of the association which was concerned about the district heating system at Felmore. I was given a warm reception and we had a useful discussion. I was struck with the responsible attitude towards this difficult problem so often associated with district heating systems. "Design and build in haste and repent at leisure" is the motto of so much modern architecture and associated district heating systems.

I understand that the leaders of the association are in the process of laying out the financial implications of carrying out certain improvements to the system against the costs associated with a replacement programme. Of course, my hon. Friend has in the past made representations about the adequacy of the heating system. We have taken those well, including most recently during oral questioning of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy on 26 January. No Secretary of State is safe, except perhaps the Secretary of State for Defence and possibly the Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales, from penetrating questions about Basildon and its problems. When my officials receive the commission's appraisal we shall make a decision as soon as possible. Needless to say, my hon. Friend will be the first to know. With that aside—a very important one to the people who live there and are so ably represented by my hon. Friend—I turn to the major part of my hon. Friend's speech, which was about Basildon and its shopping centre, an importance that was stressed by my hon. Friend from Hyndburn.

I announced last December, just before Christmas, our policy for the rapid wind-up of the remaining new towns. We have three main aims. The first is to realise a substantial amount of public assets. The second is to help the advance of Government housing policy by diversifying the ownership and tenure of homes in these new towns. About 60,000 homes are involved in the wind-up of the new towns, including some 16,000 in Basildon. I take my hon. Friend's point about share ownership very much to heart.

Our third policy aim, as I announced before Christmas, is to allow us to concentrate on the major task for the 1990s of tackling the regeneration of our older towns that are in difficulties. Good heavens above—Hyndburn! If only there were more co-operative local authorities in some of these towns we could do more.

Any assets remaining at wind-up are transferred to the Commission for the New Towns which has the remit of disposing of those assets as soon as it considers it expedient to do so.

In the 24 years to April 1987, the commission is expected to have disposed of some £500 million worth of assets and to have built up considerable experience in the process. Basildon is very lucky because it now has the benefit of the commission's long experience of these issues. The task of attracting investors can be a complex one, especially when trying to secure the best possible return for taxpayers' investment in the new towns programme. However, the recent completion of the M25 orbital route has significantly enhanced Basildon's road links as my hon. Friend has said. The commission rightly sees this as a major contribution to its task of asset disposal. The commission is also ensuring that sufficient opportunity is being given to international investment in the town through its property centre at Metro house, and exhibitions such as the one last December which we have already discussed. I join my hon. Friend in paying a warm tribute to Sir Neil Shields, the chairman of the commission, his board and his officers, for the style, the zip, the vim and the vigour with which they are carrying out the duties laid upon them.

It is the town centre in Basildon, as I have seen myself in the company of my hon. Friend, which has undergone such considerable change in recent years. The retail and office developments here are imaginative in design and they have provided Basildon with the most advanced regional shopping centre in Essex. The Eastgate centre especially is an outstanding monument to the enterprise and innovation shown by a former development corporation and to its willingnes to work with institutional investors. Oh that there were more councils up and down the land—including Hyndburn under its new regime—ready to show such willingness!

In realising the town centre assets the Commission for the New Towns is fully aware of the important contribution that this complex will make to the region's retail facilities. It also wishes to encourage scope for future development so that Basildon remains the most advanced shopping complex in the region.

My hon. Friend will be pleased to note therefore that the commission's recent sale to TOPS Estates includes assurances that the town square will be roofed over, as he said. That is splendid news. As my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Surbiton (Mr. Tracey), then responsible for new towns, said in an Adjournment debate on 9 April 1986, we are and have been anxious that the roofing scheme should go ahead. Given the commissioner's track record on disposals I have no doubts that its marketing strategy would in any way threaten the implementation of this scheme.

I understand that my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon is to meet my noble Friend the Under-Secretary of State tomorrow to discuss the disposal of Basildon town centre in some detail. He will have a few hours sleep between this Adjournment debate and his first meeting on Basildon's future in the Department of the Environment tomorrow morning.

I am sure that any concerns that my hon. Friend may still have after this debate will be allayed at that meeting. I know that my noble Friend Lord Skelmersdale is greatly looking forward to the meeting. His only regret is that, because he is in another place, he cannot be here tonight to reply to the debate. There is nothing that he would have liked more than to have been here at this time tonight, and there is nothing that I would have liked more than for him to have been here doing just that.

The Commission for the New Towns will continue to pursue its agreed strategy for the remainder of the town centre. It has agreed a marketing plan that should mean that disposal can be achieved by 1988. By then, the commission's only remaining interest in the town centre may well be in relation to those sites at the western end which involve the district council's interest. Those sites have been excluded from a disposal plan so that the commission can discuss a brief with the council.

*[Mr. John Patten]*

I am aware of a number of proposals for development close to Basildon, at Thurrock. It is understandable that one of those proposals, for a shopping centre development, should concern my hon. Friend with regard to Basildon's continued role as a leading retail outlet. My hon. Friend will appreciate, of course, that I cannot comment in this place on the Thurrock proposal at this time as it is currently the subject of a public inquiry. However, regardless of the outcome, one of Basildon's strengths has always been to make itself heard, and to forge ahead in the face of adversity.

I should not like my hon. Friend to think that my right hon. Friend and his ministerial colleagues are not interested in retail developments. Government policy on major retail developments was set out by the then Secretary of State for the Environment, my right hon. Friend the Member for Wanstead and Woodford (Mr. Jenkin), in reply to a parliamentary question in July 1985. Local planning authorities have recently been reminded of that policy through the issue on 18 December 1986 of departmental circular 21/86. That circular also covered a direction that requires local planning authorities to consult my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State before granting planning permission for developments with gross retail floor space exceeding 250,000 sq ft—something of which I am sure my hon. Friend and his constituents are aware.

Basildon is reaching the time for it to grow and develop on its own. It has enormous potential, and that is a major factor in attracting investment to the town. It should not be for Basildon to worry too much about competition; rather, it should continue to let competitors worry about Basildon.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at eight minutes to Three o'clock am.*

# House of Commons

*Wednesday 4 February 1987*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

PORT OF FOSDYKE BILL *[Lords]*
*As amended, considered; to be read the Third time.*

# Oral Answers to Questions

## ENVIRONMENT

### Land Registers

1. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much land is currently on the land registers held by his Department; and how much has been removed since they were established.

**The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. John Patten):** The amount of land on the registers has now fallen below 100,000 acres for the first time to 99,968 acres; 46,000 acres have been removed since the registers were established in mid-1981. My right hon. Friend will continue to use his statutory powers to force sales; and we shall be asking Parliament to streamline the procedures for directing owners to sell. We think that it is better to build, where possible, on brown land that has previously been built on than to build on green land.

**Mr. Hunter:** I warmly welcome what my hon. Friend has just said. What further measures does he propose to take to ensure that the intolerate pressures for development in counties such as Hampshire and Northamptonshire are relieved? What further measures does he intend to take to convince Left-wing local authorities that housing needs are more important than ideology?

**Mr. Patten:** Alas, there are some loopholes in the Act. We need to do more and my right hon. Friend's forthcoming local government measure will introduce new ways to make recalcitrant councils, whatever their political colour, "unbelt" land so that it can be built upon.

**Mr. Weetch:** Does the Minister recall that some years ago the Northfield report recommended setting up a national register of land? Does he think that there are any advantages in that? Does he agree that a national register for the ownership of land would give some sort of reliable statistical basis for a land policy? What does the Minister think of that proposition?

**Mr. Patten:** I do not remember the Northfield report. However, I do have some views on a land register. We have in the Department a perfectly adequate register of unused land in the ownership of local councils, statutory undertakers, and nationalised industries. It contains over 99,000 acres of land. That is there for a start and more land could undoubtedly be registered. We need to bring that land back into use as soon as possible.

**Mr. Steen:** We should congratulate my hon. Friend on releasing 46,000 acres of public land. However, the problem of public vacant land involves not only getting rid of the land on the register, but stopping more land coming on to it. That is the problem that my hon. Friend must face. It will mean that we never see the end of public vacant land. Will my hon. Friend also consider the 1,000 acres that are under the ownership of the Department of the Environment, because that issue needs to be dealt with?

**Mr. Patten:** Unfortunately, there are no productivity bonuses in my job, so I must make do with my hon. Friend's welcome words of praise, and I thank him for them. I saw my hon. Friend's interesting letter in *The Times* on this subject earlier this week. He is quite right in saying that we must do all that we possibly can to stop the flow of new land coming on to the register. Although more than 10,000 acres came off the register in 1986, about 7,000 acres went on to it. We should try to prevent that, although it is part and parcel of the identification of vacant land. We have a duty to move Government land holdings that are not in use, and a policy to move it all by 1 April 1988, if possible.

### Water Authorities

2. **Mrs. Golding** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will be meeting the Council for the Protection of Rural England to discuss the proposed privatisation of water authorities.

**The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Nicholas Ridley):** Ministers are in regular contact with the CPRE over a wide range of issues, and we stand ready to meet the council to discuss matters of mutual interest.

**Mrs. Golding:** Is the Secretary of State aware that some of the strongest traditional supporters of the Conservative party are completely opposed to the privatisation of the water authorities? Will he meet the CPRE and other groups in the countryside so that they can tell him of their anxiety and give him good reasons why water should not be privatised?

**Mr. Ridley:** The hon. Lady comes from a county where large numbers of people are extremely well served by a private water company, so I do not see why she is so up in arms about this. However, I am always prepared to meet anybody to discuss this important measure. I hope that people will discuss the measure when it is laid before the House, not this Session, and see the proposed details, because much of the opposition is based on misapprehension.

**Mr. Andrew MacKay:** Given that my right hon. Friend wants to communicate with the CPRE, at present he may find difficulty in doing so by telephone. If so, can he have a word with the husband of the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding) to see whether the position can be improved?

**Mr. Ridley:** A little pillow talk in that respect would be welcomed by all those who want to communicate with many other people.

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** When the Minister meets the CPRE, will he discuss the fact that the water authorities are some of the biggest polluters of the rivers that they are responsible for cleaning, and that that is a consequence of the lack of public investment in our sewerage system? Will he point out that if private investors take over the water authorities they will not be interested in cleaning pollution? No one in his right mind would buy the Mersey, for example, to make money from an open sewer full of mercury and sewage.

**Mr. Ridley:** That is a bit strong, considering that we have replaced the cuts in investment which were made under the Labour Government, whom the hon. Gentleman supported. We have now returned to a high level of investment in water. Indeed, it is perhaps at its highest level in the Merseyside area, which has a huge programme for cleaning the Mersey basin. We strongly support that and have made money available for it. The hon. Gentleman was a little ungenerous about realising what has happened since we got rid of the Labour Government.

**Mr. Hill:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that local government reorganisation in the early 1970s, which included the water boards, was a disaster and that many of the water authorities were private companies before then? Is it not pure justice that we should now privatise them again?

**Mr. Ridley:** I must be careful in responding to my hon. Friend, because I cannot remember which disaster fell before or after I resigned from the Government of the time. Consumers will be served better and it will be greatly in the national interest to remove the constrictions of Government from the water industry so that it can get on with the job of serving consumers.

**Dr. Cunningham:** In expressing our complete opposition to privatisation of the water industry, may I ask the Secretary of State to explain why he refuses to respond to the CPRE and to my hon. Friend the Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes) on why the European Economic Community has advised his Department that it could not recognise privatised water undertakings as competent authorities under EEC legislation because they would be responsible for pollution control and the supply of water? Will the Secretary of State answer that question? Why are the Government hesitating?

**Mr. Ridley:** There are three mistakes in that question. The hon. Gentleman mispronounced his hon. Friend's constituency; the EEC is now called the European Community, not the European Economic Community; and it has not advised my Department as he suggests. The CPRE has obtained a legal opinion as to what a competent authority is. I suggest that that is premature, because until the hon. Gentleman sees the proposals drafted in the Bill it is impossible to interpret whether that legal opinion is right or wrong. Let us make the proposals before we submit them to counsel.

### Reema Dwellings

3. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he is taking to rectify defects in Reema dwellings.

**Mr. John Patten:** My Department is carrying out research into the possible problems of large panel system buildings, including all the various Reema types. If the findings show that we need to give advice about appraising or repairing the buildings, we shall do so as a matter of urgency.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** Will the Minister accept that this is not strictly a political difference between us, but a huge financial problem that is not capable of being dealt with within the confines of the Housing Defects Act 1984? There are 24 blocks in Leeds each requiring at least £1·5 million spent on repairs. Will he accept that treatment of them, similar financially to that of Airey buildings, which has been successful, would be the best way to do it and that it should be taken separately from the Housing Defects Act?

**Mr. Patten:** I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his appointment as the alliance housing spokesman. I look forward to speaking to him often about matters and trying to draw out a few nuances of policy.

The large panel Reema buildings are not designated under the Housing Defects Act. While the hon. Gentleman charmingly and smilingly says that there is no political difference between us, I remind him of the cruel and vicious words he said about me in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* last week.

**Mr. Key:** I thank my hon. Friend for the survey that he is undertaking into Reema buildings. May I urge him to look at the whole problem of rural housing in areas such as Salisbury district council, which, incidentally, is not under any party political control? It is facing the impossible position where a number of Reema buildings need attention, but it has no money with which to do that, even though it has been given the discretion to repair them and formulate its own policy by the Government.

**Mr. Patten:** Work is going on into Reema buildings and their problems by the Building Research Establishment and that work is not yet finished. We have allocated at least an extra £14 million to be bid for by local authorities for extra help if they find themselves unable to meet their statutory undertakings under the Housing Defects Act 1984.

**Mr. Fatchett:** Given that I have not said any unpleasant things about the Minister in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* —[HON. MEMBERS: "Shame."]—perhaps I should take this opportunity to do so. May I put to the Minister the real problems that exist in Leeds, given that we have 20 or more Reema blocks that each need £1·5 million to be spent on repairs and renovation? Unless we have action from the Government, the tenants living in those blocks will face serious problems. It is no good the Minister saying that the housing investment programme allocation takes account of the problems of defective buildings, because the reality in Leeds is that, in real terms, under this Government, the housing investment programme allocation has been cut by two thirds. When is the Minister going to do something on behalf of the people of Leeds and those who live in those blocks?

**Mr. Patten:** I have visited the hon. Gentleman's constituency, as he knows. There are certainly problems associated with the blocks, but the hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft), who speaks for the alliance, referred to sums of money that need to be spent per block. We have had no report from Leeds city council, and I have no idea what the figures are based on.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels:** I appreciate that Reema buildings have not yet been designated. However, will my hon. Friend look at the whole operation of the Housing Defects Act 1984, in particular at the Smith houses, because Leicester city council——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The question is about Reema housing.

### Homeless People

4. **Miss Maynard** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the number of homeless people in England.

**Mr. Ridley:** About 100,000 households were accepted as homeless by local authorities in the year ending September 1986, all of whom have, or course, found accommodation.

**Miss Maynard:** Does the Secretary of State agree that the figure is so high because the total building programme every week since the Tory Government came to power in 1979 is 2,000 fewer homes than the weekly record under the previous Labour Government?

**Mr. Ridley:** I think that the hon. Lady has got it wrong. This is the number of people who have been accepted as homeless by local authorities and have either been found new tenancies in council houses or in hostels or bed-and-breakfast accommodation. They are not the people without homes, just the people who are classified as homeless.

**Mr. Squire:** Will my right hon. Friend accept that many homeless people find homes ultimately through what are termed houses in multiple occupation? There is a Bill covering that due for discussion shortly, around which strange rumours circulate. Does he agree that if the Bill should not proceed further there is still a responsibility on the Government to improve the conditions of so many of the properties?

**Mr. Ridley:** I agree that there is a need to provide more accommodation in certain parts of the country for such people. That is why we have given extra resources to the Housing Corporation so that it can attract private money to run up as many hostels as quickly as possible to house these people — high quality hostels and temporary accommodation of all kinds. That will be a major contribution to helping alleviate the problem.

**Mr. Hancock:** Can the Secretary of State tell us what help he will give to an authority such as mine which has faced an increase of 49 per cent. in the past financial year in the number of homeless people? Will he reconsider his plans to designate the 80 authorities for special help from the Housing Corporation and include Portsmouth within those 80-odd districts?

**Mr. Ridley:** I do not have the details of Portsmouth's problems. However, we have already made our allocations for housing for this year. I hope that Portsmouth will allocate the vast proportion of its resources either to improving run-down accommodation or to providing homes for the kind of people whom we have been discussing.

**Mr. Heddle:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Labour-controlled local authorities which leave their local housing stock empty for three, six, nine, 12 or even 18 months would do better to use it to house the homeless? Does he further agree that the eight inner London local authorities highlighted in the Audit Commission report last week have taken twice as long to relet vacant houses as any other authority and thus wasted ratepayers' and taxpayers' money by housing people in inadequate homeless accommodation?

**Mr. Ridley:** My hon. Friend is correct. On 1 April last year, 113,000 council houses were empty and a quarter of those had been empty for more than a year. As my hon. Friend has said, the problems are greatest, for example, in the famous eight London boroughs, where the inefficiency and ineptitude are greatest causing the deepest suffering to those who are without homes. When we hear on top of that that the eight Labour controlled councils in London are spending about £20 million a year on nonsense and political propaganda of one sort or another, we realise that that money could be used to house the homeless rather than being wasted on gesturing and zealotry, which is the curse of the modern Labour party.

**Mr. Speaker:** Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. James Lamond:** Windbag.

**Mr. John Fraser:** Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that the disgraceful figure of 100,000 homeless a year is a record for the number of people who find themselves without a home? Will he accept that we regard it as a callous misjudgment to believe that people are properly housed when they are living in hostels or bed-and-breakfast accommodation, which the Secretary of State's Department acknowledges costs massively more than the cost of building a new home? That is a crazy form of economics and the Secretary of State's words will be greeted with dismay and people will be aghast at his comments.

Does the Secretary of State not recognise that if a Government reduced the number of homes being built for rent by almost 100,000 a year, the consequence will be the disgraceful figures that the right hon. Gentleman has announced to the House this afternoon?

**Mr. Ridley:** I will not enter into the controversy as to whether the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) is a windbag. However, there are 113,000 empty council properties, many of which have been empty for a long time. The solution to the problem is to improve those properties so that people can be housed in them. It is not simply a matter of throwing more good money after bad where councils are not prepared to take the necessary steps to make housing available to the homeless. That position shocks me. Yes, the figure of 100,000 homeless is very high. However, the hon. Member for Norwood must not confuse that with the number of people who have nowhere to live. He knows perfectly well that that figure is the number of people who have been rehoused in one form or another. I will not have that mistake deliberately made by the Labour party.

### Estate Action

5. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information is available to council tenants and local authorities concerning the work of estate action, the urban housing renewal unit.

**Mr. John Patten:** We have put out massive amounts of information—films, booklets, and reports. No authority has any excuse for not knowing what help is on offer. If any council, or any tenant, wants to know more, let me know and my Department will be in touch immediately.

**Mr. Howarth:** In commending my hon. Friend for the operation of the scheme, may I remind him that, thanks to a £307,000 grant, the Rawnsley estate in my constituency has benefited to the extent of 72 properties? Will he look favourably on phase 2, which I understand is to be examined next week by my hon. Friend's officials to complete the properties? Will he tell the House whether the transfer of these properties into private ownership is to be encouraged under the scheme?

**Mr. Patten:** I am glad that my hon. Friend is pleased about the way in which estate action has been able to help in the Cannock chase area. Nationally, this year we shall have helped, through estate action, more than 100,000 people, in 53,000 homes, to live in better conditions. I shall look with interest at the advice I receive from my officials — as always dispassionate advice — about my hon. Friend's constituency and its problems.

**Mr. Madden:** The activities of estate action are welcome. However, does the Minister accept that people in Bradford who are in desperate housing need wonder why the Government have refused the city council permission to borrow more to build homes and to use capital receipts for building purposes. They are bewildered as to why the Government have cut housing improvement grants to enable improvement and renovation to take place. Will the Minister give information about Government policy, which is stopping the city of Bradford from tackling its housing crisis?

**Mr. Patten:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for his welcome for the work that estate action is doing. That is a good sign of all-party consensus. I know that it is shared by bodies such as the Association of Metropolitan Authorities. Bradford's problems are not necessarily cured by releasing large sums of money. We need to ensure that the money is spent well, and that is precisely what estate action is doing.

### National Parks

6. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he is satisfied with the current administration of the national parks.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Yes, Sir, but there is always room for improvement.

**Mr. Knox:** Is it fair that people in the Peak district national park should have planning decisions taken by those who are not their direct representatives? Would my hon. Friend's constituents in Bristol, West feel kindly if their planning decisions were taken by people who were not direct representatives?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I am not sure that the analogy entirely works, because many councillors who take planning decisions about my constituency do not come from Bristol, West. However, there is a real problem behind what my hon. Friend says. There are not enough local residents among the county and local authority appointees on the national parks boards. I have tried to rectify that by making sure that seven out of the 11 that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State appoints are local residents, but I endorse my hon. Friend's point.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours:** Will the Minister pay tribute to the Lake District planning board for the excellent way in which it manages the affairs of the Lake District national park? Does he accept that the excellent work being done by the European Year of the Environment committee in promoting national parks and other areas of environmental interest and concern will greatly benefit our people?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I am happy to endorse the hon. Gentleman's tribute to that park, and to all the parks. We have increased the supplementary grants to the national parks by 13 per cent. this year in recognition of the valuable work that they are doing. It is vital that their publicity campaign, to which the hon. Gentleman referred, shows our people what there is to find in the parks.

**Mr. McLoughlin:** Is my hon. Friend aware that of the 184 people who make up the members of the seven national park boards in England and Wales, only 42 live in the areas of the parks? Is he also aware that on the Peak district planning board, of the eight people appointed by the county council only one lives in the area of the Peak park? What other planning authorities are there where people are not directly elected or do not have to meet certain residential qualifications?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** There is a problem which, in the Peak district, in particular, is bound up with political divisions, because supporters of the Labour party tend to live in cities rather than in the countryside. I urge those councils, Labour-controlled though they be, to take care to represent the interests of those who live in the area as well as the interests of those who visit from outside.

**Mr. Livsey:** Will the Minister take the point that the farming community is inadequately represented on national park committees, and in some cases there is only one farmer on the committees?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I am not sure that the hon. Gentleman would find overwhelming support for that view other than, perhaps, in the farming community. We need to maintain the balance between national, recreational and farming interests. We try to do that and I think it has been recognised that we have not done it too badly in recent years.

**Mr. Soames:** Will my hon. Friend consider carefully what steps he could take to advise the administration of the national parks on how to deal with the serious litter problem? Is he aware that many of the people who go into the national parks despoil the countryside by scattering litter all over the place? Will he greatly increase the penalties for that offence?

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Proposals for increasing the penalties are before the House. Perhaps I could return to the first question about the Peak parks. I have seen the work of the well organised ranger service. The rangers collect tons of litter at the end of each week in the summer. This is a most appalling phenomenon. The penalties for causing litter are quite high, but the difficulty lies in getting the local courts to impose worthwhile fines.

### Land Use (Rural Areas)

7. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will now publish a White Paper on his proposals for land use in rural areas.

**Mr. Ridley:** Our policy is, and continues to be, to protect green belt land and land of environmental importance. There is no question of allowing uncontrolled development in the countryside.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** Will the Secretary of State acknowledge that people in agriculture and people interested in rural use share a widespread anxiety about a vacuum in the Government's policy? Will he confirm the existence of an interdepartmental committee on alternative land use and rural employment, and will he give us an undertaking that the endeavours of that committee will eventually be published?

**Mr. Ridley:** The Government will make such policy statements as they wish in their own good time. Wherever there is a policy vacuum it is likely that the Liberal party will try to fill it at the same time as the SDP, with the disastrous result of a collision in the middle.

**Mr. Chapman:** May I remind my right hon. Friend that established green belt land represents less than 20 per cent. of England's countryside? Is that not all the more reason for asserting that the Government will protect those green belts, and for reminding any political party which thinks that the green belts should be breached that such belts command widespread support? In the words three years ago of the Select Committee on the Environment, the green belts should be regarded as sacrosanct.

**Mr. Ridley:** I entirely agree with my hon. Friend that we must preserve the green belt. We have no intention whatever of departing from past policies about that. We do not, as the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) advocates from the Opposition Front Bench, believe that we should have green lungs with development running up to them on the green belt. We entirely reject that policy.

**Mr. Rooker:** Why does the Minister tell lies?

**Hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think I also heard unparliamentary expression. Perhaps it could be withdrawn.

**Mr. Rooker:** I withdraw the unparliamentary expression, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Home Robertson:** Does the Minister accept that tinkering with planning controls is no substitute for a proper strategy for rural economic development? Will he now answer the question put to him by the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood)? Is there a Cabinet Committee studying alternative land use and rural employment? If there is, what is it doing?

**Mr. Ridley:** As the two hon. Gentlemen are from Scottish constituencies, it is difficult to know whether these questions should properly be addressed to the Secretary of State for Scotland. If the Government wish to make proposals, as I am sure they will from time to time, on how best to promote and preserve the rural economy, they will do so in their own good time. I make it clear that we have no proposals for re-rating agricultural land, which is apparently the policy of the SDP.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** Will my right hon. Friend pay special attention in rural planning to places where schools are full and there is no capital available to build new ones? That should cause an infrastructure interdiction in just the same way as sewerage capacity or water supply.

**Mr. Ridley:** Capital allocations for education are matters for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science. These matters should form part of the structure plan or, in due course, I hope, the district plan that the district will produce. Of course, planning considerations are relevant.

**Dr. David Clark:** I begin my question by making the point that my hon. Friend—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman should ask a question.

**Dr. Clark:** I listened carefully to the—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. We are making slow progress. We have reached only question No. 7. Question please.

**Dr. Clark:** I listened carefully to what the Secretary of State said. Will he give the House a categorical assurance that the report in *The Observer* that the Government intend to weaken the green belt around our major industrial conurbations is untrue?

**Mr. Ridley:** Yes, Sir.

### Building Industry (Black Economy)

8. **Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will instruct his working party on the effects of the black economy on the building industry to complete its inquiry and publish its report by Whitsun; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** This working party will not be confined to the effects of the black economy. It will be looking at a range of issues such as the role of guarantee and warranty schemes in smaller scale building works. There are no instant solutions to these complex issues and many organisations, such as the building societies, have asked how to be involved. It will just not be possible to come up with soundly based proposals by Whitsun.

**Mr. Latham:** Is my hon. Friend aware that it is now one and three quarter years since his predecessor produced a Green Paper promising just these discussions with the industry on all the fiddles, rip-offs and other disasters that go on in the home improvement industry? Will he please give his Department a good boot up the backside and tell it to produce some specific proposals now?

**Mr. Patten:** There are no bad civil servants, only bad Ministers. If any kicks up the backside must be administered, they must be administered to Ministers. My hon. Friend has already administered such a kick to me in his excellent comment in an excellent periodical, *Building*, last week. Apart from that, all the letters and representations that we have received welcome the working party. They total 22. I understand what my hon. Friend said from his great depth of experience of this issue.

Perhaps we should try to speed up our proceedings. I shall examine the matter again to see whether we can do so, but we shall not be able to do it by Whitsun.

**Mr. Carter-Jones:** If the working party reports and if, as is most likely, it recommends that there should be better trade training and better safety practices, will the Minister undertake to implement such recommendations speedily?

**Mr. Patten:** Yes, indeed. Only three weeks ago my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Employment and I met representatives of the building and construction industry and the trade unions to discuss just these problems. Afterwards, the meeting was described by one distinguished trade union leader, Mr. Albert Williams, as surprisingly constructive.

**Mr. Favell:** Does my hon. Friend agree with Lord Scarman that the black economy is a good thing, or does he agree with the vast majority of the country that dishonesty should be discouraged?

**Mr. Patten:** I certainly think that dishonesty should be discouraged.

**Mr. Rooker:** We also welcome the working party and add to the strictures placed upon it by his hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham).

Will the Minister take on board this important point? An unregulated industry leading to a black economy has horrendous consequences for health and safety in the industry. The Minister and the working party must take on board the consequences of the deaths of workers on building sites and, in particular, on demolition sites. That cannot be divorced from the ramifications of the black economy in this industry.

**Mr. Patten:** I discussed these points this morning with the National Economic Development Council. The hon. Member raised some serious points. Trade union voices will be heard on the working party and they will have a chance to make representations about these issues.

## Local Government Officers (Vacancies)

9. **Mr. Sumberg** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the Government have any plans to seek to ensure that vacancies for officers in local government are not advertised in party political publications; and if he will make a statement.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope):** We are discussing with the local authority associations the code of recommended practice designed to prevent this.

**Mr. Sumberg:** Is my hon. Friend aware that the Labour-controlled authority in Bury recently advertised for a director of social services in *Labour Weekly*? Is there not a clear implication that only Socialists need apply? *[Interruption.]* Will my hon. Friend take firm legislative action to stop this abuse?

**Mr. Chope:** I am very surprised that Opposition Members seem to approve of such a practice. Advertisements for local government officers in party political publications are inconsistent with the long tradition of politically impartial local government. To answer my hon. Friend's question, whether there was motivation to find a Labour party member to fill the post, or merely to make a ratepayer contribution to the advertising budget of *Labour Weekly*, it is an outrageous abuse of local authority power.

**Mr. Tony Banks:** Is the Minister aware that the London borough of Newham will not be advertising for vacancies either in *Labour Weekly* or in the *Daily Telegraph*, which is a Tory party newspaper, or in any other newspaper, because all vacancies have been frozen on account of the Government's attack on the London borough of Newham? Is the Minister aware that today 10,000 people marched through the borough protesting at the cuts that the Government are imposing upo[illegible]s? If the Government will not listen to the arguments from Newham Members of Parliament in this House, they will have to listen to the people of Newham on the streets.

**Mr. Chope:** It is very good news for the ratepayers of Newham that at last the council is responding to the need to live within its budget. I regard it as totally irresponsible of the council workers to withdraw their services. I always thought that the hon. Member was arguing about the need to provide local authority services. To withdraw them in these circumstances shows just where his true loyalties lie.

**Sir Kenneth Lewis:** Is my hon. Friend aware that, arising out of many of these advertisements, far too many councillors, mostly Labour councillors, employed by one council, become councillors on another council?

**Mr. Chope:** Yes. There is widespread concern about the practice of what I think is called twin-tracking. The Widdicombe report had much to say about it. We are considering what we need to do in legislative form.

**Mr. Winnick:** Is the Minister aware that when I saw the question on the Order Paper I wondered why a Conservative Member of Parliament should be attacking Conservative newspapers, since most of the Tory newspapers carry a large number of advertisements and those papers are very faithful to the Tory party? Will the Minister give us an assurance that, despite what his hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) said, the offices of *Labour Weekly* will not be searched and invaded by the special branch?

**Mr. Chope:** *Labour Weekly* is a matter for the people who run that newspaper. They are trying to fund the newspaper out of ratepayers' money. I do not want hon. Members to think that the abuse that has been described by my hon. Friend the Member for Bury, South (Mr. Sumberg) is limited to Labour party publications. In the January issue of *Marxism Today* Haringey council is advertising for a member for its direct works department.

## Business Rate

10. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what responses he has received concerning his proposals for a uniform business rate.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend placed a summary of responses to the Green Paper in the Library on 15 December.

**Mr. Colvin:** Even if we may accept the principle of a uniform business rate, does my hon. Friend realise that it could cause glaring injustices in certain localities? Is he aware that the village of Fawley in my constituency, living as it is under the shadow of the oil refinery, has for many years been the Cinderella of local government inputs, although paying a very great amount in rates? Is he further aware that it is the local parish council that has taken the initiative in providing services for my constituents in that area? What guarantees can he give that the parish council will not be deprived of the £90,000 of rate income that it receives out of a total rate precept of £123,000 if a uniform business rate is introduced? Otherwise, it will impose an unfair burden on domestic ratepayers in the area.

**Mr. Chope:** I hope that my hon. Friend supports the Green Paper proposals, because domestic ratepayers in Hampshire, including those in Fawley, will benefit significantly from them. However, it is right for my hon. Friend to remind the House of the enormous contribution made by Esso to Hampshire rates. That is particularly apposite at a time when both the Labour party and the alliance parties on the council are vying with each other to propose a far higher rate increase in Hampshire than is necessary.

**Mr. Alton:** Can the Minister give the House an assurance that before any business rate changes are made that there will be a general rating revaluation? Is he aware that in Liverpool no revaluation has occurred since 1972? We now have the third highest business rate of any of the 36 metropolitan districts, and stores such as the city centre Marks and Spencer are paying the same rate as Marks and Spencer in Marble Arch in London. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that there is a good case for rate relief to be given to businesses in cities such as Liverpool?

**Mr. Chope:** A revaluation is scheduled for 1990. One of the great merits of the national non-domestic rate is that it will help businesses in the north. For example, in Liverpool it will benefit businesses to the extent of reducing their burden by some 31 per cent. on present projections, which shows the advantages of the proposals.

**Mr. Hind:** Following what my hon. Friend nas just said, will he keep to the principles that he has put forward by introducing a uniform business rate, and bear in mind that it will bring much-needed relief in the northern inner cities, where they are over-rated by Left-wing Labour councils, which are not responsible in their approach to rates and are driving jobs and enterprise from those cities?

**Mr. Chope:** My hon. Friend has put his finger on the main benefit of the proposals. Businesses in the north will gain over £500 million a year from the national non-domestic rate alone.

**Dr. Cunningham:** How can these proposals—which, in effect, give the Government control over 80 per cent. of local government income—be consistent with increasing responsibility and accountability at local level? How can the Minister say that they will be beneficial to the north when Manchester would lose about £29 million of income a year, Sheffield £25 million a year and Newcastle upon Tyne £25 million a year and London would suffer a redistribution of income of almost £1 billion as a result of these proposals? How will that help to alleviate inner city problems?

**Mr. Chope:** I do not accept the figures that the hon. Gentleman has quoted. Non-domestic rates conceal the true cost of local services to domestic ratepayers. On average, at present, for every £10 that is raised in rates £6 is paid by non-domestic ratepayers.

### Residential Development

11. **Mr. Butterfill** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to review the powers of local planning authorities to control the type of home erected on land designated for residential development purposes; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ridley:** No, Sir. Local planning authorities already have wide powers to determine planning applications submitted to them.

**Mr. Butterfill:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that there is a problem in Dorset, in that whenever we re-zone land for housing it is covered with a sea of bungalows that are marketed nationwide to the elderly, which aggravates the imbalance of our population and does not provide for the needs of local people? The chief planning officer in Dorset says that he does not have sufficient powers to create a reasonable balance of population in the area. Is there a need to reconsider whether a circular should be issued to such authorities to enable them to exert the necessary powers to create a balanced population?

**Mr. Ridley:** I do not want to discriminate against the elderly, as I shall be elderly myself in due course. My hon. Friend should not be against the elderly being able to find suitable places in which to live where they want to live. I think my hon. Friend will agree that we do not want councils to engage in social engineering to decide who shall live where; people should decide where they wish to live for themselves. The planning legislation is solely about the merits of certain land uses, not about who should take up those uses. That has always been so and always should be so.

**Mr. Nicholas Baker:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that, although it is quite correct that local authorities should not engage in social engineering, people should be advised to think carefully before retiring in a place away from their friends, family and former workplace?

**Mr. Ridley:** I must again say that I hesitate to give that advice. I can only tell my hon. Friend that when I retire I want to get as far away from this place as possible.

### Housing Investment Programme

13. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received since the 1987-88 housing investment programme allocations were announced.

**Mr. John Patten:** I have received a number of representations.

**Mr. Pike:** The Minister recently said that he was not able to visit Burnley or receive a delegation from the city to consider its acute problems. Like many other local authorities, Burnley faces a rapidly deteriorating housing situation in the private and public housing sectors because of the level of capital and HIP allocations. When will the Government take action to deal with these problems and to stop this downward spiral in housing standards?

**Mr. Patten:** I pay as many visits as I can to cities and towns such as Burnley. I hope that one day I shall be able to go to Burnley. Indeed, I was in Manchester last Thursday paying such a visit. Burnley has begun to do one thing which is very important — co-operate with the private sector in getting private investment in its council housing stock, notably on the Bleak house estate. I am surprised that Burnley council has not approached my Department's estate action unit for help with its housing problems.

**Mr. Forth:** Will my hon. Friend confirm that, when a significant number of properties in a town are found to have major defects which will be expensive to repair, his Department will give due consideration to helping the local authority or private individuals concerned, especially if the properties were built under the auspices of a new town corporation which no longer exists?

**Mr. Patten:** I am aware from my recent visit to Redditch in my hon. Friend's constituency of the problems that affect his constituency, especially some houses with, I believe, timber truss roofs which seem to be causing some problems. My regional office is in communication with the council on this problem.

**Mr. Rooker:** Does the Minister appreciate that probably some 2 million homes were built using the same design as the houses in Redditch which are seriously under pressure? Is the hon. Gentleman satisfied that the overall housing investment programme, even including all the private money that he can get into it, is sufficient to stop the housing stock from deteriorating, let alone improve it, in view of the rate of deterioration? In other words, is it enough to stand still?

**Mr. Patten:** We are doing much more than standing still. We are improving the housing situation. I owe the hon. Gentleman a long and detailed letter in response to his long and detailed letter of about 10 days ago on these points. I shall endeavour to send that letter to him as soon as possible.

### Political Advertising (Local Authorities)

14. **Mr. Heddle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what further plans the Government have to control large amounts of money spent by local authorities on political advertising.

**Mr. Chope:** Later this Session we shall introduce legislation to reinforce the 1986 Act and will publish the code for which the Act provides.

**Mr. Heddle:** I welcome my hon. Friend's announcement. Is it not a disgrace, and will my hon. Friend confirm, that all eight of the inner London authorities highlighted by the Audit Commission as verging on bankruptcy engaged in political propaganda and advertising at the ratepayers' expense? Will my hon. Friend have time during his busy day to look at the January edition of "Sanity" and observe that local authorities from the north of Scotland to London are wasting £2,500 or more of ratepayers' money simply issuing messages of peace and goodwill? Would it not be better if they were advertising prudence and common sense to the ratepayers?

**Mr. Chope:** My attention has been drawn to some of the advertisements in the January edition of "Sanity". I suspect that most of the advertisements inserted by the local authorities are already illegal and that there is no need to impose further legislation. I hope that those authorities will be referred to the relevant auditors.

**Mr. Haynes:** Why did the Minister not slap down his hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) for tabling such an outrageous question? Is the Minister aware that Conservative local authorities also advertise in political magazines and newspapers? What about the Tory press? Why does the Minister not be fair on this issue?

**Mr. Chope:** I am not aware of any Conservative-controlled authorities——

**Mr. Haynes:** What about Wandsworth?

**Mr. Chope:** —including Wandsworth, which advertise in party political publications. If the hon. Gentleman knows of any, I should be delighted to write to those authorities in just the same strong terms as I would to a Labour-controlled authority.

**Mr. Dickens:** Does my hon. Friend accept that it is rather ironic that the very Left-wing councils which complain and bleat about Government cuts—which of course do not exist or are caused by their own overspending—spend hundreds of thousands of pounds each year on political propaganda? It must be stopped, and it will be stopped.

**Mr. Chope:** I agree completely with my hon. Friend, except that he understates the problem. It is not hundreds of thousands of pounds, but millions of pounds that are being wasted.

### Housing (Voluntary Sector)

16. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to encourage housing developments by the voluntary sector outside designated stress areas.

**Mr. John Patten:** Under the increased programme my right hon. Friend announced on 9 December, some £123 million worth of new development is available for allocation outside the stress areas — an 83 per cent. increase over 1986-87. Whether inside or outside stress areas, housing associations can benefit from the new private finance schemes by which £30 million of grant will generate £100 million of new housing investment.

**Mr. Beith:** Is the Minister aware that the Housing Corporation, in its policy statement for the north-east, indicated that there would be virtually no money available for voluntary housing schemes outside the stress areas, such as rural Northumberland and the small towns of Northumberland? Will he try to induce some change in attitude so that there may be some limited voluntary housing development, which is so useful in dealing with problems in those areas?

**Mr. Patten:** I entirely agree with the hon. Gentleman about the problems facing rural areas such as those in his constituency. More money has been made available by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the Housing Corporation for 1987-88. I suggest that the hon. Gentleman has a word with the Housing Corporation. I also hope that he will have a word with his hon. Friend the Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) about that most unparliamentary jersey he is wearing.

**Mr. Jessel:** Within the voluntary sector, is my hon. Friend aware of the excellent work that has been done over 20 years by the Richmond upon Thames Churches Housing Trust, and is that not an encouragement and an example to the rest of the country?

**Mr. Patten:** The housing trust's record is exemplary, like almost all activities in my hon. Friend's constituency.

### Rate Support Grant

17. **Mr. Terry Davis** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations were received in his Department by 19 December 1986 in response to his consultation paper on rate support grant published on 3 December 1986.

**Mr. Chope:** We have received representations from four of the local authority associations and comments from 73 local authorities in response to the consultation paper on rate support grant published on 3 December 1986. In addition, my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government and I have seen deputations from a number of authorities and hon. Members.

**Mr. Davis:** What changes in the proposals have been made as a result?

**Mr. Chope:** As a result of the representations that were made on the earlier consultation paper significant changes were made, but as a result of the substantial support for the revised proposals no changes were made.

**Mr. Phillip Oppenheim:** Has my hon. Friend noted that the Government's failure to propose raising the rate support grant for Derbyshire this year by more than four times the rate of inflation has prompted the Left-wing leader of the county council to describe this action as "shades of a Hitler regime"? Is this not a despicable comment and an insult to the many Conservatives who fought against the Hitler regime in the last war?

**Mr. Chope:** It is an outrageous comment, particularly when Derbyshire is to get an extra £18·4 million in grant next year, and perhaps it is more than many of my hon. Friends would wish. It is right to say that the sort of outrageous comments that Mr. Bookbinder made will ensure that he never gets elected to the House.

### Bed and breakfast Accommodation

18. **Mr. Wainwright** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to seek to reduce, during the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, the number of people living in bed and breakfast accommodation.

**Mr. John Patten:** Local authorities have been asked to concentrate their available resources on homeless people and others in special need; it is for them to decide how to accommodate people whom they have accepted as homeless. Recent Government measures to help reduce reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation were set out in answer to a question by the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on 16 January. Further steps are continually being considered by us and, I am sure, by the authorities most concerned.

**Mr. Wainwright:** Does the Minister not realise that even allowing for the Government's recent changes to the bed and breakfast system, the amount spent on it is exorbitant and would more than cover the cost of building many dwellings for the homeless? Will he explain why he prevents local authorities from spending a higher proportion of council house sale receipts on providing homes for those who are incurring such exorbitant costs?

**Mr. Patten:** Local authorities will always need temporary accommodation to house people while they consider whether to accept them as homeless. It is something that will always be with us under any form of council control. I think that the hon. Gentleman should do more to welcome the substantial increase in provision for the homeless that has been made available by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's allocation of more money to the Housing Corporation so that further accommodation can be built for the homeless.

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton:** Will my hon. Friend give a more sympathetic response to the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Wainwright) and allow a greater percentage of the capital receipts that are received by local authorities to be spent on the building of specialist accommodation, especially for single persons and the elderly, which I believe would go far towards resolving the problems of homelessness? I refer especially to the problems of Macclesfield borough council, which wishes — having abided by everything that successive Governments have asked it to do—to spend money that it has in the bank on the sort of housing that is required in the area for which it is responsible.

**Mr. Patten:** I know how strongly my hon. Friend feels on this issue and I respect his views, as I respect what Macclesfield council has done through its housing policy over the years. We are currently approaching the problem of providing temporary accommodation for the homeless through the extra moneys that have been given to the Housing Corporation, a programme that I hope will continue in future.

## Police Complaints Authority (Report)

3.32 pm

**Mr. Stuart Holland** (Vauxhall): I beg to ask leave to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration, namely,

> "the need for immediate publication by the Government of the report of the Independent Police Complaints Authority into the role of Inspector Douglas Lovelock in the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce."

The matter is specific inasmuch as it concerns both individuals and the issue of police procedures in the use of firearms. It is both important and urgent in terms admitted by the Home Secretary in his letter of 11 November 1985 to Mr. Astel Parkinson of the Lambeth police consultative group, in which he said of the incident involving Mrs Groce:

> "If no charges were to be brought (by the authority) . . . then there would be no such bar to early publication . . . In that situation, if it were to arise, full and early account from the Authority of the circumstances involved would be all the more necessary in the public interest".

This admission by the Home Secretary of the importance of a full and early account from the authority conflicts with his written answer to me published in *Hansard* yesterday that

> "the Police Complaints Authority has received from the commissioner a memorandum under section 90 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 containing proposals in respect of disciplinary action arising from this incident."

He added:

> "Memoranda under section 90 of the 1984 Act are not published."—[*Official Report*, 2 February 1987; Vol. 109, c. *477*.]

However, unless the proceedings of the disciplinary inquiry are published, it will not be clear whether or in what way the Metropolitan police investigated, first, the claim that Inspector Lovelock had worked some 13 hours the previous day on hazardous work including the use of firearms; secondly, whether later that day and on the evening before the raid on Mrs. Groce's home he had been drinking at the same strip club as the nine officers of the Hertfordshire force against whom disciplinary charges are being brought; thirdly, whether he admitted, or stressed either at the time or later during the disciplinary inquiry, that he had been drinking in that club, and that he did not wish to take part in the armed search of Mrs. Groce's home for that reason; fourthly, how it could be, in such circumstances, that a request from a leading officer not to be assigned to the search raid early the following morning could have been refused by more senior officers; fifthly, whether those other officers insisted that he take part in the raid while being aware that he had been drinking and that this was in contravention of a Metropolitan police regulation that no officer should drink alcohol within 24 hours of handling a firearm?

**Mr. Speaker:** One minute more.

**Mr. Holland:** It is widely known that the charges of unlawful and malicious wounding of Mrs. Groce brought against Inspector Lovelock have been dismissed in court. It is clear that Inspector Lovelock could not have borne malice against Mrs. Groce, any more than I bear any malice against him as an individual involved in an incident with so tragic an outcome.

However, this is the third occasion, after the Waldorf and Shorthouse cases, where the police have failed to pursue disciplinary charges against officers involved in the shooting of innocent civilians. Both in terms of the Home Secretary's commitment to publish

> "a full and early account from the (Police Complaints) Authority . . . in the public interest"

and in terms of the principle that justice not only should be done but be seen to be done, the Home Secretary should both publish such an account and make a statement to the House——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman has had his three minutes.

The hon. Gentleman asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he thinks should have urgent consideration, namely,

> "the need for immediate application by the Government of the report of the independent Police Complaints Authority on the role of Inspector Douglas Lovelock in the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce."

I have listened with care to what the hon. Gentleman has said, but I regret that I do not consider the matter that he has raised as being appropriate for discussion under Standing Order No. 20 and, therefore, I cannot submit his application to the House.

*Later*——

**Mr. Patrick Cormack** (Staffordshire, South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is it not a fact that when an hon. Member seeks leave to move the Adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 20 he is supposed to give brief and succinct reasons why the debate should be granted and not make the speech that should be made if you, Mr. Speaker, were to grant the request?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is correct. Such applications are now limited to three minutes, and that is what the hon. Member for Vauxhall (Mr. Holland) had.

## Palace of Westminster (Films)

3.36 pm

**Mr. David Steel** (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. You will have just heard at Question Time Ministers complaining about the abuse of ratepayers' money for party political propaganda. May I draw your attention to the fact that this morning a film called "Keeping the Peace" that has been produced by the Ministry of Defence was shown——

**Mr. Robert Atkins** (South Ribble): Is this a point of order?

**Mr. Steel:** It is a point of order for Mr. Speaker.

The film purports to be objective about the defence policies of this country, but it is suggested that it contains party political material. As it is difficult to judge whether the cost of £181,000 should be borne by the taxpayer through the Ministry of Defence or sent to Conservative Central Office, will you rule, Mr. Speaker, that this is one film that should be shown within the precincts of the Palace at the earliest opportunity?

**Mr. Speaker:** I hope that I shall never be put in the position again of having to rule about films shown within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I apologise for not giving you notice of this point of order.

In your great wisdom, Mr. Speaker, you gave a ruling that, until the House had decided on the issue, the film concerning Zircon should not be shown on the premises of the House of Commons. We are aware that the Leader of the Opposition has stated that he believes that this is a very important matter of national security. However, we read on the tapes today that an Opposition Front Bench spokesman, the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes), intends to spread this wretched film all round Scotland to a wide audience.

Page 154 of "Erskine May" refers to

> "Other indignities offered to either House."

It refers to

> "Other acts besides words spoken or writings published reflecting upon either House or its proceedings which, though they do not tend directly to obstruct or impede either House in the performance of its functions, yet have a tendency to produce this result indirectly by bringing such House into odium, contempt or ridicule"

I am concerned that the Leader of the Opposition does not have either the guts or the ability to control his Front Bench. As the House is likely to be—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Will the hon. Gentleman come to the point of order for me? He has drawn my attention to the relevant part in "Erskine May". At the moment, the film may not be shown within the precincts of the Palace of Westminster, and that is a matter for me. However, if it is shown in Scotland or anywhere else, it is not a matter for me; it is a matter for the Attorney-General.

**Mr. Marlow:** As you know, Mr. Speaker, the ruling is contained under the heading "Breaches of privilege and contempts". This is a further indignity. This House has decided, and you decided, that the film must not be shown here, and the Leader of the Opposition said that the film should not be shown here, yet an hon. Member—an Opposition Front Bench spokesman — is taking the trouble to spread this film around Scotland.

I submit that that brings this House into ridicule. If the film cannot be shown here, how can it be shown in Scotland? When you have made a ruling, Mr. Speaker, how can it be right for any hon. Member, especially a Front Bench spokesman, to take such action? We seek—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I think that I can help the hon. Gentleman. As I understand it, this film was shown in Wales and it was not subject to any injunction at that time. If that is so in Wales, I imagine that it may be so in Scotland.

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c

*Ordered,*

That the draft Nightwear (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 1987 be referred to a Standing Committee on Statutory Instruments, &c.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

# Fixed Parliaments

3.41 pm

**Mr. Tony Banks** (Newham, North-West): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make provision for a fixed five-year term for the duration of Parliament.

I shall not delay the House—I do not want to stand between it and its weekly local government Bill.

Under my Bill, there would be a set date for a general election. Other than at the end of five years, a dissolution would be granted only if the Government of the day lost a formal vote of confidence.

Although present Parliaments can run for a five-year term, it is unusual for that to happen. Since the war, only the Government of 1959 has run the full term. Indeed, the average life of a Government since 1945 has been three years and five months.

My Bill would require the Government, given an adequate working majority by the electorate, to serve out the full term. The Governments of 1945—*[Interruption.]* I suggest that my hon. Friends cool themselves long enough to listen to my presentation. The Governments of 1945, 1951, 1955, 1959, 1966, 1970, 1979 and 1983 all had or have such working majorities, thus making an election before the end of five years technically unnecessary. Yet only the Government of 1959 served their time. We do not yet know whether the present Government, with their fairly massive majority, will do likewise.

In the case of a hung Parliament, or where a Government majority did not survive subsequent by-elections, a defeat on a formal confidence vote would precipitate a general election. Thus, my Bill would not automatically lock a Government into coalition against their wishes. A Government in such a particularly tenuous position could, if they rejected coalition, attempt to govern, and it would then be for Parliament to decide whether to give them support. A defeat on a formal confidence motion would, as I have already said, necessitate an election.

I do not disguise the fact that my Bill would take away the single, most important power enjoyed by a Prime Minister—the power, exercised alone, to determine the date of a general election. Such power is more obviously used to try to wrong-foot the Opposition, but it can be, and indeed it has been, used to threaten disaffected elements within the governing party of the day. I believe that in a democracy such personal power is overweening and undesirable.

It has become almost commonplace for Governments to manipulate the economy in an attempt to create the most favourable circumstances before making a dash for the polls. In party political terms, that is perfectly understandable, and even grudgingly admired if it works. However, such emphasis on short-term electoral fortunes contributes to cynicism among the electorate and creates instability within the economy.

With a fixed Parliament, there would be an end to the debilitating and unsettling media speculation about the date of the election. Such speculation weakens every Government, even those with substantial majorities, and by doing so eventually forces a Prime Minister's hand as the options visibly run out.

In recent months, both the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer have made pleas for more long-term planning within the economy. Yet the uncertainty over the election date makes long-term economic planning exceedingly difficult both domestically and internationally. Fixed Parliaments are normal practice in many other countries, including some of the most economically successful. In Japan, Norway, Switzerland and the United States of America elections cannot be called before their determined time. In West Germany, Belgium and Sweden, Parliaments can be dissolved early but only on a vote of no confidence. As I have already said, my Bill proposes a similar procedure for our own Parliament.

Even with fixed Parliaments, a Government would still seek to coincide economic success with the date of a general election. However, it would be done openly and the electorate would be equally aware if a Government stage-managed a defeat in a confidence vote.

If the House gives me leave to introduce it, the Bill will bring greater political stability, make economic planning less fraught, and restore to Parliament some of the power that has been taken away over the years by the Executive.

**Mr. Geoffrey Dickens** (Littleborough and Saddleworth) *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the hon. Member seek to oppose the Bill?

**Mr. Dickens:** I wish to oppose the Bill for one or two reasons, but I shall not unduly detain the House, Mr. Speaker.

Passage of the Bill would mean that the cries from Opposition parties of "Resign" to a Prime Minister or "Go to the country" to a Government would no longer be heard in this Chamber. Lobby correspondents and political journalists in the Press Gallery would be deprived of the pleasure of speculating when the election might be called. Therefore, I feel very sad that you should seek to deny so many people that pleasure——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It has nothing to do with me!

**Mr. Dickens:** I am very sad that the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Tony Banks) should seek to deprive those people of that great joy and pleasure. As I do not wish unduly to detain the House, I shall not seek to force a vote.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member should sustain his opposition at least to the point of calling "No" when I collect the voices.

**Mr. Andrew Faulds** (Warley, East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am on my feet and putting the Question.

*Question agreed to.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Who will prepare and bring in the Bill?

**Mr. Banks:** Not many takers for this one, Mr. Speaker, but what we lack in quantity we make up for in quality.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Tony Banks and Mr. Austin Mitchell.

### FIXED PARLIAMENTS

Mr. Tony Banks accordingly presented a Bill to make provision for a fixed five-year term for the duration of Parliament: And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be read a Second time upon Friday 24 April and to be printed. [Bill 64.]

# Orders of the Day

## Rate Support Grants Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.*

3.48 pm

**The Minister for Local Government (Dr. Rhodes Boyson):** I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The House has had to consider more than the usual share of local government finance in recent months—*[Interruption.]* I am glad that I have the unanimous approval of the House, at least at the beginning of my speech. I am not sure whether the amount of that legislation is a matter on which I should express my sympathy to the House, or vice versa. As hon. Members are aware, this legislation has arisen, for the most part, because of legal problems or deficiencies in the existing legislation and in the way in which it was thought to operate.

I am pleased to tell the House that the Bill is not of that category. It is a positive measure—*[Interruption.]*—designed to improve the operation of the current rate support grant system, at least until such time as we are able to bring in a new and more satisfactory system of local government finance. My right hon. Friend has already announced his firm intention to introduce legislation no later than the first Session of the next Parliament.

This is a Bill to abolish the procedure known as grant recycling. I shall summarise for hon. Members how the procedure works at present, and the disadvantages of this system, before explaining how the Bill seeks to replace it.

The block grant system may, if Plato will forgive me, be likened to his definition of democracy:

> "A charming form of government, full of variety and disorder, dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike."

That may also be a definition of grant recycling under the present arrangements my right hon. Friend announces, in the context of the rate support grant settlement, the aggregate amount of Exchequer grant available to local authorities for the year in question. From that he deducts the amounts estimated to be required for specific and supplementary grants, and after a further deduction for domestic rate relief grant the balance is the amount of money which he calculates will be available for distribution to local authorities as block grant. He also announces the principles on which that grant is to be distributed and estimates the amount of grant which each authority can expect to receive on the assumption of a certain level of expenditure. Some assumption about expenditure needs to be made at this stage, in order to be able to set the grant-related poundage schedules which govern the distribution of the grant total, and to provide examples of authorities' likely entitlements.

Authorities, however, in this fallen world, do not always spend at the levels we have assumed. Some authorities will turn out to have spent less, and will in most cases then be entitled to more block grant than anticipated. Other authorities will choose to spend more than has been estimated, in the full knowledge that their grant entitlement will decrease accordingly.

Under the present system, if the sum total of actual grant entitlements is calculated to be more or less than the

*[Dr. Rhodes Boyson]*

sum originally made available, the poundage schedule governing grant distribution is reset for all authorities in a supplementary report so that the aggregate of authorities' grants is equal to the original amount. So, when authorities spend more and lose grant entitlement the resulting underclaim is eventually redistributed among all authorities on a common poundage basis. Similarly, if some local authorities underspend and thus receive extra grants, all authorities lose some grant so that the total grant from the Government remains exactly the same. Hence the term recycling. This process continues periodically for some time after the grant year in question as new and better information about authorities' actual expenditure becomes available.

The procedure has several disadvantages, which have become increasingly apparent to the Government and clear to many local authorities. The first and most important of these is that authorities have no certainty about their likely grant entitlements at the crucial stage when they are setting their budgets and their rates for the forthcoming year.

**Mr. Allan Roberts** (Bootle): Will the Minister give an assurance to local government that the Secretary of State's guarantee at the beginning of the 1986-87 financial year that £2·41 million would be given to Sefton through the recycling process be honoured? There may be a little more money. Surely those assurances enable local authorities to plan, knowing that they were guaranteed a certain sum. If that practice were continued, the Minister would not need to pinch money from local authorities.

**Dr. Boyson:** The hon. Gentleman will appreciate that I do not have the details about Sefton with me. Last year a commitment was made that at least £400 million——

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope):** It was £450 million.

**Dr. Boyson:** It was £400 million at the beginning and shortly thereafter a further commitment was made. I am grateful for the help of my hon. Friend. The sum was increased up to £500 million and a press release was circulated.

Grant recycled in 1986-87 is likely to be £611 million, so, to answer the hon. Gentleman's question immediately, I cannot see that there would be any threat to the sum guaranteed to Sefton, depending on its expenditure. However, I shall certainly write to the hon. Gentleman about this. The amount from Government depends on the level of expenditure of a local authority. If a local authority has increased its expenditure greatly, obviously that will have an effect on the grant as the original grant will be reconsidered. Sefton, like every other local authority, will have its share of grant recycling.

**Mr. John Heddle** (Mid-Staffordshire): I should like to follow the point made by the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts). Will my hon. Friend confirm that if the House gives the Bill a Second Reading and it passes through all stages in Committee and the other place, it will have no effect on the rate support grant settlement for 1987-88 and that the rate support grant settlement for the coming financial year is well in advance of that for previous years —some 5·5 per cent.—for those local authorities that are not rate-capped, that is, well above the rate of inflation?

**Dr. Boyson:** I can give my hon. Friend the assurance that he seeks. The Bill deals simply with the question of recycling, not with the original distribution, which has already gone out. The end of recycling means that each local authority will have the grant that has been given to it, provided that it spends at the level of the settlement spending assumption. I can give that straightforward assurance.

**Mr. Robin Squire** (Hornchurch): Does my hon. Friend agree that in general terms the position is similar to that in which, if the Ministry of Defence spent in line with its estimates for any year, it should expect some extra money at the end of the year? At present that is what is happening in local government and that is what the Minister is rightly trying to stop.

**Dr. Boyson:** I agree with my hon. Friend's definition. Without bringing in other Departments, I realise that that was a splendid illustration of what is happening and what the Bill is about.

To continue with what I was saying, the process continues periodically for some time after the grant year in question as new and better information about authorities' actual expenditure becomes available. As I have already said, that procedure has several disadvantages. The first and most important is that when local authorities set their budget they have no certainty as to whether they will have more money coming to them as the year goes on. Obviously, the right time to make firm decisions is at the beginning of the year when the distribution of their money between the various local departments should be made. Relatively large amounts of additional grant can subsequently appear or be lost purely as a result of an authority's spending elsewhere.

**Dr. John Cunningham** (Copeland): I am listening carefully to what the Minister is saying. He should tell the House what has happened to the promises made by the right hon. Member for Mole Valley (Mr. Baker), who is now the Secretary of State for Education and Science. He told the House, particularly Conservative Members, that grant recycling would be used to help bring additional resources to low-spending shire authorities. What has happened to that promise? What has happened to the promise of the present Secretary of State for the Environment, who said that he was bringing an extra £800 million or £900 million in rate support grant for the coming financial year, because the Bill will reduce that amount by at least half? That is the intention of the Bill.

**Dr. Boyson:** The settlement that my right hon. Friend brought out in the summer is 9 per cent. higher than the previous year in Government grant; over £1 billion. No authority needs to lose one penny of that if it spends at settlement level. Settlement spending assumption is 1·5 per cent. higher than inflation. If the £400 million of this year was lost, it would mean that authorities throughout the country were spending at 8·5 per cent. above the previous year. If they lost £600 million this year they would be spending 11 per cent. higher, that is three times the rate of inflation. The hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) is a reasonable individual and he must be as shocked as I am to realise the level of expenditure that would be required to lose grant to that extent.

The hon. Member for Copeland's intervention gives me the opportunity to put on record the fact that if local authorities spent only 0·5 per cent. higher than inflation, at the rate of 4·25 per cent., which is 1 per cent. less than the settlement presumed, they would gain an extra £132 million from the Treasury. The opportunity is present. It is not a game of football in which the intention is to score goals, or a procedure in which the way to get more money from the Treasury is to spend less. However, more money can be obtained by spending 0·5 per cent. over inflation.

I read what the hon. Member for Copeland said last year when this matter was debated. It is surprising, sometimes, how people change sides as time passes. We have all experienced that. On 20 January 1986 the hon. Member for Copeland said:

> "the local government finance system is now much more difficult to understand and predict than before".

I will not disagree with that. Indeed, we are trying to simplify matters and assist understanding throughout the House by introducing this measure. The hon. Member for Copeland went on:

> "The figures issued by the Government on the entitlements of indvidual authorities are misleading, because they ignore the 'close-ending' factor—".

Which is grant re-cycle—

> "The Secretary of State cleverly made seductive promises . . . about what their authorities might get. Does he suppose that responsible councils and treasurers can fix budgets and levy rates and precepts on what they might get out of close-ending? Of course not. He knows that that is a preposterous suggestion. He knows that no responsible local authority would dream of budgeting on that basis." — [*Official Report*, 20 January 1986; Vol. 90, c. 57.]

I rest the whole of the Bill on the comments that the hon. Member for Copeland made then. Indeed, his comments were very responsible.

I would like to continue——

**Mr. Michael Meadowcroft** (Leeds, West): Good.

**Dr. Boyson:** I believe that it is a good thing to continue and I am glad that I have the support at least of the Liberal Benches. Indeed, perhaps the whole alliance may be joined in the desire for me to continue. There may be continuity there, if nowhere else.

As I have already said, these amounts cannot be anticipated and are quite outside an authority's control. Berkshire county council, for example, will this year receive about £39·3 million of block grant on our latest estimates. Of that, some £11·3 million will come from recycled grants—£10·3 million of which the council did not anticipate when it set its budget and rate for the current year.

Many local authorities have complained about the effects of that recycling, even though they stood to gain extra grant this year. Extra grants have been available to Nottinghamshire, Cheshire and many other authorities and these were not expected when the councils set their budgets. I can quote the example of one county council, Dorset, which sent us a long and detailed paper in June last year on the advantages of a new approach which would enable local authorities to calculate their grant with greater certainty and would produce a more direct relationship between an authority's spending decisions and its grant. The approach advocated was exactly along the lines which the Bill seeks to introduce. We have received similar letters from other authorities from which I could quote if there was time.

On the other hand, in 1985-86 for example, initial grant claims exceeded the amount available by £123 million. Therefore, £123 million had to be clawed back from all authorities' entitlements. Clearly that creates quite unacceptable uncertainty for local authorities. A further disadvantage of the present system, of particular concern to the Government, is the fact that any grant recycled when there is an underclaim, is distributed both to high and low spending authorities. Authorities which choose to penalise themselves by spending up, and which lose grant as a consequence, can paradoxically receive back large amounts of windfall grant, regaining on the swings what they quite justifiably lost on the roundabouts.

All that sounds like something from "Alice in Wonderland". Indeed, it brings to mind a piece of nonsense verse by Lewis Carroll which might have been written to describe grant recycling:

> "I gave her one, they gave him two
> You gave us three or more;
> They all returned from him to you,
> Though they were mine before."

Basically, that is what recycling is about.

That, then, is how the system works and why it needs to be changed. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced his proposals to abolish grant re-cycling in July last year. Measures to implement them were foreshadowed in Her Majesty's Gracious Speech at the beginning of this Session and the intention to legislate was confirmed in the House on 13 January when my right hon. Friend announced his firm intentions for next year's rate support grant settlement.

The Bill is, I am sure hon. Members will agree, admirably short, comprising just three clauses.

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** If the Minister is concerned that the present re-cycling system takes money from his so-called overspenders, does not give it to underspenders but distributes the money to all local authorities whether they over or under spend, why does he not introduce a new system which does what he wants—takes from the so-called overspenders and gives it to the underspenders instead of taking it from everyone and giving it to the Treasury?

**Dr. Boyson:** It is not taken from everyone; it is just taken from those authorities which overspend when compared with the assumption. Consideration was given by the Government to the suggestion made by the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts). The disadvantage of his suggestion is that an authority may be spending a lot of money yet an assessment is made on its support grant allocation and that authority may receive money back. Another authority, which is not spending much at all, may not be rewarded because it is assessed against its record in recent years. The difference between authorities' expenditure is considered in recent years. Thus there will be rewards for authorities which do not deserve them under that method.

**Mr. Tim Rathbone** (Lewes): Unfortunately, there is another side to that coin. There are authorities that have been particularly frugal in their expenditure over many years, and which, when there was rate-capping and recycling, were able to recoup some of the grants that they would have received and the support for their low levels of expenditure. That redistribution has been removed and my authority in east Sussex, which has been prained by my hon. Friend's Department year by year, and which has been promised action year after year to correct its balance of expenditure, has this year—not uniquely but as one

*[Mr. Tim Rathbone]*

of very few authorities—had its available cash reduced. There will be no extra funds available later in the year. That problem exists, but the Bill does not tackle it.

**Dr. Boyson:** There are two points in my hon. Friend's intervention. My hon. Friend's points relate to the method of distribution. The basic problem is not recycling or no recycling for some authorities. Rather, the basic problem lies in the way in which the rate support grant is distributed. Because of our suspicion of the way in which the system works at the moment and the disadvantage of the domestic rating and business rating systems, we have suggested that, in the first Session of the next Parliament, we will introduce legislation to change the system.

I accept that within the system there have been advantages to such authorities as Sussex, part of which my hon. Friend the Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone) has the honour to represent. Last summer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gained an excellent settlement of an extra £1 billion of real money—an increase of 9 per cent.—for distribution. More money was put in. However, my hon. Friend's objection relates to the method of distribution. The extra money was only a stop-gap help. There must be a change in the system to help the shires. That will be far more satisfactory in the long run.

The Bill, as hon. Members will agree and as I have already said, is honourably short as it comprises just three clauses. Clause 1 contains the meat of the Bill. It enables the Secretary of State to end the practice of grant recycling by requiring him not to be concerned to distribute the amount of block grant estimated to be available in any previous report. Instead, he may vary the amount of grant payable in any subsequent report. It also enables the Secretary of State to leave out of account new information about authorities' actual or likely total expenditure if he needs, for whatever reason, to determine new principles for grant-related poundages in the supplementary report.

In addition, clause 1 ensures that the Secretary of State can make such assumptions as he considers appropriate about authorities' total expenditure when he sets the poundage schedule in a rate support grant report.

**Mr. Michael Hancock** (Portsmouth, South): Will the Minister give an interpretation of some of the words in the Bill? Last week, when we were discussing the previous Local Government Bill, he said that the interpretation of words was important. What is his interpretation of clause 1(b)(ii)? That can be misinterpreted easily, and I should like, this afternoon, for its meaning to be read in to the record, so that everybody is clear that the Minister knows exactly what it means, and we can then go into Committee bearing in mind what he has said.

**Dr. Boyson:** I look forward to dealing with this important clause in Committee in great detail. Clause 1(b)(ii) is the centre of the Bill. Previously, every time there was a supplementary report, the Secretary of State had to bring all local authorities into line so that the sum going in grant had to be the same as what was previously determined. In this case, there is no such determination. The same £12 billion is going in grant this year. If the authorities overspend, that amount in full will not go out. On the other hand, if authorities underspend, a greater amount will go from the Treasury. Without this, the Secretary of State would have to bring all local authorities into balance in total expenditure, so that every time one local authority over or underspent, it would affect every other local authority.

**Mr. Hancock:** Does that mean that every local authority will be treated the same and the availability for grant will be the same for all local authorities? The clause could be interpreted to read that that was not the case.

**Dr. Boyson:** I hope that I am informing the hon. Gentleman correctly. The rate support grant statement, made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, set out the sum of grant to each authority and presumed a 5·25 per cent. expenditure increase. The difference of grant to each authority will depend on whether it has spent over, below or at the presumed level. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for drawing my attention to this, because this is the kernel of the Bill.

Clause 2 contains a rather technical provision which, though incidental to the abolition of grant recycling, is necessary to ensure the smooth operation of the modified scheme by removing a possible doubt in the existing legislation. This is in the use of the words "the appropriate class" which appear several times in the 1980 Act in describing different types of authority, but which our legal advice suggests may be susceptible to different interpretations in different parts of the Act. Our intention in this clause is to ensure consistency of interpretation, and to clarify that the Secretary of State's ability to consider different types of authority separately when setting the mechanisms for rate support grant reports applies in the same way throughout.

The third and final clause of the Bill, which is the most simple, provides that the Bill shall apply to England and Wales only.

Having seen reports in one newspaper today, I should like to put at rest suspicions about what clauses 1 and 2 are about. We can all agree on clause 3. We are not seeking to validate any actions that were taken on the distribution of grant in London following the abolition of the GLC. Nothing in the Bill does that. The Bill has no bearing on the Greenwich case, which concerns the so-called Bromley error. The definition of classes of authority has no bearing on this. The Bill removes doubt about the precise meaning of part 6 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, as amended by the Rate Support Grant Act 1986. We use this to set grant-related expenditure and grant-related schedules on spending and GRE. We need this to be correct to ensure that we can distribute extra block grant to educational authorities, and not all local authorities, following the Government agreed teachers' pay settlement. The Bill does not seek validatory action by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

In practice, the Bill ensures that the grant-related poundage schedule determined in the rate support grant report to distribute the amount of block grant then available will not be redetermined to take account of the spending decisions of individual authorities. In consequence, any grant not claimed because authorities overall spend more than the settlement will not be paid out. If, overall, authorities claim more grant by spending less, additional grant will be provided subsequently by the Exchequer.

That the abolition of grant recycling will bring greater certainty and stability to authorities' block grants is, I believe generally acknowledged. Many local authority members and officials who have written or come to see my colleagues and I in the course of our consultations on next year's rate support grant have recognised this. The Association of County Councils, the Welsh Counties Committee and the Association of District Councils have welcomes the principle of our proposals, although naturally they and many of the individual authorities who have commented qualify this by wishing that more grant could be made available or that the settlement spending assumption were higher. However, I remind the House that the rate suport grant settlement which my right hon. Friend has announced for 1987-88 is an extremely generous one. It represents an increase of more than £1 billion — or over 9 per cent. — in the total amount of Exchequer grant available to local authorities in England next year—a substantial real terms increase.

Labour Members will probably seek to suggest, as they have done in the past, that the abolition of grant recycling will automatically wipe out part of this increase. That has already been said. This is not true. There is nothing automatic about it. If authorities can restrain their spending increase next year to the settlement assumption —which in England is 5·25 per cent.— in current terms, rate-limited authorities excepted, which is well above the expected level of inflation of 3·75 per cent., they will be able to claim in full the extra block grant made available. I hope they do so.

However, if some authorities choose to increase spending beyond this assumed level, they will lose grant, as is the case now. The difference under the provisions in this Bill is that they can no longer hope to regain some of this grant through recycling. This is a positive benefit of this Bill.

The Bill will put an end to grant recycling and the uncertainties and illogicalities that go with it. In future, local authorities will have much greater certainty as to their grant entitlements. They will know their entitlement for a given level of spending at the time of the settlement, and will be able to calculate what their grant would be for any other level of spending in the knowledge that other authorities' decisions will no longer be able subsequently to change the whole picture. Unlooked-for sums of grant will no longer wash into authorities' accounts long after their rates for the year have been set. Neither will the Government take away grant in order to pay for some sudden increase in another authority's entitlement. An authority's grant will, from now on, if the Bill becomes law, depend on its own spending decision alone, which can only help to improve its accountability to the ratepayer.

The Bill will encourage sensible, responsible and properly planned budgeting by local authorities. I commend it to the House.

4.18 pm

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): On 16 January 1985, a former Secretary of State for the Environment, who was not then, and is not now, a Secretary of State for the Environment, described the debates on local government finance as

"occasions when the disgruntled speak to the disenchanted in front of the disbelieving."

He went on to describe the rate support system as:

"understood only by the initiated . . . byzantine in its complexity . . . fully comprehended only by those who have a taste for scholastic theology". — [*Official Report*, 16 January 1985; Vol. 71, c. 413.]

Two weeks ago, during the debate on the Local Government Finance Bill the hon. Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young), who is also no longer a local government Minister, said that the more the local government finance system was explained to him the less he understood it. This week the Local Government Finance Bill is in another place. It is intended to give retrospective cover to a series of illegal acts committed by a series of four former Secretaries of State for the Environment. That Bill will also remove the legal challenge in the courts to the past exercise of powers by the Secretary of State.

The Bill before us today adds another chapter to the byzantine saga. Like last week's Bill, this Bill has retrospective effect under clause 2. The Minister said that it was not retrospective, but of course it is because it seeks retrospectively to validate past acts. I shall go into that in more detail later. Clause 2 is certainly retrospective. This Bill, together with last week's, removes the challenge in the courts to past rate support grant decisions and introduces new and wide discretions. It is a further part of the tangled mess of the Government's creation.

This Bill like last week's and like the ones we had last year and two years before that, are all developments of the rate support grant system introduced in 1980 by the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine) who, like the others I have mentioned, is no longer a Minister. The right hon. Gentleman gave a broad description of the system in 1980. After listening to the Government's assurances, it is as well to go back and look at how the present system, which is being slightly amended, was described then.

The then Secretary of State, the right hon Member for Henley, announcing the new block grant system, said:

"The new system in no way sets limits to what an authority spends".

That is no longer true, is it? He said:

"nor does it fix the level of an authority's rates."

That is no longer true, is it? He went on:

"Those decisions remain with the authority."

That is no longer true. He went on to say:

"No cash is actually removed from an authority," — [*Official Report*, 5 February 1980; Vol. 978 c. 251-2.]

That is no longer true either, is it? We must look back to the assurances that were given when the sytem was introduced and listen also to the assurances given about last week's Bill and about this week's Bill. We must remind ourselves that this is the 42nd legislative skirmish between the Government and local councils since 1979.

This Bill is only three clauses long and is therefore admirably short, but it is another milestone along the road of muddle and misanthropy, incompetence and illegality, and sometimes plain malevolence, in the administration of the rate support grant system. We have had change after change, penalty after penalty and retrospection after retrospection. It is like the films produced by Sylvester Stallone, the "Rocky" series. Every film has a sequel, although even Sylvester Stallone never got anywhere near the number of sequels being produced by the Government.

To paraphrase and depart only slightly from the wording of the Bill, it will enable the Secretary of State to do as he thinks fit. That is the context in which the Bill is presented, and so far that is a charitable view of the legislation. The financial memorandum could hardly be more obscure. I cannot remember looking at the memorandum on a previous Bill and finding out from something which is supposed to be informative that the Bill may cause more or less money to be spent. That is the

*[Mr. John Fraser]*

least informative piece of information that I have ever seen in a financial memorandum. It is so obscure that it is quite clear that more money could be spent. However, given the Government's record, that is unlikely.

We are talking not about a theoretical world in which local authorities spend only 0·5 per cent. above the rate of inflation, but about the real world in which on the best estimates there will be a loss to local councils, and that means a loss to ratepayers. On one low estimate the loss will be £2 billion to £3 billion. On a higher estimate it will mean a loss to ratepayers and councils of £1,000 million. Those are not exaggerated figures because, as the Minister said, the amount of grant recycled in the current year was £611 million. The Bill has huge financial consequences for local authorities and diminishes the increase in support for local authorities that was promised only last year.

I listened carefully to the Minister because I thought he might invalidate many of the things that I was proposing to say. He said that the recycling system is complicated and creates uncertainty. We knew he would say that because it is in the explanatory memorandum. But he might have said that there is another way of distributing this money with a greater degree of certainty under a different but fair and equitable system for local authorities. Almost everything he said pointed the way to large amounts of this money going back to the Treasury.

The Minister gave his own description of how the present recycling system works. I shall try to give my version of that because local government finance is not as byzantine as some people make out. At present, the rate support grant goes from the taxpayers via the Treasury to local councils. As the Minister said, it is calculated as a fixed global sum which is shared among local councils according to Government assessments, not councils' assessments, of their needs. To some extent it takes into account previous spending records. To say the least, it is a somewhat odd system, because if a local elected council assesses the needs of its electorate as being much greater than the Government's assessment, it is rate-capped, or its grant is withdrawn or, at worst, it suffers both.

If a council disagrees with the Government over the assessment it will be hammered and receive less money. That is a somewhat odd system, but it gets odder. If a council agrees with the Government's assessment of its needs as set out in the grant-related expenditure assessment and tries substantially to move up to the Government's assessment of its needs, it still gets punished —certainly it will not be rewarded.

There is a third aspect of this odd and curious system. If a council disagrees with the Government's assessment of its needs and thinks that the Government have assessed that need as too great, and if the council spends below the Government's assessment of need, it gets some reward. That is the rate support grant system introduced in 1980. Since that system was introduced, the global sum has been allocated to local authorities collectively. Money has been withheld from councils that overspend according to the Government's estimates and, as the Minister explained, that pool of money is redistributed. As well as doing other things, clause 1 enables that money to be seized back by the Treasury instead of being shared by the beneficiaries for whom it was intended.

At present, the system is akin to a tote or a pool in which, even if the odds or the shares are changed, the total distribution will still go to those who are entitled to share in the pool. At least the system has that certainty. The new system that clause 1 introduces allows the Department of the Environment to fiddle the odds. I quote the word "fiddle" from a speech on the rate support grant by the hon. Member for Tiverton (Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop) about a year ago. Under the new system, the Department of the Environment can fiddle the odds and can change the shares rather like the promoter of a lottery or a bookie who puts his hand into the pool and takes some of the punters' money. As I said, the amounts involved are enormous.

If London authorities generally overspend in the forthcoming year by 3 per cent., leakage from the pool will be £112 million in 1987-88. That leakage will be three times greater than the total amount of urban aid given to London local authorities in the forthcoming year as partnership aid, programme aid and other urban assistance. If shire counties overspend—that is the DOE definition of overspend—by an average of 3 per cent. the loss from the pool to the shire counties will be £193 million, and that will wipe out in aggregate all the cash gains that the Minister claims for the current rate support grant settlement. All the cosy consultations between the Secretary of State and Back-Bench Tory MPs will come to nothing.

The same objection is made by the Association of County Councils. They say that, of course, they should like to see clarity and certainty. It says:

> "It was made clear, however, that such support—"

that is, for this new system—

> "was only on the basis that an adequate spending assumption which properly reflects local authorities' spending was used in any RSG Settlement."

This is the crucial part of clause 1. It goes on to say:

> "This would ensure that the full grant pool would be distributed and avoid the unexpected results for 1987-88 whereby it is estimated that some £400m of grant will be returned to the Treasury."

It goes on to state:

> "Since the Association does not regard the assumed spending underlying the 1987-88 Settlement as adequate, nor have any assurances been received for the future, then the total abolition of block grant recycling must be opposed at this time."

The potential losses, even on a 3 per cent. overspend basis, could wipe out all the gains that the authorities are likely to receive.

The figure of 3 per cent., which is a modest one, is not a far-fetched forecast. In the 30 January edition of the *Local Government Chronicle,* I saw the recommended or approved precepts for a number of English counties. They are not loony Left councils—I do not think that there are any loony Left councils—but Left councils that care. Whatever the argument, the councils that I shall mention are not loony Left—some of them are not even Left or centre.

North Yorkshire plans to increase its spending next year by 10·9 per cent. That is well above my 3 per cent. figure. Oxfordshire—the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction, who represents a constituency in Oxfordshire, has departed from the Chamber after his bashing at Question Time—is budgeting for an increase of 15·8 per cent. Somerset is budgeting for an increase of 7·8 per cent. Surrey—no militants are in command in Surrey—is budgeting for a 7·44 per cent. increase in its precept, and Wiltshire is budgeting for an increase of 9·9 per cent. A series of Conservative or middle-of-the-road authorities plan to bring about the grant loss that I put forward.

On Government assumptions, if all local authorities overspend by more than 3 per cent., the loss will be over £400 million. To put that sum in context, that is £70 million greater than the Government expend on arts, libraries and museums. It is close to the total amount that the Department of Environment provides for housing subsidies for local authorities with great housing needs. It is a large loss indeed. I shall translate the recycling loss for individual authorities and give the House some figures. Taking this year's figures as representative, Essex would lose £19 million. Hampshire—I am sure that this is of interest to the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, the hon. Member for Southampton, Itchen (Mr. Chope)—would lose £17 million, and Birmingham would lose £15 million.

I also have figures for some London boroughs. Bearing in mind the Government's interest in law and order, the Metropolitan police will lose £11 million with this system. Hard-pressed boroughs such as Hackney would lose £0·8 million, Islington would lose £1·1 million, and Lambeth — my borough — Southwark and Wandsworth would lose £1·3 million. It is interesting to look at the hard-pressed borough that the Minister represents. On these assumptions, as a result of what he is doing, the borough, of which his constituency forms one third, would lose £3 million. Newham would lose £2 million. I am talking not about inconsequential sums but in some cases about substantial losses, to shires that have been promised a little more as a result of the recycling and, in other cases, money that will go to hard-pressed boroughs that, whatever the circumstances, can do with a little extra assistance.

**Mr. Laurie Pavitt** (Brent, South): My hon. Friend mentioned my borough, Brent, whose representation I share with the Minister. In spite of the Conservative's efforts to keep down rates at all costs, we were left with large bills. The loss of the £3 million will be disastrous because of the legacy that we received from the previous Conservative administration.

**Mr. Fraser:** I am grateful for my hon. Friend's intervention.

I used the word "overspend" because we are talking about Government assumptions. The word assumptions is important. Clause 1 allows the Secretary of State to make virtually whatever assumptions he may with very little chance of court challenge. We are talking about assumptions such as that the homeless do not need to be housed. This afternoon we heard the assumption by the Secretary of State that it is sufficient for the homeless to be put into hostels and bed and breakfast accommodation. I know of children who have begun to eat insects as a result of their stay in bed and breakfast accommodation. Those are the assumptions about which we talk—assumptions that the cold do not need to be warm, that the jobless do not need to be provided with jobs, or that adult illiterates do not need evening classes where they may be assisted and taught to read. The Government are taking power to make even more assumptions with less likelihood of challenge.

The Minister said that the Bill has the advantage that it removes uncertainty. First, borough and county treasurers are a lot more cunning, canny and clever than they are given credit for. It may be a byzantine system but they do not find it too difficult to operate and to forecast within it. It does not worry the finance officers or the local officer's authorities that, as a result of the recycling system, they, like the London borough of Brent, may receive an extra £3 million that was not covenanted for. Brent and any other hard-pressed borough do not mind that type of uncertainty.

If the Minister were running the premium bonds system, he could remove the uncertainty by abolishing the prizes. That is the sort of system that he brings forward. A few boroughs worry about the bonuses that they get from the recycling system. The argument about certainty will not wash with any authorities. According to experience, the Department and the Treasury will be tempted to deflate local authority expenditure again. That is why all sides of the House ought to have misgivings about the Bill.

Clause 1(3) is highly objectionable. It enables the Secretary of State to discriminate against a single authority. The subsection provides for different assumptions to be made about different authorities. According to the Association of County Councils, that gives the Department the power to victimise an individual local authority. That power does not exist now. I, too, believe that clause 1(3) is obnoxious and I hope that it will be deleted.

Clause 1(3) also gives the power for the first time to create new descriptions of authorities within existing classes without parliamentary approval. Under clause 1(3) it is perfectly possible to distinguish between inner London and outer London boroughs. That power is expressly preserved by a later provision. Theoretically, it would enable the Secretary of State to discriminate between the north and the south, inner and outer districts of urban areas, hung and unhung local authorities and Conservative and Labour authorities. There is no limit to the discrimination that could be exercised under clause 1(3) and it is highly objectionable.

Clause 2 is retrospective and validates discrimination between inner and outer London boroughs. Retrospectively, it may validate favouring Bromley at the expense of a borough like Hackney. Because of clause 4(6) of the Local Government Finance Bill, which is in another place, that cannot be legally challenged. I disagree with the Minister's interpretation of the interaction between these two pieces of legislation. I hope that the other place will ensure that the judge-proofing provisions in the Local Government Finance Bill will spill over into this Bill and that it will look again at the removal of the challenge in the courts to past decisions in relation to London local authority expenditure.

This is a tiny Bill, but small errors can be costly. The amount of money involved is as much as £1 billion. The Bill lets the bookie welsh on the punters' funds and then renders him immune from prosecution in the courts. It is a breach of promise to low-spending authorities and a grave disappointment to those that spend more highly, according to their assessment of need. The Bill deeply disturbs local authorities and their associations, of every colour. It results in the massive loss of rate support grant to the Treasury and is a kind of financial three card trick, similar to the trickery of the figures in the housing investment programme. We hope that the House will agree that the Bill ought not to be given a Second Reading.

4.43 pm

**Mr. John Heddle** (Mid-Staffordshire): I begin by declaring an interest that I have not declared before in the House. I failed O-level maths not once, not twice, but three times. I am quite sure that I join many of my hon. Friends, many Opposition Members and most of my constituents when I say that I do not understand the algebraic formula or the mathematical ramifications of local government finance. Although I may be light on technical ability, I hope that I am not so light on common sense.

In principle, I welcome the Bill. It seeks to streamline an almost incomprehensible system, for the time being, until the party that sits on this side of the Chamber is returned to office at the next general election to enable it thoroughly to overhaul and restructure, on a fairer and a more common-sense basis, the whole system of local government finance.

This Second Reading debate also affords the House an opportunity to dwell on the reservations that some of the local authority associations have expressed. The hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) referred to the reservations of the Association of County Councils. I agree with him about some of those reservations, and I shall dwell on them in a little more detail in a moment.

The debate also provides us with an opportunity to put under the parliamentary microscope the attitudes, behaviour and antics of certain local authorities — the so-called high spenders and profligate authorities—that this Bill, if it becomes an Act, in the not-too-distant future will stop. It is those authorities——

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): Which ones?

**Mr. Heddle:** I refer to those authorities that are controlled by the hon. Gentleman's party, particularly those in inner London.

**Mr. Heffer:** What about Liverpool?

**Mr. Heddle:** Liverpool is quite another matter.

**Mr. Heffer:** Exactly. I thank the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Heddle:** It managed to escape the microscope of the Audit Commission, but it has not escaped the attention of the media, or of industry or commerce. The reason why there is so much unemployment in the hon. Gentleman's constituency and the city of Liverpool is largely the antics of Liverpool city council, high rates and the profligate and wasteful spending of taxpayers' and ratepayers' money.

**Mr. Allan Roberts:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Heddle:** That authority is denying industry and commerce the opportunity to create wealth and therefore to provide jobs for the constituents of the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) and also for the constituents of the hon. Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts), to whom I now give way.

**Mr. Roberts:** I am pleased about that, because the hon. Gentleman is under the illusion that I represent a Liverpool constituency. I do not. I represent a Sefton constituency, one of the lowest rated metropolitan districts in the country. It has been Tory-controlled since 1974 when it was established, and it has a 30 per cent. unemployment rate, which is as high as the unemployment rate in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Walton. Is the unemployment rate in my constituency the result of the antics of the Sefton Tory council and of its leader Ron Watson?

**Mr. Heffer** *rose*——

**Mr. Heddle:** I shall be happy to give way to the hon. Member for Walton.

**Mr. Heffer:** The hon. Gentleman is talking rubbish. In the last three years we have built 3,000 houses in Liverpool and we have taken workers off the dole. The members of my union, the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians and the Transport and General Workers Union have built those houses. We are building sports centres. We have also built a park in the centre of Liverpool, where there was never a park before. We have not indulged in what may be criticised in other parts of the country as profligate spending. We have been doing a good job for the people of Liverpool. However, the Government withheld the support that Liverpool required to carry out its programme. The responsibility for what has happened in Liverpool has to be laid at the Government's door. The local authority has carried out the programme upon which it was elected. That is not profligacy.

**Mr. Heddle:** For the 3,000 new houses that the hon. Gentleman reminded us his union has helped to build, probably 4,000 or 5,000 houses owned by Liverpool city council are lying empty and derelict and attracting vandals and they have been empty for four, five, six, or 12 months or more.

**Mr. Heffer:** Those are multi-storey dwellings that ought to have been pulled down years ago.

**Mr. Heddle:** If he were allowed by you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to continue, the hon. Member for Walton, who makes that intervention from a sedentary position, would remind the House that many multi-storey flats in Liverpool and around that once great city have now, in a partnership between the private and the public sectors, been made habitable and suitable for his constituents and others to occupy.

I shall not dwell further on the problems of Liverpool, but subsequently I shall refer to the problems of the eight inner London authorities that are highlighted in the Audit Commission's recent report. I welcome the Bill because, as my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government said, it will end uncertainty and instability. It will stop grants from being recycled indiscriminately to the high-spending authorities.

The hon. Member for Norwood suggested to my hon. Friend the Minister that if he were in charge of the premium bond system he would cancel the prizes. The difference between the premium bond system and the rate support grant system is that the premium bond holder—whoever he or she is — stands an equal chance of winning. Under the rate support grant system, high spenders and irresponsible councils enjoy the prizes. Under the Bill the prudent local authorities—controlled by both major parties in the past, but now controlled more by the Conservative party—are more likely to get the prizes.

**Mr. John Fraser:** I understand that there is a genuine difference of opinion between hon. Members as to where the money available for recycling should be recycled. But surely we can have an agreement between Conservative Back Benchers and the Opposition that whatever is available for recycling should go to the local authorities not to the Treasury. If an appropriate amendment to that effect is tabled, will the hon. Gentleman support it?

**Mr. Heddle:** I am sorry to disappoint the hon. Gentleman. I agree with the theory that he has just put forward, but I do not agree with the practice. More and more of Liverpool taxpayers' and ratepayers' money has been spent on trying to revitalise Liverpool through derelict land grants and urban development grants, as well as a raft of initiatives introduced by the Government since they were elected in 1979, but, unfortunately, it has not cured the problem. The reason is that the local authorities in Liverpool and on Merseyside have not invested the taxpayers' and ratepayers' money in the most cost-effective and job-creative manner.

My concern about the system of local government finance is not the amount of money that is in the pool, although I agree with the hon. Member for Norwood that the more money there is in the pool the more likely it is to be invested wisely. Enabling the Treasury to recycle the money through the rate support grant system will not necessarily produce a more cost-effective system. The reason for that has already been given by my hon. Friend the Minister in answer to interventions. The rate support grant settlement for 1987-88 is £1 billion more than last year, a 9 per cent. increase on previous years. For all the local authorities that are not rate-capped that will mean a 5·5 per cent., increase in grants which is some 2·5 per cent. above the prevailing rate of inflation. To answer the hon. Member for Norwood, more money is coming from the Treasury, which is due to the Government's overall management of the economy.

I shall turn to the points made by the Association of County Councils. The hon. Member for Norwood referred to the ACC's general objection to the Bill. The hon. Gentleman quoted page 2 of a letter that he received from the ACC today:

> "Since the Association does not regard the issue of spending underlying the 1987-88 settlement as adequate, nor have any assurances been received for the future, then the total abolition of block grant recycling must be opposed this time."

Clearly, there is a difference of opinion between the Government and the ACC as to the adequacy of the money available within the system. As my hon. Friend the Minister said, there is £1 billion more available in the system this year than in previous years.

The letter from the ACC highlights the association's three other reservations, which no doubt are shared by the other local authority associations. These matters, however, can be dealt with in Committee. The letter says:

> "The Bill as framed would not give a future Secretary of State for the Environment any discretion to re-introduce the operation of flowback without other further primary legislation."

In the association's view that is unnecessarily restrictive. The letter continues:

> "The Bill makes no provision for the Secretary of State to be required to consult the local authority associations who represent them on various aspects of the proposals."

In the opinion of the ACC, that omission should be rectified, but that is not a particularly significant point. The association's final point is about the powers granted to the Secretary of State to make different assumptions for the different authorities in clause 1(3).

The ACC says:

> "This is a change from previous practice whereby any assumption would only be applicable to classes of authority, thereby preventing the victimisation of individual authorities. The Association of County Councils is concerned at the potential for the proposed change to be used for a wider purpose than is presently intended, which is to deal with the issue of rate-cap authorities. It is suggested that a more precise definition could be found rather than the rather wide wording presently proposed".

I suspect that my hon. Friend the Minister will agree—between the House giving the Bill a Second reading and a Standing Committee being convened—that that matter can be accommodated in Committee within the framework of the Bill.

The purpose of the Bill is to deny those high-spending and irresponsible authorities which seek, for their own narrow party political advantage—dare I say mongrel dogma—to fly in the face of central Government and try every trick in the creative accountants' book to cause distress to the ratepayers by pursuing narrow party political ends. At this point I believe that my right hon. Friend's proposals are correct. Let us look at the eight inner London authorities that captured the attention of the Audit Commission. Brent is £2·6 million overspent——

**Mr. John Fraser:** It would be helpful if the hon. Gentleman would tell us where we can obtain a copy of the report, because I have been unable to obtain one so far.

**Mr. Heddle:** No doubt the hon. Gentleman has his own sources—the national press, radio and television. I recall sharing a microphone with the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw)—one of the hon. Gentleman's Front-Bench colleagues—on the BBC World Service last Thursday, and he was certainly adequately briefed. The arguments that he put forward to the world at large were not convincing, but he convinced me that he had considerable knowledge of what the Audit Commission's recommendations were.

**Mr. Heffer:** I tried on a green form to obtain a copy of the recommendations before the debate so that I would know exactly what was being said, but I did not obtain a copy. That is disgraceful. A document is being quoted, but when we as Members of Parliament tried to obtain a copy we were unsuccessful. In the old days—I do not know whether the Government have had anything to do with this—these documents were made available. Now one has to put a green form in to obtain one, but I still could not get one in time for today's debate. That is a disgrace.

**Mr. Heddle:** I shall leave the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton to discuss the matter with the hon. Member for Blackburn, who clearly has had the opportunity of putting in either a green card, a yellow card or possibly a gold card and has certainly obtained a copy of the Audit Commission's recommendations.

If recycling were to occur and the Bill were not to be passed by the House, Brent would receive £2·6 million more; Hackney £750,000 more; Haringey £1·6 million more; Islington £1 million more; Lambeth £1·2 million more; Lewisham £750,000 more and Southwark £1·12 million more. Let us look at those authorities through the eyes of the Audit Commission. I shall quote what the Audit Commission says about those high-spending authorities that would benefit from recycling. It refers to housing as a "catalogue of despair" and states:

> "voids, staffing and other costs are 70 per cent. higher than might reasonably be expected, and arrears nearly three times good practice levels".

The Commission states:

*[Mr. Heddle]*

> "none of the authorities appears to be spending per dwelling as much on maintenance as Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster"—

authorities with similar inner-city housing problems. The Audit Commission says that in the eight boroughs

> "the cost of refuse collection was at least 20 per cent. more than it need have been, given local policies and conditions outside the authorities' control".

The Audit Commission's view on these high-spending authorities was that inefficiency and mismanagement were rife and that these local authorities were trying to fly in the face of the prudence practised by the Government. If the Bill does nothing else but deny those local authorities the opportunity to have the money which should go back to the better benefit of the wider public—the ratepayer and the taxpayer—it should receive the wide support of the House.

**Mr. Michael Hancock** (Portsmouth, South): We can all rehearse the arguments about high-spending authorities, but will the hon. Gentleman explain the particular problems with Hampshire, East Sussex, West Sussex, Dorset, Kent and Surrey, which will all suffer? What have they done wrong? They are interested to know what they have done wrong and why they should be punished by the Bill. Will the hon. Gentleman explain how his local authority will benefit from the Bill?

**Mr. Heddle:** No doubt the hon. Gentleman will have the opportunity to catch your eye later, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to speak specifically about Hampshire. I served my local government apprenticeship on Kent council and am proud to have done so. The council certainly has not lobbied me. I suspect that none of my hon. Friends who represent Kent constituencies and who are not in the Chamber have a particular gripe about the Bill. There seem to be no problems with Staffordshire, which is controlled by the Labour party. Apart from a rather wild faction in Stoke-on-Trent, which is becoming wilder by the minute, Staffordshire county council manages its affairs not unreasonably because basically it has a good dialogue with my hon. Friends and me, who represent the eight constituencies in the southern and middle part of the area.

**Mr. Pavitt:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Heddle:** The hon. Gentleman has intervened once already. With respect, I should like to conclude to enable other hon. Members to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I am particularly attracted to the comments of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who, in July, said:

> "authorities will be able to plan their budgets and rates with much greater assurance. Their grant entitlement will depend solely on their own expenditure decisions. It also means a tougher regime for high spenders. They will continue to lose grant if they overspend, but will not then gain on the roundabouts, by getting recycled grant, part of what they lost on the swings."—[*Official Report*, 22 July 1986; Vol. 102, c. 182.]

5.3 pm

**Mr. Alfred Morris** (Manchester, Wythenshawe): I was glad to see the Secretary of State for the Environment on the Treasury Bench, even as a casual visitor to our debate. He cuts a more than slightly ludicrous figure in trying to masquerade as a friend of good local government. The plain truth is that many of the very best people in local government insist that they are now being forced to choose, not only which of their discretionary powers to use, but even which of their legal duties to fulfil.

That is now spectacularly true, in an increasing number of localities, of the legal duties imposed by section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, which is about making life better, or at least bearable, for Britain's 5·5 million disabled people. It is an Act, as the House knows, which I piloted to the statute book and, not unnaturally, I take a very close interest in its implementation. By common consent, the Act is not now being applied as the House intended and some of the worst offenders are those in local government on whom the Secretary of State lavishes most praise.

The right hon. Gentleman is clearly highly pleased at the £500 million that he will be taking from local authorities by ending grant recycling. No doubt he believes that he will be hurting those fantasy monsters which people his nightmares and stalk the pages of much of the press. These so-called ogres of the Left appear very different to the people whom they serve. My purpose in intervening in the debate is to make the Secretary of State listen to those who will really be hurt by his policies. They are not the council leaders, about whom the right hon. Gentleman is so obsessed. They are people with severe disabilities seeking to establish themselves in homes of their own, not least people with mental illness discharged after many years in hospital who find they have nowhere to live.

I am not sure whether the Secretary of State reads *The Guardian*, but I hope that at least he read the letters published on 2 February in reply to the complacent article by the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction. If not, he should now urgently read the letter from three doctors at King's College hospital, in which they describe how a homeless, mentally ill man of 32 recently developed severe frostbite and had to have both his legs amputated. It is people like that man, among others, for whom I want to speak briefly in this debate.

The Department of Health and Social Security has been weak enough over the past seven years in fighting for people with disabilities, but it at least knows what is needed. It knows that local authorities are the only bodies that can nationally provide the care that such people need, but at times DHSS Ministers might just as well be sitting on the Back Benches for all the influence they seem to have, either with the Secretary of State or with the Treasury.

In recent weeks DHSS Ministers have been congratulating themselves on an extra £27 million which they claim to be providing for community care in 1987-88. But what use is £27 million if the Secretary of State then takes back £500 million? How can local authorities possibly provide community care for physically disabled people, for people with mental handicaps or for those suffering from mental illness in these circumstances? How can they, especially in those parts of London that will particularly suffer at the right hon. Gentleman's hands, care for the additional hundreds of people dying of AIDS who want to spend the remainder of their lives in their own homes?

The hon. Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) referred to the Audit Commission. Let me remind the House that on page 34 of its report "Making a Reality of Community Care" the Audit Commission states:

> "Virtually all authorities that provide social services lose grant if they increase spending in real terms."

It continues:

> "Hence, the system used to control expenditure can penalise local ratepayers in authorities implementing Government policy and saving money for the NHS into the bargain. Thus in one authority visited that had pioneered community care for mentally handicapped people in accordance with the Government's guidelines, heavy grant losses were being incurred because the authority was exceeding its GRE in part as a result of this policy."

How does the right hon. Gentleman respond to that penetrating challenge to a policy which is as crackpot as it is self-defeating and inhumane?

I remind the right hon. Gentleman that last summer, with overwhelming support from both sides of this Chamber, the House passed the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986. The new Act placed special emphasis on the problems and needs of severely disabled people leaving institutions. It reached the statute book with the warm blessing of the Government, and the hon. Member for Braintree (Mr. Newton), then the Minister with responsibility for the Disabled, made a clear statement of his intentions on its implementation.

What has happened? Sections 5 and 6 of the Act were due to be brought into force in October. These are absolutely key sections and the delay may have already affected the futures of disabled young people leaving school or further education well into the 1990s. Yet the discussions between Government Departments and local authorities are still utterly bogged down. That is a deeply serious matter and, in the view of the organisations of and for disabled people, a wholly scandalous failure to give effect to the will of this House.

I know that the DHSS is not to blame. The blame lies with the right hon. Gentleman and the Treasury. Local authorities, quite rightly, are not prepared to start implementing the 1986 Act if they know that, if they spend the modest amounts required, they will be clobbered by the right hon. Gentleman. The amounts needed to implement sections 5 and 6 of the Act are a tiny proportion of the £500 million which the right hon. Gentleman is seeking to take from local authorities by ending grant recycling. Indeed, estimates for the implementation of the 1986 Act as a whole amount to only one fifth of that figure.

Ministers must be made to reflect on the fact that their policy of clobbering the long-term sick and disabled is a minority policy even within their own party. I urge all those many right hon. and hon. Members on the Government Benches who gave their full support to the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986 last year to join me in indicating to the Secretary of State for the Environment their determination that the Government must keep to the schedule for its implementation outlined by the present Minister for Health.

If the 1970 Act, supplemented and strengthened as it is by the 1986 Act, is to be applied in the way intended by the House, we need an urgent change in the Government's whole approach to local government finance. They have very badly let down not only social services authorities but disabled people and their families. In place of the gobbledegook with which Environment Ministers now weary the House week by week, I call for a clear and explicit statement that the Government will provide the resources needed for the full and humane implementation of the two Acts.

5.12 pm

**Mr. Robert Banks** (Harrogate): The right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) has spoken on a subject which is very close to his heart with all the authority that he commands in the House on this subject. I hope he will forgive me if I do not follow him specifically on the important points that he has raised this evening.

I was interested to hear the speech of the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) and his reference to his bewilderment over the terminology of the Bill. I share that bewilderment. Unlike my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle), I did manage to get an O-level in maths, but when it comes to working out the intricacies of the rate support grant I do not think that I am any better off than he is.

I was interested when I picked up the Bill to try to determine what it was about, and I must say that I found it extremely difficult. Nevertheless, I turned to the explanatory and financial memorandum——

**Mr. Heffer:** I have heard the argument used that it is byzantine theology, but it is much worse than that, because byzantine theology is very clear: first, they did not accept the Pope and, secondly, they believed that Mary the Mother of God ought to be worshipped as well as Christ himself. This is much worse than that.

**Mr. Banks:** I take the point to heart. I was only going to say that looking at the intricacies of the Bill and the rate support grant is rather like taking the back off a computer and looking at its internal workings—which is rather different from the analogy drawn by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer).

Turning to the explanatory and financial memorandum, my eye fell on these words:

"the Secretary of State determines fresh principles".

I thought it was rather interesting that the word "fresh" was used, and I could not help but wonder what had happened to the stale principles.

According to the memorandum, clause 2 clarifies the words "the appropriate class", but on turning to clause 2 I found myself in a greater fog than ever before. However, the good part about the Bill is that it has a long title, which gives it wide scope, and I want to raise certain points in the debate, as well as refer to amendments which I hope to table at a later date.

There is nothing more difficult than the formulae used for calculating the rate support grant. The stage must have been reached where we shall have to look seriously at the whole system and consider wiping the slate clean and starting again. It has become so incredibly complicated that I cannot but believe that it must require an enormous army of staff to make the interpretations that are necessary to arrive at the grant.

Having been through all this machinery to arrive at an amount for my own constituency borough council, Harrogate, the result is a round figure of £2·5 million. If it had come up with a figure of £2,491,000·50 I might have believed that there was something in the calculations and precision in taking account of all the various elements in that calculation. It amazes me that one ends up with a round figure.

*[Mr. Banks]*

I welcome the benefit that we in Harrogate have derived from the recycling mechanism and the additional grant due to the late change to the grant limitation arrangements. This has been a great help to us. I am sure that removing the safety netting or the capping multipliers would seriously affect the grant arrangement as it affects Harrogate borough council. Without the multiplier, the council's block grant in 1987-88 would be just over £0·75 million, and that would be £1·9 million short of the grant that has been allocated. It is therefore essential, from the point of view of the ratepayers in my constituency, to maintain the present level of protection. I seek the Minister's assurance tonight that there are no plans to make alterations to the safety netting and the capping multiplier system.

Turning now to one or two elements in the calculations used for the rate support grant, I take by way of example density. The density factor is one of the many factors which have to be taken into account. In Harrogate the ward-weighted density is 13·7 persons per hectare, compared with a simple across-the-board density of 1·1 persons per hectare over the whole area. This compares with York—which of course is a relatively dense area—with a ward-weighted density of 37·5 compared with 34·8 persons per hectare on the simple across-the-board density calculation. Any change from the ward to the simple calculation would be of enormous harm to Harrogate borough council and I seek the assurance of my hon. Friend the Minister that there are no plans to make any changes of that sort.

Apart from Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon, the areas in the surrounding district are essentially rural, and this is a factor in the sparsity element that must also be taken into account. The North Yorkshire county council is most grateful to my hon. Friend the Minister for the help that he has given to determine a sparsity factor that will take account of the education needs of the county. He deserves full recognition for that.

There are areas which specialise in bringing in visitors such as holidaymakers, conference visitors and tourists. This practice is growing enormously, and rightly so. There are many jobs to be created from the development of tourist projects and this development is more important in Yorkshire and the north of England generally than in other parts of the United Kingdom.

The figures that are used in the rate support grant take account of day visitors. The correct terminology, which I find curious, is "daytime net inflow", which is the number of people who come to an area during the day. There is reference also to "visitor nights", which means the number of visitors who stay overnight. These designations involve separate calculations and there is scope to rationalise the measurement that is based on the long-distance travel survey that was carried out as long ago as the 1970s.

The crux of the problem for Harrogate and other towns, such as Brighton, Bournemouth, Bristol and Scarborough, which are noted conference towns, lies in taking into account the importance and drawing effect that they have in bringing in visitors from other parts of the country.

Work on the construction of the Harrogate conference centre commenced in the 1970s during the period of hyper inflation. Delays, construction problems and other factors that are still the subject of a study and report contributed to a colossal escalation in cost from an initial £7 million to £8 million base to an outfall of £31 million. As the House will understand, the cost of the centre bears heavily on the backs of the ratepayers in the district. It should be recognised, however, that the centre has established a northern venue of exceptional quality and attraction that caters for conferences of national and international importance. A large and important international medical conference is to be held there and my town will be hosting the Liberal party conference in September. I hope that the tills will be ringing throughout Harrogate while that conference sits.

The problem for Harrogate has been how to alleviate the burden of debt charges on a considerable construction cost. We are grateful to the Government for enabling the borough to extend the borrowing period. That was achieved some years ago. The methodology of calculating grant-related expenditure does not reflect the revenue expenditure for servicing the loan or operating the centre. It is certain, however, that the conference centre is a magnet for Yorkshire and the north, and the benefits to those in the transport business and in other businesses far and wide are without question. The centre has already seen bookings increase by 4 per cent. for 1987, which will increase the occupancy rate to 69 per cent. The rate for the exhibition halls is running at 90 per cent. The council will be issuing tender documents shortly, following the move to put out the catering section to private operation.

It has been set out in the rate support grant consultation paper that airports' debt charges are to be used in the coming financial year in the grant-related expenditure calculation, to the benefit of about 30 local authorities. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has accepted the recommendation that I have just outlined, and others include the substitution of air frost for grass frost in the assessment of grant-related expenditure for highway winter maintenance. That is a good illustration of how detailed and complex the formula has become for arranging for a block grant to be given to a local authority.

I ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to include the debt charges on conference centres in the category into which airport debt charges come. That would benefit Harrogate, Brighton, Bristol and other towns that are faced with the problem of bringing in people from far and wide and contributing to a large extent to the prosperity of an area that is larger than that of the town itself. I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends to give consideration to my request. I shall be seeking in Committee to table an amendment on this issue so that the Committee will have an opportunity to debate the matter fully.

Nothing is more important than using the RSG to give support to authorities, especially those in Yorkshire and the north of England generally, which through environmental schemes and other projects, are making their areas attractive to visitors and giving support to tourism projects which are sponsored by private enterprise or developed in partnership with it. I would far rather see the mechanism used to give support to towns in the north of England, especially those that have high unemployment, than give grants to try to cajole businesses to come to certain areas. If individual areas are made more attractive, they will attract visitors and become more attractive to those who decide about the placing of industries. Greater attractiveness will encourage those from outside to live and settle in the areas that I am talking about and that will be accompanied by the creation of new business enterprise.

I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends again specifically to consider introducing into the formula the debt charges that are carried by authorities which have provided the service of a conference centre. I hope that my right hon. Friend will look favourably upon my request.

5.29 pm

**Mr. Michael Hancock** (Portsmouth, South): First, I must declare an interest. I am a member of Hampshire county council and Portsmouth city council and I shall be involved in the implementation of the Bill once it is enacted.

If I were a cynical person, I would suggest that the Secretary of State's absence from the Chamber is because he has started already to formulate the amendments and new clauses that he will be introducing in Committee. If previous experience is to be taken into account, we might end up with a Bill that is considerably longer than the measure that is before us. It may not resemble the one that we are discussing now. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman's absence is explained by his attempts already to refine the amendments that will be put before us when we consider the Bill in Committee.

It is clear that we are witnessing yet another attack on local authorities and their ability to cope with their problems. The Government have introduced legislation that will supposedly improve local democracy, but I suggest that it will do the opposite. Once again, the legislation will seriously undermine the ability of local authorities to respond properly to the needs of their communities.

I accept that the recycling system produces uncertainties for local authorities. Indeed, when the statement about this legislation was made last year, my hon. Friend the Member for Southwark and Bermondsey (Mr. Hughes) said that we were prepared to support it but that we had strong reservations about the way in which it would be implemented. Now that we have the Bill before us our worst fears have been realised. We have grave reservations about the way in which the Bill will operate. I suggest that the only sensible course of action for hon. Members who care about local authorities is to resist the easy temptation to vote for the Second Reading. I know that we shall vote against it.

**Mr. Squire:** What, all of you?

**Mr. Hancock:** My hon. Friends will rush back from where their endeavours have taken them and we shall all vote in the same Lobby.

The proposed change is something akin to what the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) suggested, when he compared it to taking the prize away from a premium bond holder. I would go further: it is like taking the right of appeal from a condemned man. It certainly removes any uncertainty, but it will not encourage local authorities to believe that they will benefit. Conservative Members have not been able to justify what will happen to many local authorities that will lose out. Many Conservative Members know from experience that their local authorities will suffer. They will not have the expenditure necessary to serve their areas.

The Government are now deliberately endeavouring to embark on a process of underestimating the expenditure assumptions of local authorities. In that way the Treasury can get the money back from the local authorities. The Government are making the task of the local authorities harder. The Government are deliberately underestimating what it takes to run an authority and the only body that will benefit will be the Treasury.

Even if one gives the Government the benefit of every possible doubt, it is suggested that the Exchequer will be some £400 million better off as a result of the legislation. Local authorities will find it more difficult to decide their priorities. The irony is that most local authorities will lose grant and, as a result, the Government will have more money available for tax cuts. It is suggested that the £400 million will be used to bail out the Government's promise of tax reductions. Once again, cynical hon. Members would suggest that there is a degree of logic behind that argument.

The Government have made it clear that not only the high spenders will be affected—most local authorities have benefited from the flowback in the current financial year. Figures produced by the Department suggest that over 500 local authorities have benefited. Therefore, those 500 local authorities, as well as the high spenders, will also suffer. Hampshire is a big spender and will suffer considerably. However, over the past seven years, it followed to the letter Government instructions concerning changes to local government finance. Other local authorities such as West Sussex, Dorset, Kent and Surrey will also be losers under the proposed changes. I do not care that the hon. Members who represent those authorities are not here today, but I am damn sure that the people who live in their constituencies will be concerned that they are not here to defend their ability to use the services of their local authorities.

**Mr. Squire:** I believe that the hon. Gentleman is rather overdoing it. Let me give him a simple analogy. If we follow through the hon. Gentleman's principle, will his party give all Government Departments—whether they have spent above budget, below budget or on budget—extra sums of money each February simply because it is February and it is a nice thing to do?

**Mr. Hancock:** The hon. Gentleman is making a rather silly point. We would make sure that local government expenditure took care of the specific needs of the areas. That expenditure would not be conceived in Marsham street or some other Government Department. It would take into account the proper needs of the community.

The right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) has already discussed the problems facing the disabled. The Government must be embarrassed that many local authorities cannot fulfil their commitments to the disabled in their areas. That cannot be something of which Ministers are proud. I am sure that Conservative Members must be squirming in their seats at the embarrassment to which they and their colleagues in local government have been exposed.

The Association of Metropolitan Authorities has doubts about the necessity for the Bill. It believes that the Bill is necessary to abolish the present system but it focuses attention on the new powers that the Secretary of State is trying to slip in on the Bill's coat tails. The AMA recognises the need for change, but it also recognises the true problem contained in the Bill—the extra powers given to the Secretary of State and their potential effect on local authorities.

*[Mr. Hancock]*

The Trojan horse in the Bill is clause 1(3). It allows the Secretary of State not only to victimise one or more local authority if he does not happen to like its political colour but, alternatively, it allows him to favour individual local authorities if he chooses. We should be concerned about that. The Secretary of State can not only screw down the high spenders but, if it suited him for political purposes, encourage some local authority by giving it more assistance. That takes away any fairness—if that is the right word—in the operation of the system. It affects the way in which the Secretary of State responds to the needs of local government as a whole.

Undoubtedly, that is something that will worry hon. Members and will occupy many hours in Committee. If it is the Government's intention to create a new class of authority — specifically identified as education authorities or rate-capped authorities — that intention should be clearly stated. That should be spelt out and, at the very least, the House should have the opportunity to scrutinise any new expenditure assumption made in subsection (3).

The Minister represents a constituency in the same county as myself, and the county treasurer of Hampshire has described the Bill as being

> "a very severe and unfair mechanism for restraining individual local authority spending."

I do not suggest that Mr. Scotford is anything but a first-class officer who respects the rule of law and the rights of government. However, the fact that he described the effects in such a manner must surely strike a chord in the democratic heart that beats somewhere on the Government Benches. It is not right that a county treasurer should have such an opinion of a Bill of this nature.

I hope that when the Minister replies he will recognise that the proposals in the Bill will mean that the county will lose not £17 million as originally quoted but close on £20 million. Absorbing that sort of loss will mean enormous difficulties. As I said recently—and I had an absurd reply from the Secretary of State—the whole of the planning and transportation department of Hampshire county council would cease to operate. If we tried to share the burden, libraries would be closed, firemen would be ill equipped and there would be fewer poliemen and police cars to patrol the streets to try to curtail the enormous growth in crime that Hampshire has suffered during the past few years. It would mean fewer home helps and a reduction of the ability of the social services to provide adequate and proper care. Hampshire has the second highest number of children in care of any local authority, and the legislation will diminish Hampshire's ability to cope with the problems.

We must carefully study the Bill because it is not good enough. We hope that the Minister will recognise that, sooner or later, the crumbling edifice that has been created during the past seven years—the farcical way in which local government finance is administered—will come tumbling down around us. I am sure that local authorities will welcome the day when they have total control over their income and over their ability to spend it. However, the only way in which that can be achieved is by introducing a system of local income tax, although I do not mean a system similar to that proposed for Scotland, where the poll tax will further diminish the money-raising powers of local authorities.

The rating system is obviously incapable of providing genuine local democracy. We must free local government from centralisation. We must try to give it the impetus it needs to move properly with the times. This Bill will do none of that. In fact, it will make matters worse.

If we are not to paint a very sad picture of the future of our cities, we must heed the report in *The Guardian* on 30 January entitled

> "Ridley rules out rescuing eight Labour councils from £300 million spending gulf."

The final paragraph of the article reports one chief executive of the authorities affected as saying:

> "To argue that without improvements to local government inner London is only a few years behind Harlem and the Bronx is, to be kind, imaginative."

If the Government proceed along their present route—and last week's and today's legislation will undoubtedly lead them along that route—inner London will be on a par not only with Harlem and the Bronx but with many other areas in Britain, and not only those confined to the inner cities. Rural areas will suffer real deprivation because all counties and all councils will suffer. No one in his right mind should welcome this Bill.

5.43 pm

**Mr. Robin Squire** (Hornchurch): With the exception of one or two comments on inner cities, I could not find very much in the speech of the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) with which I could readily agree.

I welcome the legislation, which I regard as a natural consequence of the present system. I apologise to the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) for not having been in the Chamber to hear his speech, but I can assure him that I shall read it.

My right hon. and hon. Friends on the Treasury Bench will be aware that I have had the odd disagreement with the Government about the present system. Since I came to the House seven years ago, I have consistently said that we should move towards a system that dramatically reduces the amounts that are dictated from the centre and gives local authorities a more dynamic and widespread source of funding. However, I am aware that the House would not wish me to go into great detail about that today.

In the context of the present system, the central proposal in this legislation makes a great deal of sense. After all, primarily we are talking about certainty and good housekeeping. I remember that only a few years ago, when the Local Government Act 1982 was passing through the House, the Government attempted to include a provision that would allow them to change the rules during the year. The provision was known as the mid-term holdback, and it would have allowed the Government to go to local authorities half, two thirds or three quarters of the way through the year and take back some of the money that they had said they would give.

That provision was opposed by a number of Conservative Members and by the Opposition, and, for a variety of reasons, it did not happen. Certainly, the principle that guided my opposition to that provision was the same principle as we face today, except that it is the other way around. We are now considering a system—I have endeavoured to get this point across without much success, especially with the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South—under which local authorities, whether they are good or bad, high spenders, medium spenders or low spenders, have fixed their budgets at the beginning of the financial year. They assess their likely income and likely expenditure, taking into account the level of Government support. Then, guess what happens. As if by magic the seventh cavalry comes to the rescue of many authorities and provides more funding. It does not matter whether they "deserve" it—I put the word in inverted commas because there are sensitive souls in the House—it is simply a consequence of the system.

I do not think that, stripped of party-political labels, hon. Members honestly think that that is an intelligent way to budget. It certainly does not impose proper disciplines on local authorities. I am a great defender of local government, and I do not think that even my worst enemies would deny that. I have great faith in the ability of local councils to run their affairs effectively. Given a fixed budget at the beginning of the year, I believe that they can deliver an outturn roughly on the level of budget fixed. It does not in any way encourage a sensible budget-making process to have the present adjustments.

The Association of County Councils—a body to which I listen carefully—spoke, understandably in this context, of the money being lost to the local authorities' pool. I understand what the association means, but to agree with that interpretation would imply that local authorities were acting in concert and that the direct consequence of each of their separate decisions should therefore be retained within local authorities. It is my experience and, I suggest, that of every hon. Member, that local authorities manifestly do not act in concert. Even if we ignored different authorities under different party control and simply considered those under similar party control, we could produce an intersting list of councils that did everything except act in concert. It is, at best, a theory to view the issue as one of some local authority pool being lost.

Linked with good housekeeping is testing the efficiency of local authorities. I believe that many, if not most, local authorities are more efficient than several branches of Government. I have said that before and I shall say it again. As the recent Audit Commission report makes clear—the hon. Member for Liverpool, Walton (Mr. Heffer) referred to this earlier—the level of inefficiency in some authorities is quite appalling. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) went into this matter in some detail, and I do not propose to follow him line by line. I simply wish to highlight two or three brief points arising from the report because it goes to the heart of the whole question of efficiency.

The report demonstrated that the eight London Labour authorities that it named have twice as many staff in post per thousand population as the most deprived metropolitan districts outside London. The implication is that inner London in particular knows deprivation and the cost that that undoubtedly brings. However, there are many areas of high deprivation, but administratively speaking, those areas are spending at twice the level. That is frightening. Secondly, it was discovered that there was a gap of 100 per cent. between expenditure per head in inner London and the most deprived authorities outside the capital.

It is not a question of Socialism. I am the first to go to battle for or against specific policies. I am sure that many Opposition Members would be the first to recognise in their heart of hearts that we are talking about inefficiency and that inefficiency is doing a disservice to the Labour party rather than to the Conservative party.

There are further implications which worry me still more. Many authorities find it difficult to recruit senior staff—those who earn over £25,000 a year. That is a substantial sum. The figures in the Audit Commission report show that, despite the problems of unemployment and all the other difficulties about which we regularly read, those authorities find it enormously difficult to attract qualified senior staff. One consequence may be that some senior and responsible staff appointed may have less ability than we would wish, and, of course, they are prey to the suspicion that they are appointed as much on party political considerations as on ability.

That is always a fear, but it is more of a fear when candidates have to be chosen from among one or two dozen rather than from 100 or 200. I am talking about incompetence rather than about any high-flown Socialist, or even Conservative, theory.

This is a short, but I believe important, Bill. I should be grateful if my hon. Friend the Minister would answer the query raised by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities about the possible interpretation of clause 1(1)*(b)*. The AMA charmingly stresses that the theory could be either malign or benign and, for reasons that will come as no surprise to any hon. Member in the Chamber, the AMA is more naturally concerned about a malign interpretation. The AMA says that the clause

> "allows for differential close-ending of grant entitlements. In other words the Secretary of State may make assumptions on different bases about the spending of individual authorities and therefore potentially drastically alter the block grant entitlements of local authorities, for instance penalising those who do not spend in line with his expenditure assumptions."

It is possible that the AMA is chasing a false hare. Indeed, the words I have quoted were sufficiently surrounded by "ifs" and "ands". However, I hope that my hon. Friend will deal with that matter in his reply.

I do not foresee any major problems with the Bill. Some people say that the Bill will lead to a loss of grant, but I assume that the real argument is that more grant should be given to local authorities under the initial settlement. That is a perfectly valid view. I might find myself manning a similar barricade in many other instances. But the time to make that view known is when the initial allocations are made. The present system, which is a somewhat accidental top up, has little to commend it and it owes nothing to any sort of discipline. When the system is changed by the Bill I am sure that it will be more efficient and effective.

5.55 pm

**Mr. Allan Roberts** (Bootle): I am most disappointed with the speech of the hon. Member for Hornchurch (Mr. Squire), especially as, claiming to be a supporter of local government, he has been my co-conspirator in a number of private Bills to open up local government in terms of access and freedom of information. We want to make everything open and free, except for private meetings to discuss the Bills which we are introducing.

For one who claims to oppose dictation by central Government to local government, the hon. Gentleman made a very strange speech. Indeed, it was a very strange speech for a supporter of local government, damning with faint praise, assenting with civil leer, and—seemingly—without sneering, teaching the rest to sneer. The hon. Gentleman is obviously a supporter of Tory local government rather than local government as a matter of principle.

*[Mr. Allan Roberts]*

The Bill continues a long line of pieces of legislation that the Government have introduced to take more power to the centre and to take away freedom and rights from local democracy. This is the 42nd or 43rd piece of local government legislation, or legislation directly affecting local government, in England, Wales and Scotland since 1979. It is the 16th Bill dealing with local government finance. The Bill is

> "designed to remove this uncertainty by making further provision for calculating the block grant payable."

The Rate Support Grant Bill 1986, now in the other place, is

> "An Act to validate certain block grant determinations already approved by the House of Commons; and to clarify and amend the law relating to rate support grants."

The Local Government Act 1986 is

> "An Act to require rating authorities to set a rate on or before 1st April; to prohibit political publicity and otherwise restrain local authority publicity."

The Local Government Act 1985 is

> "An Act to abolish the Greater London Council and the metropolitan county councils; to transfer their functions to the local authorities in their areas and, in some cases, to other bodies."

The Local Government (Interim Provisions) Act 1984 is

> "An Act to make provision for the composition of the Greater London Council and the metropolitan county councils pending a decision by Parliament on their continued existence."

The Rates Act 1984 is

> "An Act to enable the Secretary of State to limit the rates made and precepts issued by local authorities."

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 is

> "An Act to make amendments for England and Wales of provisions of that part of the law relating to local authorities or highways which is commonly amended by local Acts."

The Local Government Finance Act 1982 is

> "An Act to abolish supplementary rates and supplementary precepts; to require rates and precepts to be made or issued for complete financial years".

I have quoted from the long titles of only a few of the Acts introduced by this Government. It all started with the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, which had the audacity to call itself—and this is how it still reads—

> "An Act to relax controls over local and certain other authorities".

Since that Act we have had a plethora of legislation designed to interfere with the freedom of local government, destroy local democracy and concentrate power not here in Westminster, but in Whitehall, in the Department of the Environment. Under that legislation —and this Bill is no exception—Ministers may take powers unto themselves to penalise one authority and help another at their discretion and by means of their own determinations. If precedent is anything to go by, the decisions have been political, taken by Ministers, to penalise Labour authorities and, supposedly, to help Conservative authorities. Recently, however, even the promises made to Conservative authorities have begun to be broken.

Conservative Members may be surprised to learn that the Bill is not an attack on the so-called loony Left or the Liverpools of this world. It penalises the so-called "underspenders"; it penalises the whole of local government. It will take at least £500 million away from local government.

Conservative Members are concerned that when grant is withdrawn from local authorities that the Government say have overspent, the money is generally redistributed so that every local authority benefits, including those so-called overspenders. So why do we not have before us a Bill to fulfil the promises of previous Tory Secretaries of State to redistribute the grant that is clawed back to the underspenders—to the so-called prudent authorities?

Ron Watson, the then leader of Sefton council, which was Conservative-controlled until last May—it is now hung or, as the Liberals would say, "balanced"—justified his council's support for the rate-capping legislation and for the plethora of legislation increasing central Government's control over local authorities on the ground that under such legislation authorities such as Manchester, which spent a lot of money, would lose grant, while authorities such as his, which wielded the axe with enthusiasm and did everything that the Government asked it to do to cut services and keep the rates down, would benefit in terms of rate support grant.

After many years of Tory control, Sefton is now to lose a significant sum under last year's budget, determined by the Tories, and this year's budget, which will be determined by a hung council. If we assume a 3 per cent. expenditure over the Government's target, Sefton will lose £1·121 million in the next financial year. If it spends 5 per cent. over the Government's target, it will lose £1·869 million. Like the whole of Merseyside, Sefton will suffer, too, from the clawback of grant from the Merseyside police, fire and transport services, which are to lose £4·103 million, £725,000 and £4·391 million respectively. That money will not be redistributed to anyone and it is in addition to the £6 million that has already been taken away from the Merseyside police force in the rate support grant settlement to be given to the shire counties. We are talking about an area with a massive crime wave, which needs all the money that it can get for policing facilities.

That shows the nature and scale of the impositions that the Bill, by ending recycling, will make on hard-hit areas with high unemployment. It will affect not only Labour Liverpool but what was until recently Tory Sefton—one of the lowest rated metropolitan districts in the country, and an authority of what I would describe as the loony Right. Such authorities close schools for the handicapped and learner swimming pools, while at the same time they spend money on fairy lights for Lord street in Southport and provide grants for statues of Red Rum. Those were the loony Right-wing priorities of Sefton, which cut social services, education and other services.

Sefton's reward for making the people in the area suffer and for keeping the rates down is not to be extra grant but an end to grant recycling and the loss of even more grant. In 1980-81 Sefton received £50·237 million in rate support grant; in 1981-82, £47 million; in 1982-83, £45 million; in 1983-84, £45 million; in 1984-85, £43 million; and in 1985-86, £44 million. It is with those massive cuts that this Government have rewarded Conservative-controlled local authorities for cutting services and keeping down the rates. It seems that Sefton's final rate support grant figure for 1986-87 will be only £45·78 million. The budget, introduced by the outgoing Tory administration, meant a massive rate increase of 19 per cent., as well as cuts in service.

I am pleased to say that the change in grant recycling arrangements will not hit the proposals of the Labour group on Sefton council, which are to be put forward for consideration at the next budget meeting. For the first time ever, we have a growth budget—the kind of budget of which any sane, sensible, responsible local authority could be proud. Now that we have got rid of overall Tory control in Sefton, things are looking up. The Labour group proposes an extra £3 million revenue which will allow for the creation of 125 genuine jobs for teachers, home helps, nursery nurses and others in various departments.

The proposed Labour budget earmarks £1·7 million for improvements in education, such as an increased pupil-teacher ratio, repairs and maintenance to the borough's schools, which are neglected and dilapidated, £100,000 for the new GCSE examination and £50,000 for additional discretionary awards. It is scandalous that young students with places in colleges of higher education — students from Liverpool and Manchester or one of the other areas with criticised so-called Left-wing councils — got the grant, but students from Tory-controlled Sefton did not get one and therefore could not go to an institution of higher education.

We are proposing to put that right by providing an extra £50,000 for discretionary awards, a further £20,000 for postgraduate awards, £30,000 for school swimming programmes and £100,000 for the borough's youth service, which is essential in an area of high youth unemployment. The social services will get £750,000, including £40,000 for aids and adaptations for the disabled.

Sefton was the kind of local authority that my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) mentioned. It did not break the rate-capping legislation but it broke the statutory legislation — the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act—by having illegal waiting lists and not providing the necessary services and facilities for the disabled.

We shall also allocate £115,000 to works for the elderly and the mentally infirm. If that is what is meant by the Loony Left, I plead guilty. If the budget proposals and improvements in services in my area and in Southport and Crosby are the kind of thing that Conservative Members want to condemn, I am happy for them to do so and to put their views to the electorate, because all these so-called Left-wing Labour councils have been returned to power over the past few years.

I congratulate Councillor Benton, leader of Sefton's Labour group, on his marvellous statement that Labour's budget, if adopted, would bring good news to the borough's council tenants.

> "We don't propose any rent increase for tenants for this year",

he said, but an increase in repairs and maintenance as a result of the profits which the Tories have made on the housing revenue account, which will not be given back to the tenants in the form of no rent increase and improved repairs and maintenance. He continued:

> "It is the first time for a number of years that we have been in a position to show any growth within Sefton services and we welcome this. We can't in one year restore all the damage done by cuts since 1979, but this will indicate our gradual progression in the present political climate".

That is a major achievement, given that the Government are still cutting grant and are taking away up to £3 million that Sefton would have received next year if recycling had remained and this Bill had not been introduced.

This is a tawdry little Bill. It will pinch at least £400 million from local government. The money is not being taken from Left-wing councils or from overspending councils—I use the Government's term, although I do not believe that they are overspending. Those councils are trying desperately to meet the needs of their areas and to provide the services that are demanded by a higher percentage of one-parent families, greater poverty, more children on free school meals, deprivation and unemployment.

The Government are taking money not only from those who are fighting to provide services but from the whole of local government, including those so-called underspenders that successive Conservative Secretaries of State for the Environment have promised to help. The Government are stealing the money by the back door and giving it to the Treasury so that the Treasury can use it, with other money that it is stealing, for tax cuts in the Budget in preparation for a probable early general election. That is what the Bill is about. It is a scandalous little Bill and it should be rejected.

6.9 pm

**Mr. Bill Michie** (Sheffield, Heeley): I follow my right hon. and hon. Friends in condemning the Bill. It is another blow against local authority democracy. Clause 1 gives the Secretary of State broad discretion on several issues. For example, he may determine the principles for calculating grant-related poundages for the rate support grant report, and any supplementary report, on any basis. He may also make assumptions on any basis about the total expenditure of local authorities. He does not need to match claims for grants from local authorities with the originally determined total of block grant available. He may make wholly different assumptions about the position of individual local authorities.

I recall the Minister's opening remarks when he said that if local authorities spend less they will get more Government money. That might sound reasonable, although it does not make sense for local authorities that are not unreasonable in their spending, but fulfil their obligations, not only to the electorate, but in the provision of services. It is totally unrealistic to say that if an authority spends less money now it will be rewarded later.

I accept that there must be more clarity and certainty, but I do not believe that the Bill will fulfil that obligation either. We should consider the needs of different areas in the country, and the obligations that they place on the appropriate authorities.

It has been said that the Bill is a microscope to consider whether local authorities are efficient, or overspend and are irresponsible. I do not mind a microscope being placed on local authorities, but I should prefer it to cover not just the financial situation but the services and needs of those areas. That is not being done.

The provision of accommodation for the elderly and for social care services is being ignored. The ever-growing pressure of educational needs, especially in inner city areas, and the problems of inner-city deprivation and massive unemployment in areas such as Sheffield are also being ignored. There is also the problem of trying to keep up the morale of people who feel that they are under constant and increasing attack from a Government who do not understand their needs or the pressures on them.

On Monday, I was privileged to be present when Sheffield city council opened a new job project to create as many job opportunities and training facilities as possible within the limitations that have been imposed. It is a good scheme that looks to the future, and looks after the young by giving them something to hope for. However,

*[Mr. Bill Michie]*

because of the massive financial restrictions that have been placed upon the council by the Government, the project will not be as successful as it could be.

**Mr. Martin Flannery** (Sheffield, Hillsborough): My hon. Friend has referred to our city of Sheffield and to the cuts that we have sustained. There have been attacks on the south Yorkshire transport system, and there is massive unemployment. At 4 o'clock this afternoon, I learned that 600 redundancies had just been declared in the large Stockbridge steel works in my constituency. We have to contend with that sort of thing from the Government, in addition to their policy of cuts, cuts and more cuts in every direction.

**Mr. Michie:** I understand what my hon. Friend has said. He has given another example of the tragedy that we are facing. However, there is no way in which the city council can respond because of the continuing restrictions. The problems do not go away, but are with us all the time. The fact that the council cannot react to them because of the lack of finance does not mean that the problem suddenly disappears. It means that, through no fault of their own, ordinary people cannot get the help that would normally be provided by the city council, if all things were fair and equal.

Sheffield is a rate-capped authority, but the fact that it has no recycling money will also affect the Sheffield area in the long term. Last week, a headline in my local paper read, "Residents weep as home closes." The article tells the story of a home that would have been all right had some work been done on it, but it was discovered that the electrics were all wrong. The city council's finances are now so restrained that there is absolutely no way that it can improve such homes to the necessary standards. The old people can be removed from the home that they obviously love and fitted in elsewhere, but the net effect is that other people who need that sort of accommodation will have to stay at home and perhaps be looked after by loved ones. Others may be totally neglected, unless much better financial provision is made.

The services that Sheffield has provided over many years are still needed, but the buildings and services have to change. The longer those buildings are used, the more they cost and the more they will have to be changed to be brought up to modern standards. That work cannot now be done because of the restraints placed on the council. We cannot update the services that have been carried out for between 20 and 50 years.

The Government appear to have taken a microscope to local government but have ignored, or have chosen to ignore—perhaps they do not really understand—those problems.

The Government cannot tell the world to stand still while local authority expenditure is restrained. Although we have had meetings with the Ministers and, I believe, proved our case, the reaction has always been the same.

Some activities that have been carried out by Sheffield city council have been done at the request of central Government, but I do not believe that the council will be able to fulfil them in the future. The Government discuss the efficiency of city councils and local authorities, but we have spelt out to them many times the fact that even the district auditor has commended the city council on its effectiveness and on the value for money that it has been able to achieve in the services that it provides. The attacks have not been made just to save the ratepayers or taxpayers money. There has been a political attack on local authorities. It is an attack on the services that have been provided by caring authorities, and an attack on the services that our citizens require and demand. The Government seem to have taken a tremendous dislike to the caring image that is presented by many local authorities.

I wish to refer to the problem of providing services and especially accommodation for the elderly. This is a catch 22 situation. We all agree with the regulations that place certain standards of care on local authorities. How can a local authority respond to the regulations that have been placed upon it by central Government if the financial restraints are becoming more severe with each year that passes? How can a local authority look after the people that it has to remove from institutions because of a lack of maintenance money or general revenue? What will happen to those who are still waiting to receive those services? Are they to die alone? If there is a tragedy, the blaze of publicity will throw the blame not on central Government, but on the local council, social worker, housing visitor or the health visitor. Neither the problem nor the responsibility lies fully with those people.

We need to try to educate the Government to look at local authorities in a more positive and rational manner. The answers to the problems will not be found by Government officers, but lie within the local communities.

I have already outlined the consequences of this legislation and repeat that life and limb will be put at risk. I know that the Minister met delegations yesterday from the Fire Brigades Union, which tried to spell out exactly what the consequences would be if further restrictions were placed on local government finances. I met that delegation also. Last time I spoke on this subject, I talked about the worry that south Yorkshire would not be able to carry out its statutory responsibilities. I was rather surprised to discover that schools and hospitals are not covered by the so-called statutory responsibility of cover for fire prevention. There is a high risk of the fire service being unable to cover schools and hospitals, again because of a lack of resources. The chief fire officer of south Yorkshire has made it clear that the fire service already operates below the minimum standards required. That makes the probable further restrictions even more worrying. Last year, on 1,500 occasions the fire appliances that were called out to major fires were undermanned. This year the restrictions will make the situation even worse.

I cannot think why we have a financial formula which only takes into account finances in order to put money back into the Treasury pots. Many people are at risk from a lack of care and because the fire services are undermanned, firemen are likely to put themselves in greater danger. Normally local government can respond, and people throughout the country have enjoyed the benefits of that, but now no services of any consequence can be provided.

6.20 pm

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): The Bill must be opposed and the Labour party will oppose it. It reminds me of the Tory philosophy that I first discovered when I was a councillor in Liverpool many years ago. I was a member of the children's committee and we discussed the possibility of providing three or four bicycles for children in a home. We agreed to do so and then a Tory lady councillor said, "I hope they will be secondhand bicycles." I shall never forget that. I also remember discussing whether we should install central heating in the dormitories of children's homes. One lady, who no doubt lived in a nice house with central heating in every room, including the bedrooms, said, "You don't really need central heating in dormitories. It is better for children not to have it. They grow up strong." That summed up Tory philosophy. The Bill and everything that the Government have done with rate support grants over the years sums up that same Tory philosophy.

Since 1979 the Government have cut £17 billion in rate support grant to local government. Imagine everything that could have been done with that for children, the old, those who need homes to live in and those who are dispossessed. The Bill adds to that problem.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts) has described what has happened on Merseyside and I shall describe what could happen in Liverpool. The settlement amounts to £128·316 million, and before anybody gets enthusiastic about it, they should understand the problems facing Liverpool. We have high levels of unemployment. Despite what Labour authorities have achieved over the past three years, people live in slum properties which should have been pulled down many years ago. We have a drugs problem and terrible pressures, yet what do we find? If the budget exceeds the Department of the Environment's assumption by 3 per cent., local government will lose £7·252 million; if it exceeds the assumption by 5 per cent., it will lose more than £12 million. In other words, the local authority dare not go beyond the Government's limit. Talk about centralised control. The Government talk about freedom, yet they tell local authorities, "Do this or you will suffer worse than you have suffered in the past." That is unacceptable.

I should like to suggest what the Labour party should do when we return to office. First, we should not hesitate to abolish rate capping and the penalty system. Secondly, we should abolish surcharges on local councils for carrying out policies which they have said they will follow. We should certainly abolish the disqualification of councillors. Councillors have already been disqualified in Lambeth and some may be disqualified in Liverpool, if the case goes against them. I hope that it does not and that the House of Lords will have enough sense not to agree to their disqualification. However, if they do not, we shall abolish surcharges and the disqualification of decent, ordinary, working people who carry out their policies.

Thirdly, we should restore central Government grant to its level prior to 1979. Some will say that I am asking for too much, but I do not think so. Even if we restore it to the 1979 level, because of the higher costs involved we are not restoring it to the level at which it should be, but only to the level at which it would have been if we had not had the Government's policies. The distribution of rate support grant must certainly be reformed, based on a genuine assessment of local authority needs.

Fourthly, we must introduce special measures through the grant system to assist financially local authorities which have been forced to use creative accountancy measures. Did any of them want to use those measures? Of course not. They were forced into it because they had no choice. That has led to further problems for local authorities.

Fifthly, we should abolish the controls on capital spending to allow local councils the freedom to determine and plan their local capital programmes. Sixthly, we should provide cheap loans to local councils which seek to expand their local capital programmes in order to tackle homelessness and urban deprivation, and to generate employment. Hon. Members who have not read the Church of England's document "Faith in the City" should study it. I refer particularly to Tory Members who often talk about being Christians and members of the Church of England. That document goes beyond what we in the Labour party are advocating.

Seventhly, local authority powers should be extended so that authorities can interven in the local community and economy, particularly in relation to raising the 2p limit on section 137 moneys. Eighthly, we should repeal the Government's privatisation legislation and replace it with both a statutory requirement on minimum pay and conditions for local authority employees and equal opportunities policies.

Finally, we should restore the Greater London council. It is an absolute scandal that it has been abolished. It is wrong for our capital city not to have a local authority covering the whole area. It is an absolute nonsense and it should be restored.

We must bring the police service under democratic control. We must do that on the basis of what we have seen recently. That does not mean political control, as Conservative Members are always saying. It means control by people who are elected and who, if the electorate do not like them, can be turned out. Democratic control is vital.

We must consider the concept of more regional Government in certain areas to deal with the problems.

I hope that I have summed up what I think should be done. Unfortunately, we will not win the vote tonight. The trouble in the House now is that we always win the argument hands down but we lose the vote. In the next election we will not only win the argument but win the vote as well.

6.31 pm

**Mr. Roland Boyes** (Houghton and Washington): I should like to explain why the Newham Members have been unable to be present during the debate. They have been talking to a large number of people who are lobbying because of the effects of local government finance measures on their borough. It should be on the record that Newham is being rate-capped for the first time without any appeal.

The Bill is a squalid one. It is one of a series of squalid Bills introduced in recent weeks which have included retrospective legislation and which have been designed to rob local authorities of power.

I shall put the Bill into context. On 20 January 1986 the Secretary of State for the Environment, now the Secretary of State for Education and Science, said:

> "Under the old system of targets and penalties, the grant lost by the high spenders was surrendered to the Treasury . . . Under the new system, the grant that will be lost by the high spenders will form a pool which will be recycled to local authorities."—[*Official Report*, 20 January 1986; Vol. 90, c. 48.]

The then Secretary of State made much political capital of his decision to introduce grant recycling. Just over one year later we are debating a Bill to bring an end to grant

*[Mr. Roland Boyes]*

recycling. That is not surprising in the context of the way in which the Government have treated local authorities, particularly in respect of finance.

The Government have created a system of local government finance that is so complex, with so many irregularities and illegalities, that the only people benefiting and laughing all the way to the bank are the lawyers. The system is so unsound that it makes one wonder about the lawyers in the Department of the Environment. However, I suspect that their advice has probably been ignored for political expediency. We know with certainty that neither the people who administer the system in the atmosphere of uncertainty nor the people whom they serve benefit. The system, shrouded in illegalities, can be tinkered with no longer. A system which is understood by all, and which gives certainty, must be introduced urgently. The Government have forfeited their opportunity to carry out that task. In fact, if the present Government were measured on their treatment of local government alone they would be relieved of office forthwith, and so they should be.

My hon. Friend the Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) and my other hon. Friends who have spoken have explained in a simple and understandable way how the amount of cash in recycling is arrived at. I shall not waste the time of the House by reiterating what has already been said. On 5 March 1986 the then Secretary of State for the Environment stated in a written answer:

> "On the evidence now available to me about local authority budgets in 1986-87, I am satisfied that there will be a grant underclaim of at least £500 million."—[*Official Report*, 5 March 1986; Vol. 93, c. *190*.]

He continued by declaring his willingness to guarantee that amount.

The Association of County Councils gave a guarded welcome to the scheme. In a press release issued on 5 March it said:

> "The Government's guarantee . . . will bring a welcome degree of certainty to shire counties and counties . . . will nevertheless be glad that this money will benefit ratepayers."

However, the chairman of the association, Mr. John Lovill, pointed out that the £500 million was still a recycling of a total grant that is less in cash terms than in the current financial year.

By 7 May 1986 the Secretary of State had informed the public, through a Department of the Environment press release, that his guarantee to recycle £500 million would not be called upon. His officials had discovered a grant underclaim of £628 million that was available for distribution to local authorities. I am sure that the fact that that announcement was made to the newspapers less than 24 hours before polling began for the by-elections in Derbyshire, West and Ryedale was purely coincidental. The Department said that it was a routine announcement. Those who believe that must live in a dream world.

The Association of County Councils pointed out in its own press release on 13 May 1986 that the announcement did not represent new money for local authorities. The association's cool attitude led it to say that there was uncertainty about the future of the recycling because the amount would change, as authorities' spending inevitably varied from their budgets. Local authorities do not like uncertainty. However, they must prefer uncertainty about the amount they will get to the certainty of getting nothing. That was to come.

In his first rate support grant settlement consultation paper, 1987-88, the Secretary of State confirmed that grant recycling was to be abolished. He demonstrated his ability to write excellent Orwellian double-speak. In paragraph 5 he proposed to introduce

> "a further change which will provide individual authorities with greater certainty as to their grant entitlement."

In paragraph 6 of the same document he argued that local authorities which overspent were entitled to less grant, which was then redistributed. He continued by saying that one local authority did not know by how much another was going to overspend, so no one knew how much was going to be recycled. The announcement of the amount to be recycled was made late and it was difficult to take into account when setting the rates precept. The Secretary of State, therefore, introduced certainty. Recycling was finally to be ended altogether.

The Secretary of State demonstrated that he was able, not only to write double-speak, but to talk it. On 22 July 1986, during his rate support grant statement for 1987-88, he said that he intended to abolish grant recycling. He said:

> "As a result, authorities will be able to plan their budgets and rates with much greater assurance."

That is an excellent example of Orwellian's new language. My hon. Friend the Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) questioned the Secretary of State on his statement. He said:

> "Is not the Secretary of State also, in his plan to end recycling of grant, effectively saying to local authorities, 'Here is additional money in the settlement, which will be taken away later, almost certainly in at least an equal amount, by the termination of recycling of grant'? Does not that simply mean a massive windfall for the Treasury, which will be used for other purposes than local authority expenditure?"—[*Official Report*, 22 July 1986; Vol. 102, c. 182-83.]

The Secretary of State said that my hon. Friend was wrong about recycling. My hon. Friend was not wrong; he was absolutely correct. Everything said by the Minister today has justified every word said by my hon. Friend. Clearly, it was the Secretary of State who did not understand his own brief.

The treasurer of Somerset county council has estimated that the size of the grant that will be lost in 1987-88 will be over £400 million. This compares with £592 million that would have been lost to English authorities if there had been no grant recycling in 1986-87. It is like management offering its work force a rise of between £8 and £12 during wage negotiations and the next day offering nothing because that removes uncertainty and allows the work force to redistribute its wages with, to use the Secretary of State's phrase, "much greater certainty."

The treasurer of Durham county council, Mr. Kingsley Smith, wrote to me on 13 January 1987. He is a highly respected and experienced chief officer. He wrote:

> "The only advantage will be that the present uncertainty about grant entitlement will be removed. However the cost of removing this uncertainty is prohibitive and I cannot imagine that there is a local authority treasurer in the country who would regard it as a reasonable price to pay."

Because of Mr. Smith's knowledge of the trade, I am certain that he reflects the anxieties of treasurers the length and breadth of England and Wales.

The Government are taxing local authority spending. They are robbing the authorities of cash which the authorities expect and to which they are entitled. That important aspect has been underlined by the county treasurer of Durham. He writes:

> "The point that needs to be emphasised is that the effect of this Bill will be that local authorities collectively will not receive the amount of grant that Parliament believes it is approving for local authorities in the annual rate support grant statement."

Local authorities are being denied cash which Parliament approves for them which they desperately need to deliver the services to the increasing number of people in their areas who need those services.

I want to consider what that means for a specific local authority. David Wishart, the treasurer of the borough of Sunderland, wrote to me about the Bill. He explained that Sunderland spends above its GREA and as a consequence of spending 11 per cent. above GREA it suffered a grant loss of £2·598 million in 1986-87. Based on the returns of estimated expenditure for 1986-87 from local authorities, Sunderland's share of the £628 million available for grant recycling would be £2·735 million, that is to say, £137,000 more than the grant lost. If a similar calculation is made for 1987-88 based on an estimated expenditure of 4·1 per cent. higher than the 1986-87 figure, and the borough spent 11·8 per cent. above GREA, it would lose £1·89 million. If grant recycling was ended, that £1·89 million and the total grant lost by the other local authorities would be retained by the Treasury. Of course, the Government's assumption that spending will increase by only 4·1 per cent. is open to a big question. A treasurer told me that the assumption that expenditure would increase by only a little over 4 per cent. was "clearly ridiculous."

Mr. David Wishart ends his letter by stating:

> "In summarising I would wish to express concern at the Secretary of State's decision to abolish grant recycling, because of the possible effects on Sunderland and similar authorities."

I do not have time this evening to debate all the problems of Sunderland. Suffice it to emphasise that Sunderland has a large unemployment problem and the town has the highest unemployment rate in Great Britain. The Government aim to take away almost £2 million from that authority.

**Mr. David Clelland** (Tyne Bridge): Does my hon. Friend agree that the city of Newscastle, in the metropolitan borough of Gateshead, stands to lose about £10 million as a result of these measures? These authorities share an inner area partnership. As a result of the Government's financial regime the authorities now have to reduce expenditure by more than twice as much as they will receive in inner area partnership grant. Does that not make nonsense of the Government's crocodile tears over the problems of the inner cities?

**Mr. Boyes:** My hon. Friend has made a telling and important point. Indeed, Newcastle could lose between £5 million and £9 million worth of grants, and his local authority—of which he was such a distinguished leader —may lose between £500,000 and £1·6 million. That money is badly needed in the areas that we represent.

The borough of Sunderland is greatly concerned about clause 1 (1)*(b)*(i), because it appears to be too wide in its literal sense. It suggests that the Secretary of State can ignore any information or data that become available. That appears to conflict with the requirement of section 65 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980, as amended by the Rate Support Grants Act 1986, which states that the information required from authorities in order to enable the Secretary of State to produce the rate support grant report must be received

> "in such form and by such date as he may specify".

I also want clarification about clause 1 (1)*(b)*(ii), which could have far-reaching implications. It would appear to give the Secretary of State the power to fix the aggregate amount of block grant available without having any regard to the amount so specified in the RSG settlement.

Clause 2 retrospectively corrects an illegality. The clause has been introduced to prevent adversely affected councils from seeking redress in the courts. The clause will turn out to be a legal minefield. It adds to a local government system created by the Government which is a shambles. The House has spent a considerable amount of time recently debating Bills concerned with retrospective legislaton which have had to be introduced because local authorities took the Government to court for acting illegally and won their cases. Each time we discussed the Bill, a Minister suggested that everything would now be all right.

At the end of the debate on the rates Support Grants Bill the Minister said:

> "We are about to pass a Bill which will clarify the law and make it what it was thought to be in a number of important technical respects in relation to rate support grant settlements."—[*Official Report*, 21 July 1986; Vol. 102, c. 150-51.]

That was the Bill to end all Bills, but very soon we were considering other Bills, and this is the third Bill in quick succession on these matters.

The Secretary of State said in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Bootle (Mr. Roberts):

> "I am the only person who is quite certain what the law is."—[*Official Report*, 16 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. 1055.]

If the right hon. Gentleman is certain about the law, I do not understand why he wants to bring in three Bills—and no one can guess how many more might be introduced—to bring some sanity into the system.

If the Secretary of State understood the law so well, why did the Government have to introduce the Rate Support Grants Act 1986, the Local Government Finance Bill and this Rate Support Grants Bill? Every time that the Government have tried to introduce certainty, they have discovered greater uncertainty. How many more Bills will they introduce before they realise that there are so many problems with the present system that the only honourable thing to do is for the Government to pack their bags, be gone, and let the Opposition create a simple, easily understood and manageable local government system.

6.47 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Christopher Chope):** We have had a full and, by and large, constructive debate this afternoon on what is a simple but important new measure designed to improve the operation of the present rate support grant system. Hon. Members have made interesting and largely relevant contributions. I have listened carefully to the views expressed and will do my best to respond to some of the key points that have been raised.

My hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government has eloquently explained already the need for the Bill and how it achieves its stated objectives, and I do not intend to repeat what he has already made clear. He has also explained the benefits which the Bill will confer on local authorities in terms of great stability and certainty, which explains why many authorities have welcomed the principles and purpose which lie behind it.

Some Opposition Members have raised the spectre of all sorts of misdeeds which they believe my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State may be trying to perpetrate

*[Mr. Christopher Chope]*

under cover of this apparently straightforward measure. I must tell Opposition Members that they are wrong. I am unable to say whether they are wrong through lack of understanding or lack of trust—or perhaps both.

The Bill is intended to abolish the practice of grant recycling, a procedure which has proved a hindrance to good management and sensible budgeting in local government. Local authorities which adopt sensible spending policies have nothing to fear from the provisions of the Bill. It is significant that most of the contributions from Opposition Members came from hon. Members representing high-spending authorities which wish to spend even more. The Bill has implications for such authorities. It will provide a tougher regime for those who choose to push up spending, and that I regard as a further positive advantage offered by the Bill. Hitherto, recycled grant has found its way back indiscriminately to high and low spenders alike. The very high-spending authorities whose spending decisions have reduced their grant entitlement, and have therefore contributed to an aggregate underclaim of grant, find themselves beneficiaries of recycling. Such a situation is unacceptable, and the Bill will bring it to an end.

I stress that the Bill will still allow local authorities to spend at levels of their own choice. However, it ensures that the consequences of their spending decisions, in terms of their entitlement to grant, are clear-cut and flow directly from, and only from, those decisions. The spending levels of other authorities have no bearing on an authority's grant entitlement. Overspending elsewhere will not affect that entitlement. This is important in promoting certainty as to grant entitlement at a very early stage, when budgets are being set and rate levels discussed, and in achieving a greater level of local accountability. Ratepayers will be able to see with the utmost clarity just what the effects of profligate spending are.

**Mr. Heffer:** What does "profligate spending" mean? Does it mean building homes and sports centres for the unemployed youth, or putting telephones into old people's homes?

**Mr. Chope:** If the hon. Gentleman had been present earlier today——

**Mr. Heffer:** I have been here all the time.

**Mr. Chope:** If the hon. Gentleman had been present this morning when I was addressing a seminar organised by the *Local Government Chronicle*, he would have been able to have the benefit of a detailed analysis of exactly how much money is being wasted unnecessarily in local government, and how much can be saved. We intend to make six particular services the subject of compulsory competitive tender. Even if only 10 per cent. savings are made on those services—that is a modest estimate having regard to the savings made by those authorities which have already gone in for competitive tendering — that will save £250 million. I do not expect to convince the hon. Gentleman about this, because I read in the newspapers that he regards the present Liverpool city council as the best that there has ever been in Liverpool. If that is his view, that shows how wide is the chasm between us and how difficult it will be to reach an understanding on these matters.

We have been asked when the Bill's provisions will apply. There will be no grant recycling in 1987-88, but for the remainder of the financial year 1986-87 grant will continue to be recycled. The guarantees given by my right hon. Friend the previous Secretary of State that £500 million would be available in the first supplementary report for 1986-87 will be implemented when that report is made. That will be as soon as the Local Government Finance Bill has received Royal Assent. Some £618 million will be recycled by that report. However, that is only the first supplementary report in 1986-87, and subsequent supplementary reports will be produced in due course. I cannot comment about those.

The hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) suggested that, on what he called a low estimate of the Bill's proposals, it would cause two thirds of a billion pounds to be lost. A higher estimate was that £1 billion would be lost. There is an amazing contrast between that and what the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) has said. He suggested that the cost would be about £400 million. There is a lack of consistency here.

I am able to tell the House that both hon. Members are wrong. Their assumption is that local authorities will carry on massively overspending, and if that assumption is proved correct those authorities will forfeit grant. However, if local authorities do not go on massively overspending, the grant is theirs. They will not lose any grant if they increase spending overall in line with the settlement assumption, which, at 1·5 per cent. above inflation for non-rate-limited authorities, is realistic. Authorities will then be able to claim the full amount of grant available for them next year.

My hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) raised a number of interesting points, in particular his concern about consultation. No special consultation provision is necessary, because of the wide provisions available in part VI of the 1980 Act, which requires consultation on the contents of the rate support grant reports.

A number of comments have been made about clause 2 and the delineation of classes of authority. This delineation is used to enable different determination of GRE, grant-related poundage, multipliers and so on to be made for different types of authorities. This is necessary because of the different functions undertaken by different types of authorities. For example, county councils, metropolitan districts, outer London boroughs, ILEA and the Isles of Scilly are education authorities, while the shire districts, the inner London boroughs and the Common Council of the City of London are not. Our lawyers advise us that there is doubt about whether the definition of classes of authority is consistent throughout part VI, and that is why clause 2 seeks to put all those references on the same footing—that is, using the definitions in sections 53(5) of the 1980 Act, as modified by section 59(11) and schedule 1 to the Rates Support Grants Act 1986. I hope that that will allay some of the fears that have been expressed by Labour Members.

I had hoped that we would hear a bit more about the Labour party's proposals. As far as one can detect from what it has published so far, its proposals envisage the reintroduction of grant recycling and putting no local authority on a negative marginal rate of grant. This would mean that no authority would lose grant if it increased spending, and most would gain grant. That is not the end of what the Labour party says. It says that total grant would be cash-limited, and that means that additional grant would have to come from other authorities. We would thus return to a situation where authorities which exercised good housekeeping would have to pay for the excesses of the high spenders. Labour would not be introducing grant recycling — it would be giving authorities more grant than they expected, but it would be introducing grant clawback, giving authorities less grant than they expected. This has severe implications for all local authorities living within their means and trying to budget sensibly.

The right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) raised a number of detailed points about the disabled. I am as concerned as he is about the disabled. He did not refer to the principal issue that is one of the priorities for local government. His local authority of Manchester increased its number of employees on a full-time equivalent basis by 2,291 between June 1985 and June 1986. How many of those extra employees have been taken on to help the disabled?

**Mr. Alfred Morris:** With their very important responsibilities for local government finance, what consultations have Environment Ministers had with DHSS Ministers and the Treasury about the implications of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986? That is a very important question.

**Mr. Chope:** I shall write to the right hon. Gentleman in answer to that detailed point. Much of his speech was addressed to the implications of the Bill. He suggested that it would take money away from local authorities which would otherwise wish to spend it on the disabled. It is worth pointing out that in Wandsworth, between 1978 and 1985, despite prudent spending by that authority, there was a 27 per cent. increase in home helps and a 38 per cent. increase in the council's stock of sheltered accommodation. That shows that prudent spending is compatible with care for those in greatest need. I do not have time to deal with all the other detailed points raised in the course of the debate. This is an important Bill and deserves the support of the House.

*Question put,* That the Bill be now read a Second time:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 343, Noes 196.

**Division No. 80]** **[7 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Aitken, Jonathan
Alexander, Richard
Alison, Rt Hon Michael
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkins, Rt Hon Sir H.
Atkins, Robert *(South Ribble)*
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Rt Hon K. *(Mole Vall'y)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Beaumont-Dark, Anthony
Bellingham, Henry
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Best, Keith
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biffen, Rt Hon John
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Bottomley, Peter
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butler, Rt Hon Sir Adam
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Critchley, Julian
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dorrell, Stephen
Douglas-Hamilton, Lord J.
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dunn, Robert
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Eggar, Tim
Emery, Sir Peter
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fox, Sir Marcus
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Fry, Peter
Gale, Roger
Galley, Roy
Gardiner, George *(Reigate)*
Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Goodlad, Alastair
Gorst, John
Gow, Ian
Gower, Sir Raymond
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Grylls, Michael
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hampson, Dr Keith
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Havers, Rt Hon Sir Michael
Hawkins, C. *(High Peak)*
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hawksley, Warren
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Hayward, Robert
Heathcoat-Amory, David
Heddle, John
Henderson, Barry
Heseltine, Rt Hon Michael
Hickmet, Richard
Hicks, Robert
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howard, Michael
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howe, Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Hunt, John *(Ravensbourne)*
Hunter, Andrew
Hurd, Rt Hon Douglas
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Knox, David
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lawson, Rt Hon Nigel
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman

Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Moate, Roger
Monro, Sir Hector
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Moore, Rt Hon John
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Moynihan, Hon C.
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Normanton, Tom
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Parkinson, Rt Hon Cecil
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Porter, Barry
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Price, Sir David
Prior, Rt Hon James
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Renton, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rost, Peter
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shepherd, Colin *(Hereford)*
Shepherd, Richard *(Aldridge)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor

Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Tebbit, Rt Hon Norman
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thatcher, Rt Hon Mrs M.
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thorne, Neil *(Ilford S)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Whitney, Raymond
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Robert Boscawen and
Mr. Tony Durant.

## NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.

Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Barron, Kevin
Beckett, Mrs Margaret
Beith, A. J.
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty

Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*
Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Campbell-Savours, Dale
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Carter-Jones, Lewis
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Corbett, Robin
Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Dobson, Frank
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Dunwoody, Hon Mrs G.
Eadie, Alex
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
Garrett, W. E.
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Gourlay, Harry
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hancock, Michael
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Haynes, Frank
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*

Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kaufman, Rt Hon Gerald
Kirkwood, Archy
Lambie, David
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Litherland, Robert
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McGuire, Michael
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McTaggart, Robert
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Mikardo, Ian
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Allan *(Bootle)*
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robertson, George
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Rowlands, Ted
Sedgemore, Brian
Sheerman, Barry
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Smith, Rt Hon J. *(M'ds E)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David

Stott, Roger
Strang, Gavin
Thomas, Dr R. *(Carmarthen)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Thorne, Stan *(Preston)*
Tinn, James
Torney, Tom
Wainwright, R.
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David
Wrigglesworth, Ian

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Ron Davies and
and Mr. Allen McKay.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Bill read a Second time and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).*

## RATE SUPPORT GRANTS BILL [MONEY]

*Queen's Recommendations having been signified—*

*Resolved,*

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Rate Support Grants Bill, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any increase attributable to the provisions of that Act in the sums payable out of money so provided under any other enactment.—*[Mr. Maude.]*

## Security (Search Warrants)

7.10 pm

**Dr. David Owen** (Plymouth, Devonport): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am grateful to the Leader of the House for staying in his place. There is a rumour going around that the Solicitor-General for Scotland is about to issue a statement clarifying what took place in the House yesterday and what was said in another place today. It will be within the memory of the House that the Secretary of State for Scotland, in answer to an intervention that I made, said:

> "as with any Law Officer, in these circumstances the Lord Advocate does not have a dual role—he has a single role as a Law Officer. Secondly, the width of any warrant sought is a matter not for the police or for the Lord Advocate but for the courts."

The Solicitor-General for Scotland, when discussing the responsibilities of the Lord Advocate to secure the search warrant, said:

> "He is there to ensure that, first, the warrant is sufficient to meet its purposes and, secondly, to ensure that it does not go beyond what is required."—[*Official Report,* 3 February 1987; Vol. 109, c. 852-57.]

There is a clear incompatibility between those statements. There has been a further statement in answer to a question from Lord Wilson of Langside, himself a former Lord Advocate, in another place. Frankly, it appears that there now is considerable confusion.

The substantial point is that clarification of the confusion should not be made in three different statements by Scottish Office Ministers. Surely the clarification should be made in the House. As the term "Law Officer" has been used in this matter, it impacts upon the responsibilities of the Attorney-General. With respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would be of great convenience if the Leader of the House will at least assure hon. Members that, on a matter for the House of Commons, no clarification will be made outside the House of Commons and that that should be done at the earliest possible moment.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** The right hon. Gentleman has made his point. I am sure that it will be noted. I am sure also that he realises that it is not a matter for the Chair.

**Mr. Bruce Millan** (Glasgow, Govan): Further to the point of order, Mr. Speaker. It was I who, from the Opposition Benches, first raised the issue during the debate yesterday and asked the Secretary of State to make a clarification there and then. Have you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, had any sign from the Leader of the House or from the Secretary of State for Scotland that we will have a clarification? It is unsatisfactory that this matter, which was crucial to yesterday's debate, was not satisfactorily answered by Ministers. In effect, there was a refusal to answer. The answer was perfectly clear by implication. There was a statement today by the Lord Advocate, in another place, although the Solicitor-General for Scotland was here yesterday, together with the Attorney-General, not to mention the Secretary of State for Scotland who wound up the debate. The matter could have been clarified here yesterday during the debate. Surely, in those circumstances, we are entitled to some response from the Leader of the House at least.

**The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen):** I am not aware that there is an inconsistency, but I shall certainly look at the point that has been raised.

## Parliamentary and Health Service Commissioners Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.*

7.17 pm

**The Minister of State, Privy Council Office (Mr. Richard Luce):** I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second Time.

I am sure that hon. Members will recognise this Bill as a valuable measure and I hope that it will receive support from all hon. Members. Its main aim is to implement the Government's undertaking, given in 1985, to introduce legislation to extend the powers of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to enable him to investigate the activities of non-departmental public bodies, commonly known as quangos, as well as those of Government Departments. It is now almost exactly 20 years since the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner — the first United Kingdom Ombudsman — was established to look into complaints of maladministration against Government Departments. It is perhaps surprising now to recall the doubts expressed at the time about the wisdom of this action and, in particular, whether the Parliamentary Commissioner's activities might not undermine the role of hon. Members in pursuing complaints. The experience of the last 20 years has shown the great value of his role. I am sure that most hon. Members will agree that his investigations have actually strengthened the ability of hon. Members to protect the individual against administrative abuse. I take this chance to commend the Ombudsman, Mr. Anthony Barrowclough, and his staff for the painstaking job that they do.

Hon. Members will recall that the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration recommended this extension of jurisdiction in its report on non-departmental public bodies in the 1983-84 Session. This was an area that the Select Committee had explored some years previously but had delayed making final recommendations until the Government's review on the nature and number of these quangos had been concluded. In its report the Select Committee made clear its view that it would not be appropriate for all quangos to be included and gave considerable thought to the precise bodies to be covered. We must all be grateful for the valuable work of the Committee in mapping out guidelines in this new field under the chairmanship of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North (Sir A. Buck).

In their response, published in July 1985, the Government pointed out that the Select Committee had put forward no evidence of significant maladministration by any of the bodies recommended for inclusion in the PCA's jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the Government accepted that there was a case in principle for extending the PCA's jurisdiction in this way, subject to some further observations on the criteria for defining the bodies which it was appropriate to bring within jurisdiction. We undertook to introduce legislation in due course to implement the proposals—hence this Bill.

The meat of the Bill, dealing with the extension of PCA jurisdiction to quangos, is in clause 1 and the schedule attached to it. Hon. Members will need to note that all provisions of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 apply unchanged to the new bodies, with the exception of the amendment which specifies the bodies that the PCA may investigate.

The existing non-departmental public bodies which it is proposed to bring within jurisdiction are listed in the schedule. The clause provides that further bodies may be added to the schedule in future. It also lays down for parliamentary approval the criteria that such bodies will have to satisfy in order to be listed. These reflect essentially the concept that the bodies should be subject to some degree of ultimate ministerial accountability to Parliament, in that they are dependent for their financing and continuing existence on Government policy.

While this extension of the PCA's jurisdiction is the main purpose of the Bill, we have taken the opportunity to bring forward one or two other useful amendments to existing legislation. First, clauses 2 and 4 propose some changes that are designed to ensure the smooth running of the PCA's or the Health Service Commissioner's office, should it be left unexpectedly without a commissioner. Clause 2 provides for the removal of a commissioner who, possibly through accident or illness, is incapable of carrying out his duties but is so severely incapacitated as to be unable to offer his resignation. The present Acts provide no remedy in such an event, except removal after addresses by both Houses of Parliament—an insensitive and inappropriate procedure.

Clause 4 provides for the appointment of an acting commissioner, should the offices of the PCA or any of the Health Service Commissioners become vacant. The appointment of a new commissioner necessarily takes some time, and while the position remains vacant some important functions, including the presentation to Parliament of reports on completed cases, cannot be carried out. I must stress particularly that both these clauses are precautionary measures to meet an unlikely situation, but should either unwelcome event occur the continuing work of the PCA and the Health Service Commissioner offices would be hampered without them.

In addition, clause 3 introduces a provision to allow Health Service Commissioner reports to be passed to Members of Parliament who have been involved in a complaint. The Health Service Commissioner has felt unable to pass his reports to hon. Members under legislation establishing the offices of Health Commissioners, even where an hon. Member has been instrumental in assisting a constituent, on the grounds that the reports would not be privileged in such circumstances. He has recommended, and the Select Committee has endorsed his view, that this position should be remedied. The Bill provides a convenient opportunity.

Clauses 5 and 6 bring in some changes to the time limits and procedures for complaints to the Health Service Commissioners. The main effect is to extend from three to 12 months the period within which a health authority in England or Wales may itself refer a complaint to the Health Service Commissioner. The Health Service Commissioner considers, and the Select Committee has agreed, that this period is too short and that the longer period, which is already specified in the parallel Scottish legislation, is more appropriate.

In addition to its major provisions, the Bill therefore provides the opportunity to introduce a number of additional modest but useful changes to improve the effectiveness of existing legislation. In all, I think that this is a useful Bill and I hope that it will command general support. I commend it to the House.

7.25 pm

**Mr. Frank Dobson** (Holborn and St. Pancras): There is little likelihood of there being much dispute about whether the Bill ought to be given a Second Reading. Most hon. Members regard it as a relatively meritorious Bill. It is worth reminding those hon. Members who are present that the first British ombudsman — the Parliamentary Commissioner—was created by the Labour party. We welcome any improvement on the scope of that office and on the scope and functioning of the Health Service Commissioner's office. However, we do not think that the Bill goes far enough.

Opposition Members, who believe that a substantial number of services should be provided by public bodies, feel under a greater obligation to make provision for the proper redress of grievances than do Conservative Members, who would prefer to do without public bodies altogether and to privatise everything. Therefore, it is important that those who believe in public services should provide for the redress of grievances.

I intend to concentrate on the functions of the Health Service Commissioner rather than on his functions as Parlimentary Commissioner. My hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) will be concentrating on his activities as Parliamentary Commissioner.

After the Parliamentary Commissioner's report to the Select Committee, it was agreed that his jurisdiction should be extended. However, there are a few curious omissions from the list of bodies that were originally recommended for inclusion. Why the Medical Research Council is to be covered by the Parliamentary Commissioner but the Economic and Social Research Council is not is beyond my grasp. I hope that the Minister will be able to explain that to us. It is also strange that the Scottish Special Housing Association should have been recommended for inclusion but was then excluded by the Government. I shall say no more about these oddities. I am sure that my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East will refer to some more.

A few of the general points that I wish to make spring from long-held personal feelings. I am dubious about the fact that the Parliamentary Commissioner's office is staffed by seconded civil servants. The arrangement in local commissioners' offices, under which people have to apply for a job, obtain it and then go on to the payroll, is superior.

**Mr. Nicholas Soames** (Crawley): The hon. Gentleman says that he thinks it odd that the Parliamentary Commissioner's office is staffed by civil servants. I am sure that he does not mean to imply that they do not do a thoroughly good job.

**Mr. Dobson:** No; they do a throughly good but rather slow job. As they are seconded from the Civil Service, they are open to the criticism that during their investigations they may be influenced by the thought that eventually they may have to return to the poachers, having abandoned their gamekeeping role. We shall need to consider that point.

It is also a fault that the PCA's office employs no lawyers of its own. I am no advocate of the widespread

*[Mr. Dobson]*

employment of lawyers, despite the fact that I represent Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn, which are in my constituency. The Parliamentary Commissioner's office relies on Treasury solicitors for legal advice, which leads to the possibility of Treasury solicitors advising the poacher and the gamekeeper, because Treasury solicitors could be advising the Department complained against and the PCA's office investigating the complaint. There is some dubiety about that arrangement.

**Mr. Alex Carlile** (Montgomery): Does not the hon. Gentleman think that he is being a little grudging to the present Parliamentary Commissioner and his predecessor, who were distinguished lawyers? Does he accept that the independently minded Parliamentary Commissioner would not look for one moment at partisan advice from the Treasury Solicitor?

**Mr. Dobson:** I believe that the hon. Gentleman is a lawyer. Presumably, by his intervention, he is saying that all parliamentary commissioners should be lawyers because they alone will introduce an independent legal element into the office. That seems to be a bit of an absurdity. I do not think that it meets my point.

We cannot expect the Parliamentary Commissioner himself—who has other functions—to mull over detailed legal points which may arise when cases are first submitted for consideration, whether or not they are appropriate for an investigation. That should not be his normal function.

It was a retrograde step—this is to do with the Select Committee, not the Parliamentary Commissioner — to abandon the practice of publishing all the commissioners' reports. The reports should be available and on record. The investigation of complaints is partly carried out to provide proper satisfaction and redress for people who have individual grievances. But, in addition, in many organisations — certainly in well-run commercial organisations — the logging and subsequent analysis of complaints is used to identify patterns of things going wrong in terms of where problems are located, which departments are slipping up and whether a particular procedure appears to be leading to problems. The non-publication of the reports inhibits the proper practice within departments of looking at all the reports to see whether patterns can be discerned so that steps can be taken to prevent problems from arising.

**Sir Antony Buck** (Colchester, North): The hon. Gentleman has raised an interesting point. Does he agree, however, that any report can be published? The report goes to the Member of Parliament, who, with the agreement of his constituent, can publish it. A summary of the departments involved is included in the various reports made by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. One can keep tabs on the number of complaints made against any particular Department, which enables the Committee, of which I have the privilege to be Chairman, to keep tabs on the situation and see what the most sensitive matters are.

**Mr. Dobson:** I accept the latter point made by the distinguished Chairman of the Select Committee that summaries are available, but it would be better if the whole reports were available. No one will have the opportunity to analyse and discern any patterns or recurrent behaviour, just because individual Members of Parliament may publish the reports that they receive.

If there is anything secretive about the PCA's office, the Health Service Commissioner's office is much worse. Sometimes we have to assume that the office must be doing good by stealth. Although I welcome the proposal in the Bill that in future the Health Service Commissioner should disclose reports to Members of Parliament when they have been involved in the submission of a complaint against the Health Service, I think that the practice in the local ombudsman's office — in line with the Local Government Act 1974—would be well applied to the Health Service.

When the local ombudsman issues a report about something that has happened in a local authority, the authority is obliged to make that report available to the public and advertise in local newspapers that it is available to the public. That obligation should be placed on the health authorities, because it is possible now for a report to be made on a health authority, and for no one other than a limited number of members of the authority, or even officers of the authority, to know that a complant has been received, examined and reported on. It would be to everyone's advantage if those reports were to be published.

There are wider criticisms of the complaints machinery within the National Health Service that are not the responsibility of the Select Committee or the Health Service Commissioner. Anybody faced with a complaint about aspects of their health treatment practically needs legal advice to know where to register their complaint.

The family practitioner committees are not subject to the jurisdiction of the Health Service Commissioner. The service committees of the family practitioner committees are a more confusing group of bodies than the family practitioner committees. People may complain to the General Medical Council, to the district health authority or to the Health Service Commissioner, but, if it is a complaint about clinical matters, the commissioner cannot entertain that complaint—there is the further possibility of taking legal action against a health authority.

Despite the fact that I represent the inhabitants of Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn, the last thing that I want to develop in the Health Service is more litigation, which would be expensive and harmful and stifle the spread of medical knowledge. If people think that their honest thoughts may be pursued by someone in the courts, they are less likely to tell their professional colleagues, either by learned papers or in a conference, the reason that X and Y went wrong during a fatal or damaging operation.

All Health Service staff, especially the doctors, should support the wide scope of the Health Service Commissioner in relation to their activities. Family practitioner committees provide 90 per cent. of the service provided by the National Health Service to people in Britain. The Health Service Commissioner might be described as Mr. Ten Per Cent., because he can investigate only about 10 per cent. of the complaints of the activities of the National Health Service. That is fundamentally unsound, it would be sound to extend his jurisdiction over family practitioner committees.

The Labour party believes that the Health Service Commissioner's scope should be extended to cover clinical matters; not to challenge clinical judgment — although that is increasingly happening in the courts at great expense—but so that no one can hide behind the claim that some maladministration within his part of the Health Service was the exercise of clinical judgment.

The Health Service Commissioner before last explained that his office would be capable of carrying out investigations involving clinical aspects of health care, that that would be subject to safeguards and that it would be necessary from time to time to call on expert advice. He said, properly, that he could explain what could be done and that it was up to the likes of us — Members of Parliament — to decide what should be done. Labour Members think that the Health Service Commissioner's activities should be extended to include matters of clinical judgment.

The Labour party believes that the Health Service Commissioner should be able to initiate investigations in some circumstances when no specific complaint has been received and when a matter is brought to the commissioner's attention which suggests to him that it is of significant public importance and that there is a likelihood of maladministration and injustice having occurred but no formal complaint has been received. That would be a useful, sensible development. The various propositions which I have put forward in favour of extending the Health Service Commissioner's jurisdiction in various ways—many of which have been counselled by people who gave evidence to the Select Committee and few of which, if any, have been rejected by the Committee —would be in the interests not just of patients but of professional staff, I believe, if only because of my general fear of the gradual development of harmful litigation in the Health Service.

I turn to John Milton's statement about complaints:

> "when complaints are freely heard, deeply considered, and speedily reformed, then is the utmost bound of civil liberty attained".

That is true. We need systems that are open and make complaining easy. We need to make people feel that they can draw attention to shortcomings. We need to make people confident that, when they think that something has gone wrong, it will be properly considered. We need to make people confident that, if injustice has been done to them, it will be remedied in so far as that is possible. I believe, even if I have been a little critical, that the offices of the various ombudsmen attempt to discharge that task. Any shortcomings in any of the offices spring not from those who work there but from our failure to give them the necessary powers to do the more extended tasks which would be an asset to us all.

7.42 pm

**Sir Antony Buck** (Colchester, North): I am glad to follow the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson). I shall take up two points that he raised before I make my contribution on the generality of the measure.

First, the hon. Gentleman talked of the possibility of clinical judgment being brought within the purview of the Health Service Commissioner. The Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, of which I have the honour to be Chairman, carefully considered that aspect. I have some sympathy with the hon. Gentleman's comments. The Select Committee recommended some years ago that the HSC should not be debarred if there was an element of clinical judgment.

I am bound to say that from time to time the medical profession rather overstates its case. One case which came before the HSC and under our scrutiny involved an old lady of nearly 100 who was moved from hospital A to hospital B. My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) was a distinguished member of that Select Committee and will remember the case well. Certain medical dramatis personae had the nerve to suggest that it was a matter of clinical judgment whether a person of nearly 100 should be moved from hospital A to hospital B at dead of night, when in fact a bed was available in hospital A and the lady need never have been moved. She died soon after. With the help of my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne, the Select Committee gave the medical authorities a fairly tough time.

I have a certain sympathy, therefore, with the suggestion that the Parliamentary Commissioner should not automatically be debarred if there is an element of clinical judgment. When a case involves pure clinical judgment, it is probably a matter for the British Medical Association or the medical authorities. Because of the Select Committee's recommendations, the complaints system in the Health Service was altered. Internal investigations of one authority are now carried out by another authority. We shall have to wait a little to see whether the present system works properly. The Select Committee will wish to return to this subject a little later.

Secondly, the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras said that the Parliamentary Commissioner should be able to investigate of his own accord, and I have a certain sympathy with that view. I submit that there is a way to get over the difficulty. I have said to successive ombudsmen that if, during an investigation, a matter causes them difficulty and they are worried about it, they could well have a word with me as Chairman of the Select Committee or with one of the distinguished Opposition Members who serve on it and we may instigate an investigation.

I suggest that the Bill's proposals are an appropriate amendment to the ombudsman system. This system was created by the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967 and is something of a success story. The Bill reveals the way in which we are prepared to take institutions that have their roots in other countries and adopt and utilise them within our constitution so that our constituents are better served.

I served on the Standing Committee on the legislation that set up the ombudsmen system. At that time the objection was aired that the creation of the ombudsmen system might detract from the position of Members of Parliament. More than one of the foreign witnesses who gave evidence at our Select Committee's later investigation pointed out that every Member of Parliament is, according to some international definition, an ombudsman because Members of Parliament take up cases. The Committee, in preparing its report after the system had been in existence for 10 years, found that about 10,000 constituency cases a year were taken up by Members of Parliament with various Government Departments. Perhaps my right hon. Friend the Minister will give us the updated figures. Every Member of Parliament is, by some international definition, an ombudsman, and long may that continue.

The creation of the ombudsman system has put a further bolt in the armoury of Members of Parliament to look after our constituents. A typical case for a Member of Parliament at our surgeries and advice bureaux involves pensions. Mr. X, a constituent, thinks that he is not getting as much as Mr. Y down the road, so he goes to the local

*[Sir Antony Buck]*

pensions office. He sees a clerk, who may have had a tough morning and who tries to explain as well as he is able, but does not get over to Mr. X, the significance of the difference between the pensions. The constituent goes away dissatisfied. The constituent then comes to see a Member of Parliament and as far as I am concerned I may well not know the answer off the cuff because, like Randolph Churchill, every time I see a decimal point I think of "those damned dots." I am therefore unlikely to be able to solve the problem, but I will take it up with the local office, and in the vast majority of cases it will then be resolved to my satisfaction and that of the constituent. If I can understand it, the constituent will certainly be able to do so.

Once in a while, however, one takes up a case with the local office and finds that things have not gone properly and it seems that there is something of a cover-up mechanism. Before the creation of the ombudsman one would have taken it up with the Minister, but now it can be referred to the ombudsman and he can, and does, do that which we cannot do and cannot even force Ministers to do. He can go through the books with a fine-toothed comb and report to the Member of Parliament, and thus the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of the Member of Parliament and of the constituent.

**Mr. J. F. Pawsey** (Rugby and Kenilworth) *rose*——

**Sir Antony Buck:** I am glad to give way to my hon. Friend, who does such excellent service on our Select Committee.

**Mr. Pawsey:** On the point about Members of Parliament acting as ombudsmen, does my hon. and learned Friend agree that any move towards proportional representation would much reduce the link between the individual Member of Parliament and his constituents? Does he therefore agree that any move in that direction would be entirely reprehensible?

**Sir Antony Buck:** That rather widens the scope of the discussion, but I have always thought that one of the principal arguments against proportional representation is the abolition, which almost inevitably takes place, of the individual, personalised constituency Member of Parliament, whereby an elector knows who his Member of Parliament is and can go and see him, so I think that that is a valid point. However, as we must deal with these things even-handedly, it is interesting to note that if one did away with the constituency Member of Parliament one would probably have to extend the ombudsman system vastly. A country which has got absolutely perfect PR on paper is Israel, and when one talked to Mr. Nebenzahl, who used to be the doyen of ombudsmen, one found that ombudsman rule had almost been substituted for Member of Parliament rule. Devoted as I am to the ombudsman system, I think that it is the job of the elected representatives, not to rule, but certainly to supervise government and be responsible for it.

I am obliged to my hon. Friend for his intervention, although it has taken me farther away from the terms of the Bill than I had intended.

One of the recommendations that we made as a Select Committee which has not been accepted is that there should be a regular annual debate in the House on the work of the Parliamentary Commissioner. Because of my having been lucky in the draw for private Members' notices of motion we have from time to time been able to subject the ombudsman system to parliamentary scrutiny, but I urge the Government to look again at that recommendation, which is on the periphery of the matters which are before us now.

If the ombudsman system is, as I have said, a success story, it is because of the way in which it has been framed and also—this gives me an opportunity to pay a tribute to them—because of the skill and total integrity and efficiency of successive ombudsmen. The first ombudsman, Sir Edmund Compton, was an interesting appointment. He did a superb job, for which one must commend him, because he laid down the guidelines at the creation of the office. That was an admirable appointment, because his last job as a civil servant had been that of Comptroller and Auditor General, so he had ended his life as a civil servant. He is full of life still, I am glad to say, and is especially concerned with musical matters. He is a man of great distinction, and he laid down the ground rules for the ombudsman and laid a firm foundation. He ended his Civil Service career as a quasi-civil servant, and the importance of that will be seen by the House in a moment.

Then came Sir Alan Marre, Sir Idwal Pugh, Sir Cecil Clothier and Mr. Barrowclough. It is interesting that Cecil Clothier, who now does such an important job with the Police Complaints Authority, was the first ombudsman not to have been a civil servant. The Government overreacted at an earlier stage to the recommendation of the Select Committee that the ombudsman should not always be a former civil servant, on the basis that justice must not only be done, but must be seen to be done. While it is true that former civil servants are probably more harsh on those who fall below the high standards they set than an outsider would be, nevertheless it does not seem appropriate for the ombudsman always to be a former civil servant. The Government agreed and said that the next ombudsman would not be a civil servant, and this was an over-reaction, because if there had been someone like Sir Edmund Compton it might have been appropriate for him to be appointed. But since then we have had those who have not been civil servants and have given very distinguished service as parliamentary commissioners—Sir Idwal Pugh, followed by Sir Cecil Clothier and now Mr. Anthony Barrowclough, who upholds well the high traditions of the office.

I wish to commend the provisions of the Bill because they result, as far as I am able to see, directly from the Committee's fourth report and the Government's response to it. I commend my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for having taken note of those recommendations, given effect to them in good measure and, indeed, put some additional bodies within the purview of the parliamentary commissioner. As far as I am able to ascertain with the help of the distinguished Clerk, with whom I went through it with some care, there are now included the Charities Commission, the Commission for the New Towns, the new town development corporations and the urban development corporations. It seems to me that it is good that they should be included, but some non-departmental public bodies which the Select Committee suggested be included have not been so included. Why some of our recommendations have not been accepted could appropriately be dealt with from the Front Bench.

I am particularly glad that one matter is cleared up by the Bill, namely, that of the ability of the commissioner to send the reports of the Health Service Commissioner to Members of Parliament who have been involved in the cases brought before him. It is quite clear that in dealing with Government Departments there is the parliamentary filter, because the reports have to come through a Member of Parliament. So it is clear beyond peradventure that the Member of Parliament sees the reports.

With regard to the Health Service Commissioner, the conduit is different. It was not clear whether the Health Service Commissioner would have been entitled to absolute privilege had he sent the reports to Members of Parliament. I thought it might have been appropriate for the Health Service Commissioner to take the risk because he would undoubtedly have been entitled to qualified privilege and it would have been difficult for any litigant to prove malice, which would have been necessary to displace unqualified privilege. But this lacuna is now filled and, in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee, this has now been included within the ambit of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. I hope very much that this will go through without difficulty, and I am pretty confident that it will.

I hope that the Minister, in winding up, will give his prognostication as to what additional staff may be necessary for the commissioner and whether it will be recommended that, again, some of the staff should not always be former civil servants. There have been occasions on which there have been secondments not from the Civil Service to the Parliamentary Commissioner and the Health Service Commissioner and it may well be appropriate for that to be extended. There is no doubt that those who are seconded from the Civil Service to serve in the ombudsman's office are especially keen to ensure that the highest standards are maintained by their fellows. There is none more jealous of the efficiency of the Civil Service than a civil servant. None the less, it may be appropriate that there should be a greater number seconded from outside the Civil Service on the basis that justice must not only be done, but be seen to be done.

I commend this important measure to the House and I congratulate the Government on bringing it forward. I am glad that they have responded to the Select Committee's requests and that in some instances they have gone slightly further than its recommendations.

8 pm

**Mr. Alex Carlile** (Montgomery): In an interesting diversion a few minutes ago the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) offered us the opportunity to extend the debate beyond the immediate scope of the Bill. The House will be relieved to hear that I do not propose to take advantage of that offered extension; save to say that if we examine the effectiveness of ombudsmen in countries where there is the single transferable vote system of proportional representation, it is clear that they are functioning well. Having said that, I shall address myself to the body of the Bill.

I have the privilege of being the most recent recruit to the Select Committee on the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, of which the hon. and learned Member for Colchester (Sir A. Buck) is a distinguished chairman. I have the advantage of the fresh interest of being a member of the Committee; and the great advantage of being refreshed, and surprisingly so, by realising how effective the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration and the Health Service Commissioner is, as is the Select Committee. As one health authority chairman discovered fairly recently, anyone who falls foul of the criticism of the Commissioner and decides not to accept his recommendations or views does so at his peril. He is dealt with toughly and even roughly by the Select Committee, and rightly so. The fact that the Select Committee is so robust adds power to the undoubted effectiveness and efficacy of the commissioner.

I do not agree with the comments of the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), whom perhaps I should call the hon. Member for Gray's Inn, my own inn, and Lincoln's Inn, that the secondment of civil servants is worthy of criticism. My experience in legal practice is that the gamekeepers who become poachers are the most effective poachers, and vice versa. I have found over the years that former superintendents of police who decide in their retirement to become solicitors' clerks are the most assiduous of instructing solicitors on behalf of the defence. Indeed, they often turn up many possible lines of defence that others would not have imagined possible. The use of seconded civil servants, but not exclusively, as staff for the commissioner is an advantage.

**Mr. Dobson:** Will the hon. and learned Gentleman accept that his simile is not quite accurate? Ex-chief superintendents do not intend usually to return to the police force.

**Mr. Carlile:** I do not believe that there is a jot of evidence to suggest that any of the seconded civil servants are anything other than entirely objective in what they do. I reject any criticism on that score. Having taken the trouble to read the Select Committee's reports and the commissioners' reports for some years before I became a member of the Select Committee, I know that there is no evidence to justify the hon. Gentleman's criticism.

I welcome the Bill because it extends the scope of the commissioner, and I congratulate the Government on introducing it. I would be happier if the commissioner were able to institute inquiries and investigations of his own accord, and it is interesting to note that the previous commissioner, Sir Cecil Clothier—Sir Cecil is now the chairman of the Police Complaints Authority, and its first chairman — has the power in his new capacity to institute investigations without anyone asking him to do so. There is no evidence so far that that power has put him, the police or the public at any disadvantage. It is a longstop power that should be made available to someone of great distinction who is exercising an important role, such as that of the commissioner.

There are some oddities in the schedule and I draw them to the Minister's attention in the hope that at some stage it can be reconsidered. There are certain illogicalities: An example which affects my constituency is that whereas the Development Board for Rural Wales is included among the organisations about which complaints can be made to the commissioner, the Welsh Development Agency is not. It may have escaped the attention of the draftsman of the Bill that in my area the development board carries out almost all the functions of the WDA. In a sense, my constituents will be at an advantage compared with those who live in areas that are not under the aegis of the development board and who merely come under that of the WDA. It seems that there is no logic in that distinction.

*[Mr. Carlile]*

I am disappointed that the Civil Aviation Authority is not included in the schedule. There are many occasions when members of the public have reason to complain to Members about matters which fall within the authority's jurisdiction. I have in mind especially problems caused by aircraft noise and the timetabling of flights into civil airports. In my constituency of Montgomery there is not an international airport as yet, though I am reliably informed that a small airport is shortly to be built in Caersws. That being so, I may be faced with such complaints in due course. I know that many hon. Members receive complaints about matters which concern the CAA and it is disappointing that they cannot be brought to the commissioner's attention.

It is a matter of great disappointment to me that the Monopolies and Mergers Commission will not be open to the commissioner's scrutiny. The Select Committee recommended that the commission should be subject to it. In its response to the Select Committee the Government considered that the commissioner's

"jurisdiction . . . should be extended to certain executive non-departmental public bodies".

These would satisfy two criteria. One of the two inclusive criteria was that the body concerned should have

"executive or administrative functions which directly affect individual citizens or groups of citizens (including companies) and which would be within the PCA's jurisdiction if carried out by a government department".

The second criterion is that there should be

"some degree of ultimate Ministerial accountability to Parliament".

In recent weeks and months great controversy has been raging in the House about matters concerning the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. It is of course fair to point out that controversy concerned ministerial decisions rather than the activities of the Commission. However, one can envisage many different circumstances in which the conclusions of that Commission and, more important, the way in which those conclusions are reached may be questioned. There are few remedies available. It is extremely difficult to obtain a judicial review of the way in which the Commission has reached its conclusions. I hope that early consideration will take place as to whether the Parliamentary Commissioners may scrutinise the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

I do not want to sound grudging in relation to this Bill, which is highly commendable. I am glad to be a member of the Select Committee that will have a wider range of interesting subjects to consider and face a greater challenge in terms of dealing with recalcitrant persons from a broader public body.

8.10 pm

**Mr. Ian Gow** (Eastbourne): Twenty years ago, when you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were in the House and I was not, the Parliamentary Commissioner Bill received Royal Assent. I must confess that if I had been in the House at that time I would have voted against the Bill. However, 10 years ago I had the good fortune to serve as a member of a Select Committee under the chairmanship of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North (Sir A. Buck). It was during that time, as a member of that Committee, that I began to understand the worth and value of the Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1967.

I entirely agreed with my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) when he stressed the importance of the relationship between a constituent and his Member of Parliament. Of most notable importance is the fact that the constituent may say, "That is my Member of Parliament; that is the person who will champion me." I do not want to be led astray, but I wanted to say to my hon. Friend that I entirely agreed with his recommendation.

However diligent a Member of Parliament may be in championing the interests of a constituent, the ombudsman — whether the Parliamentary or Health Service ombudsman — is able to bring added resources to bear when championing the case of a constituent who has suffered injustice as a result of maladministration. Therefore, I am very pleased that the Government have decided to extend the scope of the Parliamentary and Health Service Commissioner.

I congratulate my right hon. Friend on the way in which he introduced the Bill. I hope that it will have a speedy passage because I believe that it will give additional protection and safeguards to constituents who have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration. I also pay tribute to the work done by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North and his Committee.

The hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) — whose serried ranks are beside him — mentioned that there were some omissions from the schedule. Before I suggest one or two deletions, I would ask my right hon. Friend to consider a further omission which should be remedied. Will he consider adding to the list the Boundary Commission?

Some hon. Members, including Members of the Labour party, believe that their constituents have suffered an injustice at the hands of the boundary commissioners. Though the boundary commissioners are distinguished, in many cases they are driven by an passion for drawing lines on a map and are ignorant about the true nature of the communities that the constituencies are designed to serve. A passion for equality and for lines on a map has disfigured and discredited much of the work of the boundary commissioners.

**Mr. Dobson:** I appreciate the concept about injustice. Would such injustice be remedied by a change in boundaries or the dismissal of the Member of Parliament who had been elected on the basis of those boundaries?

**Mr. Gow:** I believe that when the boundary commissioners make recommendations the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration should conduct an inquiry—mercifully a speedy one—to discover whether the recommendations of the Boundary Commission are reasonable.

**Mr. Soames** (Crawley) *rose*——

**Mr. Gow:** I will gladly give way to my hon. Friend the Member for Crawley—not Horsham and Crawley but Crawley alone.

**Mr. Soames:** My hon. Friend will remember the long-running saga of Bewbush when, last year, the Boundary Commission changed my division of Crawley. There was a good deal of local discussion on whether the change rendered by the Boundary Commission was fair to me. The change was fair for the people who came into my division but was unfair to me because of the nature of the people who live in the Bewbush ward—they are more likely to be associates of the Labour party. My hon. Friend should speculate on whether it would have been possible for me to make a complaint through the commissioner in respect of the boundary changes? In fact, that avenue was effectively blocked off. If I were a deer forest owner, I could complain to the Red Deer Commission.

**Mr. Gow:** My hon. Friend is correct. The Red Deer Commission is included in the Bill. It would be possible for my hon. Friend, as a citizen, to complain to the Parliamentary Commissioner if he thought that he had suffered an injustice as a result of the maladministration of the Red Deer Commission. Any citizen, including a Member of Parliament, can complain through his Member of Parliament—he could complain to himself—to the Parliamentary Commissioner of Administration if he has suffered an injustice. A Member of Parliament is not excluded from making an application to the Parliamentary Commissioner, through his own Member of Parliament, if he believes he has suffered an injustice.

I believe that if the people of this country have suffered injustices as a result of the decision of the boundary commissioners because they have to make long journeys to see their Member of Parliament, that is because of the passion for equality and parity that seems to be one of the characteristics of the boundary commissioners. This is one suggestion for a extra body in the public sector that could be included in the Bill. I hope that my right hon. and learned Friend will address himself to that.

In the Chamber is my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Sir P. Holland). He is a good illustration of what the Boundary Commission has done. His constituency had a distinguished name — Carlton — but it has been changed to a gelding——

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): Gedling.

**Mr. Gow:** I deliberately substituted the "l" for the "d". That illustrates why the Boundary Commission should be brought within the scope of the Bill.

Has my right hon. Friend included too many bodies in the Bill? You, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are better than I am at mathematics. I tried to add up the number of bodies in schedule 2 and I am sure that the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery will correct me if I am wrong —and I counted 105. My hon. Friend the Member for Gedling has been most assiduous in attacking quangos and I am sure that he shares my hope that before the Bill completes its passage in another place the Government, inspired by my hon. Friend, will have disposed of some of the bodies.

I want to leave one thought in my right hon. Friend's mind——

**Sir Philip Holland** (Gedling): While I applaud my hon. Friend's plea for the abolition of more quangos, I nevertheless strongly approve of tighter control being exercised.

**Mr. Gow:** My hon. Friend and I are in total accord.

I want to leave one thought in my right hon. Friend's mind. What heroic purpose is served by the Co-operative Development Agency? My right hon. Friend may say that it is a sterling body applauded by the Opposition. Is the Crafts Council essential to the progress of mankind? Does the Crofters Commission render signal service to the human story—[HON. MEMBERS: "No."] I have received my answer from Opposition Members. What useful purpose is served by the Central Bureau for Educational Visits and Exchanges? Could we not privatise that body? Opposition Members are nodding in agreement. Do the folk come from Venezuela, Ecuador or San Salvador— Latin American countries well known to my hon. Friend the Member for Watford (Mr. Garel-Jones)? Does the British Film Institute have to be in the public sector? I argue in favour of privatisation, a cause dear to the heart of my hon. Friend—not the Member for gelding, but for Gedling.

What useful purpose is served by the Economic and Social Research Council? I put that question especially to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North who is Chairman of the Select Committee. Does that body have to be in the public sector? My hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for sport is not in his place, but page 9 of the Bill lists the Sports Council, the Scottish Sports Council and the Sports Council for Wales. What happens to the poor people in Northern Ireland? Why do they not have a sports council?

I commend my right hon. Friend the Minister to make a diligent study of those bodies. It is not that I want them to be excluded from the range of inquiry by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, but I wonder whether some of them might be privatised and some of them abolished before the Bill reaches the statute book.

I repeat my warm welcome for the Bill, I repeat my conversion to the cause of the Parliamentary Commissioner, I repeat my tribute to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North, and I hope that the Bill, subject to the changes that I have suggested, will soon reach the statute book.

8.24 pm

**Mr. Frank Haynes** (Ashfield): I shall be brief because of the time factor and the number of hon. Members who wish to speak. It is a great pleasure to serve on the Select Committee. It is a worthwhile Committee, which I believe to be the best Select Committee because of its membership and its work in overseeing the whole of the administration of Departments.

I wish to associate myself with the remarks about previous commissioners. I was lucky enough to be apponted to the Select Committee when I first came to the House, when Sir Cecil Clothier was doing a marvellous job on behalf of the people whom we represent. When Sir Cecil left, I welcomed the appointment of Mr. Barrowclough, who also did a first-class job.

We must not overlook the service to the Committee of its Clerks. We must cover the whole spectrum because we had good Clerks in the past and we have a first-class Clerk now. The Clerk does a really good job and gets stuck into the work so that hon. Members have the information that they require.

I listened carefully to the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) when he recommended that the Minister should look at the long list of bodies with a view to excluding some of them. However, the hon. Gentleman also suggested that the Boundary Commission should be included. I know that Conservative Members want to include other bodies. I discovered that from the hon. member for Rugby—I think it is Rugby—after the Select Committee meeting yesterday—

**Mr. Pawsey** *rose*——

**Mr. Haynes:** I am not encouraging the hon. Gentleman to intervene.

**Mr. Pawsey:** I do not really need any encouragement. My constituency is Rugby and Kenilworth—a point that I had intended to make to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow). If I am fortunate enough to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall elaborate on that later.

**Mr. Haynes:** I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman for that information. I am worried about the extension of the activities of the Parliamentary and Health Service Commissioners. That has worried me ever since I became a member of the Select Committee because although it is easy to pile work on to a Department, if the manpower to deal with it is not available the whole process will slow down. Indeed, that has been a complaint in the past.

I am keeping my remarks brief because the Bill will now go into Committee. I am sure that I am the first to be able to say that I will serve on that Committee. That is almost a certainty. I look foward to the Committee's debate on the Bill.

The present and previous Parliamentary Commissioners have not been afraid to speak their minds, and neither have hon. Members been afraid to do so. When it is necessary, it must be done—whether or not that upsets people. Even if it involves high-ranking professionals, it does not make any difference. I remember when the Select Committee summoned the chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue to appear before it. He had a rough ride. He did not like coming before the Committee, and he will not like doing so again. However, the job had to be done, and the Parliamentary Commissioner and hon. Members made sure that it was done.

I look forward to the Committee stage and am sure that we shall have a first-class debate. I hope that when the Bill reaches the statute book it will be satisfactory, not only to hon. Members, but to the people whom we represent.

I agree that we should discuss the Department and reports on it more often in the House. That would give us the opportunity to speak about the people who serve us as Members. It is right and proper that the House should know about the first-class service that we received in that Committee.

8.30 pm

**Mr. Warren Hawksley** (The Wrekin): I do not intend to delay the House, but I should like to welcome the Bill and especially the extension to the list of the bodies that the parliamentary ombudsman can investigate. I begin by admitting a slight reservation about the effectiveness of commissioners or ombudsmen, whether local, parliamentary or health ombudsmen. The famous man on the Clapham omnibus may expect to find that he has a case of maladministration against a public body, but often when the commissioners investigate it they do not necessarily seem to follow the logical conclusion, as it would appear to that average person. In some cases, where partial success is achieved by the Commissioners the public body involved does not necessarily respond with quite the enthusiasm that our constituents would wish.

Before and since the Government's White Paper, Cmnd. 9563, which was published in July 1985, I have argued strongly for the inclusion of the new town corporations and especially for the one in my constituency of Telford, in the list of public bodies that the ombudsman can investigate. I was slightly worried by the reply to a written question that I put down on 4 December 1985, column 268. The Under-Secretary of State for the Environment said that legislation would be introduced, in due course, to bring the new town corporations under the control of the parliamentary ombudsman. Therefore, I congratulate the Government and my right hon. Friend for bringing forward this legislation and for making sure that the phrase "in due course", which put fear in my mind, means the next parliamentary Session.

There is a strong need for new towns to have an appeal body to which constituents can go if they consider that there has been maladministration by the corporation. I hope that schedule 2, which talks about a

> "Commission for the New Towns,"

means the commission for each individual new town. I believe that it does. I gathered from previous answers that Ministers have given me that that was their intention.

In a constituency such as mine, if maladministration is committed by the Wrekin district council, the constituent has the right of appeal to the local government ombudsman. However, if the Telford development corporation, commits that maladministration, my constituents have no such rights. I hope that I shall receive assurances that they will have that right once the Bill is on the statute book.

I am not especially critical of the Telford development corporation. I do not believe that it is any worse, or any better, than the district council. However, it is important that we should clarify the rights that constituents have when they take appeals further than the corporation itself.

I should like to ask the Minister two questions, to which I know that my constituents would like to know the answers. First, if the Bill receives a speedy passage through both Houses—we all hope that it will—when does the Minister expect that it will be effective? Will it cover any maladministration that could be going on now but about which my constituents may not be aware, but which could become apparent to them later, although the date of the maladministration could be before the passing of the Bill?

My second question concerns page 10 of the Bill and the issues raised in the notes. Note 7 states:

> "In the case of the Commission for the New Towns, a development corporation for a new town, or the Development Board for Rural Wales, no investigation shall be conducted under this Act in respect of any action in connection with functions in relation to housing."

Why has housing been excluded? It would have been desirable to include it despite the fact that one appreciates that new town housing will go to other bodies in due course. That may not happen for one or two years, but if that is the reason, I should hope that consideration could be given to the inclusion of housing as one of the areas that the ombudsman might consider. I should like to reiterate my full support for the Bill and my belief that it is a move in the right direction. I hope, and believe, that it will receive not only all-party support but a speedy progress through both Houses.

8.36 pm

**Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** (Newbury): I did not have the opportunity to serve on the Select Committee, and to that extent I am at a disadvantage compared to other hon. Members who are in the Chamber.

Perhaps my right hon. Friend the Minister will forgive me if I begin by asking him why the Health Service Commissioners for Scotland, England and Wales are referred to in the Bill, but no reference is made to Northern Ireland? Is that because, under the heading "Northern Ireland Office" which appears in a schedule, the Northern Ireland Health Service is subsumed into that title, or will a separate body cover Northern Ireland? If so, will the changes in the Bill be incorporated into that Bill and will it soon be brought before the House so that Northern Ireland can be put on the same terms as the rest of the United Kingdom?

I should like to concentrate my remarks purely on the Health Service Commissioner. I do so although I am aware that the Health Service Commissioner and the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration are, in fact, one and the same person.

Secondly, clause 2 enables the Crown to part with the services of the Parliamentary Commissioner and the Health Service Commissioner for medical reasons, presumably on the grounds of physical or mental incapacity. How will that action be taken? Who will decide whether the Parliamentary Commissioner is no longer mentally or physically able to do his job? In other words, who appoints him and withdraws from him his right to do that job? What appeals procedure will exist for him? It would be a rather curious situation if the ombudsman required an ombudsman of his own to protect his rights. As I can find nothing in the Bill to cover that point, I should like to know whether he could appeal if he disagreed with the judgment about his physical or mental condition. The clause refers to the monarch making that decision. However, I cannot help feeling that it is unlikely that Her Majesty would make that decision, and I should be pleased to know whose responsibility that will be.

I welcome the contents of clause 3. It seems absolutely right that a Member of Parliament who has taken a complaint on behalf of a constituent to the Health Service Commissioner should be informed of the commissioner's findings, as is the case with the Parliamentary Commissioner. That seems a long overdue reform.

The question on this clause to which I should like to direct my remarks relates to the role of the Health Service Commissioner. What exactly is he doing, what can he do, and is he fulfilling an especially useful role? To that extent I want to follow the remarks of the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), with whose comments I am broadly in agreement.

In the Health Service Commissioner's annual report about his activities there are certain figures that are surprising, if not worrying, bearing in mind that in 1984-85 there were no fewer than 9,000 written complaints relating to the Health Service. Assuming that in 1985-86 there were the same number of complaints, of those 9,000 written complaints only 926, or 10 per cent., were directed to the Health Service Commissioner. Of those 926 complaints, 454 were rejected, 273 were referred back or closed and the Health Service Commissioner issued reports on only 137. That is a minute number of complaints for such a powerful body to have investigated, dare one say it, at a high cost to taxpayers. Of those 137 reports, 50 per cent. related to grievances about nursing.

We talk about maladministration being the touchstone on which we decide whether or not the ombudsman has a role, but I wonder whether grievances about nursing can fairly be described as maladministration. Moreover—I must ask the House to forgive me if I refer to myself—as a result of the Hospital Complaints Procedure Act 1985, my private Member's Bill, I wonder whether those complaints will go to the ombudsman.

I introduced the Bill because no discernible stress was laid on complaints procedures such as may have existed in hospitals where I was a patient for over eight months. But now, as a result of that Act, every hospital has a statutory duty to produce a complaints procedure and to make it known by leaflet to every patient. In those terms it seems that the 50 per cent. of cases relating to grievances about nursing which the ombudsman considered are not in future likely to go his way. As my hon. Friend the Member for Derbyshire, South (Mrs. Currie) said when she was in charge of Lords' amendments to my Bill:

> "Over time, as the health authorities obey the instructions set out in clause 1 and introduce a complaints procedure and tell people about it, the ombudsman may be unable to take up cases because the Secretary of State and the health authorities have pre-empted him."—[*Official Report*, 5 July 1985; Vol. 82, c. 641.]

In other words the ombudsman may soon find that he does not have a genuine role as a Health Service Commissioner. If that is the case—I hope that the Government will consider this matter with care—is it not reasonable to suggest that perhaps a new role should be found for the Health Service Commissioner which might make his work more valuable than it appears it will be in the future?

From those figures it appears that the ombudsman has been involved in only 10 per cent. of the complaints that arose in the Health Service in a particular year, and that of those complaints or issued reports he looked at only 1 per cent. Therefore, the idea that he stands as some bastion for the patients or those who suffer from maladministration in the Health Service is far-fetched, to say the least. Yet there is a genuine need for a complaints procedure over and above the Hospital Complaints Procedure Act. At present that job is being done by Action for Victims of Medical Accidents, which looks at thousands of complaints that are brought to its notice by ordinary people who have found themselves unable to get an explanation from their local hospital or regional health authority about the circumstances in which either they or members of their family have found themselves disadvantaged in hospital.

It does not seem reasonable that a private body should consider such a large number of complaints when the Health Service Commissioner looks at such a tiny number. There is a mismatch somewhere. Either the work of the Health Service Commissioner is not properly understood, or his remit is drawn so narrowly that he cannot effectively provide a service which makes the NHS more sensitive to the problems of patients.

Why are hospitals and regional health authorities so unwilling to come forward with evidence? It is because they fear that by doing so they may make themselves liable to prosecution. Therefore, as a patient put it effectively to me, they create a wall of silence around the incident that is being investigated. When a patient leaves hospital, he will find the greatest difficulty in breaking through that wall to discover the reality, although the reality may in itself be trivial and one which most of us would have said could be explained without difficulty. Every hon. Member present will have had constituents coming with problems, asking for an explanation and sometimes an apology, but

*[Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson]*

finding the hospital or authority refusing to go beyond much more than an acknowledgement, for fear of giving grounds for liability.

I must stress the point because as medicine becomes defensive medicine, as it is in the United States of America, we shall see a greater unwillingness by the medical profession to come forward openly and say what happened, for fear of litigation. There is a role for the Health Service Commissioner. I may be told that I am talking about clinical judgment, but I am not. Action for Victims of Medical Accidents states that 60 per cent. of the cases with which it deals are not seeking financial compensation. They are seeking an explanation and occasionally an apology but not money. If it can fulfil that role, where litigation and the desire for financial compensation are not involved, why on earth cannot the Health Service Commissioner follow that course and take up that burden? The organisation is a privately funded body which lacks funds, but it does a most worthwhile job. The Health Service Commissioner earns a large salary and is replete with a full staff, yet at present he is handling what can only be described as a piffling number of complaints. I strongly urge my right hon. Friend the Minister to consider in particular the role of the Health Service Commissioner, with a view to making his task more effective and worthwhile.

I cannot end without saying that in the end we must move away from the concept of litigation for negligence in hospital cases. We should consider a no-faults compensation scheme. But I know that that is a different argument and outside the remit of the Bill.

In giving the Bill a welcome, I do not believe that we have recognised adequately that the Health Service Commissioner's job may become decreasingly important unless we give it some new definition which could make it a much more valuable instrument than it is at present.

8.50 pm

**Mr. J. F. Pawsey** (Rugby and Kenilworth): I say to my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) that I have listened, as have other Members of the Select Committee, to what he has had to say. I am sure that members of the Select Committee will consider the points that he raised.

To my hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) I say that the boundary commissioners do not always get it wrong. In Warwickshire they certainly got it right when they discovered an affinity which was not too obvious at the time to everyone living in the county and they decided to conjoin Rugby with Kenilworth. The gentrification that has taken place since then has been entirely to my advantage.

The hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) is a distinguished and robust member of the Select Committee, and I believe that he was entirely right to draw attention to the manpower implications of the Bill. I hope to deal with that. He believes that he will serve on the Standing Committee. I certainly hope that he will, and I look forward to joining him.

I welcome the Bill. I congratulate the Government and my right hon. Friend the Minister on its introduction. I believe that it is particularly helpful and that it will do much to strengthen and improve the powers of the Parliamentary Commissioner. It is an indication of his worth that this measure has now been introduced.

It might be helpful to look briefly at the office of Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration. It was first set up in 1967 on the Scandinavian model to investigate maladministration in government. That was closely followed by the Health Service Commission, which was established in 1973 to investigate maladministration in the National Health Service. I thought that the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) was being a trifle defeatist and not his usual cheerful self when he referred to the slowness with which the Health Service Commissioner sometimes dealt with cases. I have to say to him—he need not take my word for it, but that of his hon. Friend the Member for Ashfield who is sitting beside him—that the Health Service Commissioner's job is not easy. It is his job thoroughly to investigate complaints, and that takes time. That is probably why the cases are not always dealt with as expeditiously as he would like. It is also fair to say—again this can be confirmed by the hon. Member for Ashfield—that a substantial amount of the work of the Select Committee is represented by the work load of the commissioner who deals with the NHS.

In 1974 there was the creation of the third part of the Trinity, the Commissioner for Local Administration. I believe that the Bill is a further step towards providing citizens with much greater rights of redress against Government agencies. It is worth drawing the House's attention to the fact that there must be very few Select Committees which have had a report accepted almost in its entirety, as has happened in this case. That underlines, perhaps as nothing else can, the fact that the Parliamentary Commissioner discharges a most worthy function. As my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North (Sir A. Buck), the Chairman of the Select Committee, said, it is a success story. He was right to use that phrase. Those of us who serve on the Select Committee believe that it is doing a most worthwhile job.

The report and the Bill argue that the non-departmental public bodies — quangos — should be brought within the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner. I entirely agree. I believe that there is a powerful case for giving Parliament, through the commissioner and the Select Committee, the option of receiving and redressing complaints about the activity of powerful bodies, which range from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service to Oftel and from the Medical Research Council to the tourist boards.

Many of the bodies listed in schedule 1 spend literally millions of pounds of taxpayers' money and their activities impinge on the lives of most, if not all, members of the public. Therefore, it is right that they should be subject to a complaints procedure. I believe, as other hon. Members clearly do, that no organisation can be all right, all the time. Therefore, complaints must be made from time to time. Where such a case exists, it will be examined in detail by the Parliamentary Commissioner.

As my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North said, nothing in the Bill prevents a Member of Parliament, if he so wishes, from actively pursuing a constituent's case directly with the body concerned. The Parliamentary Commissioner is an alternative route that can be followed and it does much to allow constituent's cases to be examined. It is important

—this was touched on by the hon. Member for Ashfield —that the Parliamentary Commissioner has additional staff that will reflect the additional work load generated by the Bill. I am convinced that the House does not wish to see the office of the Parliamentary Commissioner brought into disrepute by inadequate staffing levels or by the long delays caused by too few people investigating too many cases. That was mentioned by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras.

The fourth report of the Select Committee is interesting. On page VII, paragraph 9 it states:

> "while there may be procedures for appeal against formal decisions, these are not necessarily an adequate substitute for the investigation of administrative actions . . . Further, 'public bodies which exercise functions neither on behalf of the Crown nor on behalf of local authorities have been deliberately set up at arm's length from either.'"

In an arm's-length operation, the public need specific protection and I believe that the PCA provides that.

Paragraph 10 of the report states:

> "There should be no possibility of shelter behind technical 'non-departmental' status."

It is because the quangos — non-departmental public bodies as they are referred to on the face of the Bill — are not directly answerable to Parliament, that I believe the PCA is necessary.

Paragraph 14 of the report excludes nationalised industries. I have some reservations about that exclusion. I am certainly not satisfied that the consumer bodies set up to safeguard the interests of the public have the necessary sharp teeth to enable them to discharge their work in an entirely reasonable way. One has only to look at the difficulties that exist in trying to persuade British Rail to give details of the punctuality of trains to make a case in point. I am delighted that the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) who has just taken his seat on the Opposition Front Bench, evidently agrees with me on that.

I now come to the point made by the hon. Member for Ashfield. It seems that there is a case for the British Broadcasting Corporation to be included in the scope of the Bill. Clause 1(6) does not automatically exclude the corporation. I would very much appreciate the thoughts of my right hon. Friend the Minister when he winds up, for I would have thought that it would be helpful if the BBC was brought within the terms of the Bill.

As I said at the outset, I welcome the Bill, but would like to see some additional measures, particularly as they apply to local authorities. Members of the Select Committee will know that from time to time local authorities have been before the Committee, and I found it unhelpful that in certain cases those local authorities had totally disregarded the findings of the commissioner. Even when the commissioner made further representations to those local authorities, such representations were still, and deliberately, ignored. I believe that the commissioner dealing with local authorities should possess more teeth than at present. I make that point to my right hon. Friend the Minister so that he may take it on board, if not for this Bill then for a future Bill. When local authorities ignore the ombudsman, they bring the office of the ombudsman into disrepute. That disrepute must spill over on to this House, because we are responsible for setting up the ombudsman. If we fail to ensure that he has adequate powers to ensure that his findings are met, we are not discharging our responsibilities properly.

The ombudsman is a success within the closely defined limits which surround him. That point was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Newbury. I have considerable sympathy with the case that my hon. Friend argued and I hope that my right hon. Friend the Minister will consider that. We have hedged the ombudsman too closely, and perhaps we should be seeking to extend his general responsibilities. So often we find that matters are raised which one would have thought should be examined, yet the ombudsman states they are outside his specific terms of reference.

Many cases are referred to the ombudsman, but not all are accepted. that is a classic variation of the theme "many are called, but few are chosen." That results in considerable dissatisfaction. The House could usefully consider two suggestions. First, the area in which the commissioner operates should be better and more effectively publicised. Secondly, greater publicity should be given to his existence, particularly in light of his new responsibilities. That point was referred to earlier.

The Parliamentary Commissioner undertakes a most useful function. However, too often it is found that people are unaware of his existence or, if they are aware of his existence, they do not understand the specific area in which he operates. Therefore, it is important that a greater effort is made to publicise the office of the Commissioner. The public should be aware that there is a watchdog and that that watchdog is now operating on a slightly longer chain.

I welcome clause 3, as other hon. Members have done tonight. It will allow copies of reports to be seen by the initiating Members. It is an entirely logical step for an hon. Member to see the end of the chapter that he has brought forward.

I commend the Bill and hope that it will speedily be enacted and put on to the statute book to provide more protection for our constituents.

9.1 pm

**Mr. Nicholas Brown** (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): We all have our illusions shattered at some time and, having learnt during the course of the debate that the hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) does not own a deer forest, life seems somehow diminished.

My hon. Friend the Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) quoted Milton. Milton also wrote that it is

> "better to reign in hell, than serve in heav'n."

In responding to the debate for the Opposition, I want to say at once that the Bill's main purpose, as the Minister perfectly properly explained, is to extend the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to non-departmental public bodies or quangos. I am sure that that is worthwhile, but no doubt in Committee we will want to consider in more detail which bodies are to be included and which are not. Indeed, the Committee may want to debate what constitutes a non-departmental public body. In the Bill, the Government have adopted a criterion different from that of the Select Committee, as a number of hon. Members quite properly observed today.

As I understand the Government's view, and the Minister may wish to respond to this point in his summation, they do not wish to extend the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration to non-departmental public bodies which operate in a commercial or contractual manner. Why should bodies

*[Mr. Nicholas Brown]*

which operate in that way not be scrutinised by the ombudsman? The distinction is hard to maintain in practice and has no moral foundation in any possible theory. Is the Government's objection that there could not possibly be any wrongdoing in the commercial area, or is it that the tests of standards of behaviour which the ombudsman applies are somehow unsuited to the commercial world?

There may be a fear in some quarters that if the principle was allowed for the public sector's commercial activities, sooner or later something similar will be applied to the private sector. Certainly, the retiring Parliamentary Commissioner, Sir Cecil Clothier to whom tribute has been paid in the debate, saw no reason why bodies that operate in a commercial or contractual manner should not be included in the ombudsman's area of responsibility. He said as much in his final annual report.

I believe that the Government's distinctions are also difficult in practice. The hon. Member for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) and the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile) referred to that. The Government have departed from the Select Committee's recommendations by excluding the British Museum from the ombudsman's area of responsibility. However, they have included the British Library as an extra. They have excluded the Scottish and Welsh Development Agencies, but have specifically and additionally included the Co-operative Development Agency.

What process of decision making lies behind the change to exempt the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, whose inclusion was recommended by the Select Committee, but has led to the inclusion of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission, whose inclusion was not suggested by the Select Committee? Does this not have more to do with political prejudice than any judgment of the issues of public administration?

The hon. and learned Member for Colchester, North (Sir A. Buck) referred to the worrying issue of resources, and I support him in what he said. There is no point in an ombudsman if his office is so overworked that delays become another focus of public discontent to add to the grievance that took a complainant to the ombudsman's door in the first place. Although the resourcing of a parliamentary commissioner does not require further legislation, this is an important matter to which Mr. Barrowclough drew attention in his report for 1985-86. Parliament must be committed to resourcing the extra duties it places on the ombudsman. There is no point in doing anything less.

Clause 2, which deals with medical incapacity of the commissioner, is not the subject of any controversy. However, on the Health Service Commissioner, the Bill is significant more for what it leaves out than for what it includes. Clause 5, which changes the time period for health authorities to raise matters with the ombudsman from three months to 12 months is not objectionable in itself but it is not a sweeping reform either. Nor is clause 3, which will enable Members of Parliament to get copies of reports on cases that they take up without the risk of the ombudsman being sued for defamation. I thought that the ombudsman might have taken a chance on that, as the hon. and learned Member for Colchester, North properly pointed out.

The hon. and learned Gentleman also referred to clinical complaints. It is interesting that Sir Cecil Clothier had something to say about this in his final report, in which he reflected on his own experience and that of the office on its 10th anniversary. One of the topics he covered was clinical complaints. He declined to answer the question whether he should take such complaints, arguing that this was a matter of political discussion and discussion with the professionals. However, he discussed whether he could do so and concluded that it was practicable, although expert assessors would be needed. That is important, and we could return to it in Committee.

The family practitioner committee complaints have been properly touched on. The Health Service Commissioner discussed these matters in his annual report of 1983-84, in paragraph 10. Referring to the statutory regulations governing the formal family practitioner complaints procedure, he said:

> "Those regulations are complicated and the ordinary citizen frequently finds them hard to understand."

The report goes on to say that the time limit, the formality of the procedure, its complexity and its adversarial structure all combine to make the complainant feel disadvantaged. The commissioner tells us that complainants look to him for redress, but in vain, because the actions of contractors to the family practitioner committees are outside his power.

As with complaints about clinical judgment, there can surely be little doubt, certainly among ourselves, that there is a public desire for an easily understood, non-adversarial mechanism for dealing with the issues. I accept that there is controversy as to what the mechanism should be, but there can be no doubt about that public desire. The Health Service Commissioner could provide such a mechanism, and I am sorry that the Government have not seen fit to include this in the Bill.

Both the Select Committee and the Health Service Commissioner have urged that personnel and contractual matters be included in the scope of the commissioner's responsibilities. This would not require legislation as it could be done by Order in Council, but the Government seem to have no intention of doing anything of the sort, although I accept that they would not have to do that in the Bill. Nor does the commissioner look like getting the power to investigate matters concerning the Health Service on his own initiative when there has been no complaint. Although the Select Committee did not back him on that point, I can see the strength of it and perhaps we will be able to explore it further in Committee. The contents of the Bill are not so onerous or so wrong as to cause us to press the matter to a vote.

9.10 pm

**Mr. Luce:** I have enjoyed listening to the debate, not least because it seems that in all parts of the House there is strong support for the purposes of the Bill. I was glad to hear the speeches by the hon. Members for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson), for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) and for Ashfield (Mr. Haynes) and by the hon. and learned Member for Montgomery (Mr. Carlile). They all gave broad support to the Bill and raised a variety of points which can probably be more easily explored in Committee.

We also heard from my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Colchester, North (Sir A. Buck) who played such a prominent part in chairing the Select Committee. He and the other members of the Select Committee do an excellent job.

My hon. Friend the Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Gow) made a characteristically colourful speech in which he asked me to justify the fact that the Red Deer Commission is incorporated. I shall find that slightly easier to answer in Committee after I have had a little more time to think about it. I noticed a great tremor of excitement and tension when my hon. Friend spoke about the Boundary Commission and asked why it was not incorporated. I know his feelings and to some extent I share them because of the shape of my constituency. The Boundary Commission is an advisory body and, in the context of the Bill, we are talking only about bodies with executive and administrative functions.

The striking feature of the debate is the great belief in the value of the ombudsman. We have had 20 years' experience of an ombudsman and, although the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras expressed doubts about the staffing, there was a unanimous view that Mr. Barrowclough and his staff do an excellent job. I shall deal in a moment with the questions posed about resources.

The most useful way in which I can respond to those hon. Members who asked why certain bodies were included while others were excluded is to remind the House of the broad criteria for selecting quango-type bodies for incorporation in the schedule to the Bill. As I said in my opening speech, such bodies would have to meet certain criteria. They should be subject to some degree of ultimate ministerial accountability to Parliament because they are dependent for finance and continuing existence on Government policy.

Clause 1 of the Bill sets out in detail how we interpret those criteria as a broad basis upon which to try to make a judgment. In addition, we must take into account the cardinal fact that they apply only to bodies with executive or administrative functions which directly affect individual citizens or groups of citizens. The complaints must also be based on evidence of sustained injustice as a consequence of maladministration. On the basis of those broad criteria, I have to make a judgment about which quango-type bodies should be included. Hon. Members would not wish me to detain the House by answering the questions posed about specific bodies, but we can make some judgments in that context.

Consider, for example, the Civil Aviation Authority, about which some of my hon. Friends raised questions. In carrying out most, if not all, of its functions, the CAA acts as a tribunal, subject to oversight by the Council on Tribunals. The Government fully endorse the Select Committee's view that tribunals should not be brought within the scrutiny of the PCA. I respect the fact that these matters can be examined in more detail in Committee, but I wish only to give some idea of the matter.

A question was raised about the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, which is principally an advisory body with no executive function. Again, it does not come within the criteria that I have set out.

My hon. Friend the Member for Rugby and Kenilworth (Mr. Pawsey) referred to the BBC. I accept that there are grey areas, but, largely, the BBC does not qualify within the broad category of executive and administrative functions, with the exception of misrepresentation and invasion of privacy. There is already an effective supervisory body, the Broadcasting Complaints Commission. Again, this matter can be probed in more detail in Committee. I select those bodies simply to illustrate the broad criteria that the Government have determined for the selection of this range of bodies.

There has been much discussion about quangos. I am pleased that my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Sir P. Holland) is present. He played a most effective and prominent role—I do not know whether it is fair to say this or whether I shall come under some criticism for saying it — in hunting quangos. I have overall responsibility for the Government's policy on quangos. There has been a net reduction of just over 500 in the number of quangos in the past seven years. Much of the credit for that goes to my hon. Friend. The purpose of the debate is not to determine exactly how many quangos there should or should not be but to take into account what quangos there are and to consider whether they should qualify for inclusion in the Bill.

Some of my hon. Friends asked about the resources available to the ombudsman to undertake his task. It is clear that the ombudsman must have resources to meet his new responsibilities. There is no shadow of doubt about that fact. At this stage, it is difficult for the ombudsman to be sure about what increasing work load he will have, but he is making a careful assessment. There has been a review of the ombudsman's staffing needs. Careful account will be taken of the implications of the Bill when it is passed. I assure my hon. Friends that this matter is being taken fully into account.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newbury (Mr. McNair-Wilson) made an impressive speech, principally on the subject of the Health Service Commissioner and about whether his powers and tasks are sufficiently wide ranging. His speech was based, in a moving fashion, on his own experience—let alone that of his constituents—of the Health Service. It is my job to take into account what he said, although I hope that he will bear with me in accepting that the main purpose of the Bill is to seek to extend the jurisdiction of the PCA to include quangos. Therefore, some of the other points that my hon. Friend raised about the Health Service Commissioner should be considered seriously for the longer term.

I am grateful to my hon. Friends the Members for The Wrekin (Mr. Hawksley) and for Rugby and Kenilworth for their contributions to the debate. As I am unable to answer their questions in detail at this stage, I shall try to answer them by letter or in Committee.

My hon. Friend the Member for Newbury asked who had the power to appoint the ombudsman. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister advises on the appointment of the ombudsman. He also asked why Northern Ireland has not featured in the debate. Northern Ireland had its own PCA, established under the Parliamentary Commissioner Act (Northern Ireland) 1969, who investigates complaints of maladministration by Northern Ireland Government Departments or authorities.

The Bill will become effective about two months after it has completed all its stages and, in answer to my hon. Friend the Member for The Wrekin, it will be able to deal with complaints that are being made now by members of the public. I am delighted that it has received such a warm welcome. I look forward to examining the Bill in more detail in Committee. I warmly commend it to the House.

***Question put and agreed to.***

*Bill accordingly read a Second time, and committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).*

## PARLIAMENTARY AND HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONERS BILL

*Queen's Recommendation having been signified—*
*Resolved,*

That, for the purposes of any Act resulting from the Parliamentary and Health Service Commissioners Bill, it is expedient to authorise—

*(a)* the payment out of the Consolidated Fund of any salary, pension or other benefit payable by virtue of the provisions of that Act to an acting Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration or an acting Health Service Commissioner for England, Wales or Scotland; and

*(b)* the payment out of money provided by Parliament of any increase attributable to the provisions of that Act in the sums payable out of such money under any other Act.—*[Mr. Neubert.]*

## Rent (Relief from Phasing)

9.21 pm

**The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. John Patten):** I beg to move,

That the draft Rent (Relief from Phasing) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 13th January, be approved.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Ernest Armstrong):** I understand that it will be convenient to discuss at the same time the second motion on the Order Paper:

That the draft Protected Shorthold Tenancies (Rent Registration) Order 1987, which was laid before this house on 13th January, be approved.

**Mr. Patten:** I am most grateful because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at 3 o'clock this morning I was talking about the beauties of Basildon's shopping centre. With questions this afternoon, I feel that I have already spoken enough for one day. I should not like to have to go through two separate debates on these orders. Therefore, I am grateful to the hon. Members for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) and for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) for having agreed to this course. *[Interruption.]* And, indeed, I am grateful to every other hon. Member, including my hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins).

The draft orders before us represent minor but essential and long overdue changes to Rent Act legislation. They will restore some of the incentives for private landlords to let properties which have been left empty because of the restrictions of the Rent Acts. They will particularly encourage landlords to make accommodation available in London where housing need is at its greatest. This will benefit many people—job movers, single people and the homeless for whom private renting is sometimes the logical and, indeed, the only choice.

I shall deal first with the Rent (Relief from Phasing) Order which abolishes the phasing of rent increases for regulated tenancies. The hon. Member for Perry Barr does not need to be reminded that it was the Labour party's Rent Act of 1965 that introduced the current fair rent machinery. That Act makes no provision for the phasing of rent increases. Under the 1965 Act landlords were allowed to charge the full fair rent immediately.

The phasing of increases in regulated rents has been with us since the days of counter-inflation measures. In particular, the Conservative Government in 1973 froze rent increases. That was subsequently converted into statutory phasing, in the Housing Rents and Subsidies Act 1975. Phasing was introduced at a time of high inflation to protect tenants from paying large increases all at once. I understand why it was thought necessary at the time to do that. The 1975 Act provided for an increase in the fair rent to be payable in three equal instalments.

In 1980, the present Government altered the phasing provisions and the effective period of registrations. We reduced from three years to two the period before a fair rent could be reviewed, and made a similar change to the phasing period. The effect of this is that only half of any increase in rent can be charged immediately, the full rent becoming, due one year later.

Under phasing, I do not think that it is unfair to say that the landlord never gets a fair rent. He or she does not get the fair rent assessed in 1985 until 1986, when it has already fallen behind. When, in 1987, a new fair rent is fixed, appropriate for 1987 circumstances under legislation, he or she does not get that rent until 1988. Unfair rent would be a better description, certainly less fair than it was in 1965 when the Labour Government introduced the Rent Act legislation which introduced fair rents.

For many years private landlords and housing supply in Britain have lost out because rent increases have fallen behind the rate of inflation. Since 1970 — these are important facts—private rents have lost a fifth of their value against the retail price index, and two fifths against average earnings or against local authority rents, which are not phased.

**Mr. Nick Raynsford** (Fulham): Will the Minister give way?

**Mr. Patten:** I do not think that I will.

**Mr. Raynsford:** Why not?

**Mr. Patten:** Because I do not choose to.

Inevitably, there has been a catching up process, and this is still continuing, but the annual rate of increase has fallen from 12·5 per cent. in 1983 to 8·5 per cent. in 1986.

**Mr. Raynsford** *rose*——

**Mr. Patten:** If the hon. Member for Fulham was here at 3 am talking about Basildon he would be slightly tetchy. If the hon. Gentleman is fortunate enough to catch your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he can make his own speech in his own way.

Inflation is now firmly under control and is at its lowest for many years. The abolition of phasing will make a marginal difference to rents payable, but it will help landlords to obtain a better yield from rentals, and in turn help them to carry out often much-needed repairs to their properties. We suffer from a disrepair problem in Britain. Ending phasing will not affect the ability of tenants to claim housing benefit on any higher rents, which is very important.

The second order with which we are concerned is the Protected Shorthold Tenancies (Rent Registration) Order which deals with shorthold tenancies in Greater London.

Shorthold tenancies were introduced by the Government in the Housing Act 1980 as an initiative to encourage private landlords to let property. That has been useful outside London; it has been a lamentable failure in Greater London. The key element of shorthold is that it is a fixed-term tenancy of between one and five years, at the end of which the landlord may, if he wishes, take possession of his property. That allows a landlord to enter into short-term lettings with the knowledge that he is guaranteed possession at the end of the period. If the tenant refuses to go at the end of the fixed term, the landlord has an absolute right to repossess his property. The tenant enters into the agreement quite freely, knowing that it is for a fixed term, and that the landlord has the right to reclaim the house or flat at the end of the tenancy provided he serves notice as the rules of the tenancy require.

In devising shorthold, my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for the Environment, built in safeguards to protect the interests of tenants. The most important of these involves serving the correct notice to the tenant. Before a shorthold is granted, notice must be served to the tenant in a form prescribed by Parliament telling the tenant exactly what his rights are clearly and precisely, so that there can be no misapprehensions. There are also strict rules, which I strongly support, that the landlord must follow in bringing a shorthold to an end. If they are not followed, a fully protected tenancy is created.

Initially, it was a precondition of a shorthold tenancy that a fair rent had to be registered for that tenancy. This condition does not apply, and never has applied, for any other private letting. It was a unique precondition. The statutory provisions governing shorthold gave the Secretary of State power to review the position and modify the conditions, and he did so in 1981. It was clear that the requirement for uneconomic fair rents to be registered was enough to deter many landlords from using shortholds, so this requirement was waived for shorthold tenancies outside Greater London.

There has been modest growth in the number of shorthold tenancies. They have encouraged job mobility and have been a valuable addition to the housing armoury. People elsewhere in the Western world would think that we are wasting our time debating whether shorthold tenancies are good or bad.

**Mr. Raynsford:** How many shorthold tenancies are there?

**Mr. Patten:** There are a limited number. If I have the opportunity later, I shall give the exact number. In many other countries in western Europe people would not waste their breath talking about whether shorthold tenancies are desirable. It is simply a form of contract which is entered into all the time. It is a great help to housing in other countries.

The order lifts compulsory rent registration for shorthold tenancies in London to bring them into line with shorthold tenancies elsewhere. The order does not affect the position of existing shorthold tenants in London. Their existing fair rents will continue to have effect. I emphasise that it is still open to either the landlord or the tenants, or both, of a shorthold tenancy outside London to apply for a fair rent to be registered. It is important for the House to realise that that opportunity still exists.

The reasons for our proposals are simple. There is growing evidence that, although shorthold is used successfully by many landlords outside London, it is not used much inside the capital. The order is designed to encourage its use in the capital, where there is a substantial housing need.

Since 1980, the Opposition have been hostile towards shorthold. I have heard of the pledges given by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) and his hon. Friends to repeal this form of tenure should they form a Government at some future date. They are concerned that the shorthold tenant has insufficient security of tenure. But the tenant does have security for the duration of his or her agreement and he or she can extend the letting with the landlord's approval. Such tenants have, and will still have under our proposals, the right to have a fair rent registered for the property. That right is not removed.

There are great merits in the shorthold system and I hope that they will lead to an increase in this useful form of tenure in the capital. It has brought a bit of much-needed rented accommodation on to the market, by giving a fair deal to tenants and a degree of confidence to landlords.

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): How much?

**Mr. Patten:** It is difficult to estimate how many shortholds there are in the country, but I shall endeavour, if I am given leave to speak again, to give the exact number. I am afraid that I do not have the figures in front of me, so I cannot answer the question.

Landlords have been able to bring into use properties which fear of the Rent Act had forced them to keep empty because they were concerned that they could never recover possession. The order will build on this success and bring benefits to both landlords and tenants. We want this process to continue.

I hope that I have made clear in my brief remarks the purpose of and justification for these two orders. They will help those in housing need. I commend the orders to the House.

9.35 pm

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): The Minister, who has admitted that he is somewhat tired, has attempted to make a quarter reasonable case for what might look like two quite innocuous orders, on the grounds of low inflation and bringing more properties into rent, but the Opposition do not take the matter so lightly. Indeed, if it were not for the Opposition these two orders would have disappeared upstairs to a Committee to be dealt with one morning, scrutinised under our procedures, but not dealt with on the Floor of the House of Commons. I think that we were right to insist on this debate on the Floor of the House.

We did that for a reason. We want to send a signal to the Government and, indeed, to private landlords. It is a simple signal. It is that, however innocuous these orders may appear to be, we are not prepared to accept the decontrol of rents and we object to this thin end of the wedge approach. We want the Rent Acts strengthened, not weakened, which is the effect of these orders. I know that Ministers might argue that it is only at the margin, but it is the thin end of the wedge, and we want to send this signal to those outside this House who may or may not make their decisions based on the fact that there will at some time in the future be another Government.

People outside do believe that we have not taken on the role of a one-party state. In this area of activity, housing policy and the private rented market, people outside know that their investment decisions depend on consensus. I tell them now that there is no consensus on rent decontrol, and if they have not taken that message on board before tonight, it has to be reaffirmed here and now.

**Mr. Winnick:** I am most grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way, particularly in view of the arrogance of the Minister in refusing to give way at all. Is my hon. Friend aware that on a number of occasions the Minister has referred to rent controls as Socialist controls, and does that not indicate only too clearly that, in the unlikely event of this Government being re-elected, security of tenure for new tenancies will be removed?

**Mr. Rooker:** My hon. Friend is perfectly right, but I hope that we can keep the debate more good natured and good tempered even than Question Time was today.

We know from the constant requests from Conservative Members to their Ministers that the majority of them want the lid to be taken off rents. This is constantly brought out at Question Time and in the occasional debates that we have on the matter. Ministers have now started to respond to that request, and it is clear that however much Ministers may prevaricate, they too want the lid taken off rents. They have made certain commitments about what might happen with new tenancies if they were to form another Government, but my hon. Friends know the score. The ultimate purpose will be to take the lid off all rents if they form another Administration. On what the Government decontrol, we shall reimpose controls which are suitable to the particular occasion.

**Mr. Michael Latham** (Rutland and Melton): Does the hon. Gentleman realise that in section 12 of the Rent Act 1965, which was piloted through the House by Richard Crossman — this section as it now is having been introduced by him on Report — there is power, by ministerial order, to take any houses out of the regulated sector? That was introduced by Richard Crossman himself.

**Mr. Rooker:** One of the reasons why we object so much to this piecemeal approach is that we object to the detail here but we also object to the principle of the thin end of the wedge. There probably would not be any argument between us if the Government had a housing policy. If the Government were setting out to see that housing need was met, whether to rent or to buy, in the public sector and the private sector, and that there were sufficient houses for people to rent where they wanted to live, there would not be the artificial shortage of homes to rent—indeed, the artificial shortage in some parts of the country of homes to buy—thus forcing up prices of both homes to buy and homes to rent. No one is advocating—I am sure that the hon. Gentleman is not advocating—that that particular power in the Act be used in present circumstances, given the nature of the housing crisis.

The Opposition see no long-term future for traditional private renting for commercial profit as a form of housing tenure. For the avoidance of doubt, I reaffirm our support for shared ownership and assured tenancies, which I declared on 19 February at columns 377-78. I reaffirm also that being another person's landlord for a crude commercial profit is an unacceptable way of earning a living.

**Mr. John Butterfill** (Bournemouth, West): Why?

**Mr. Rooker:** I understand through the usual channels that we shall have much more time available to us next week to develop our case than we have now. I shall be happy next week to take on board the hon. Gentleman's question.

As I have said, it is our belief that to be another person's landlord for a crude commercial profit is an unacceptable way of earning a living. I exclude from that statement the institutional part of the voluntary sector. We want to see private tenants opting for the voluntary sector that is represented by housing associations and co-operatives, or local authorities. We believe that tenants of private absentee landlords should have the right to buy their homes.

**Mr. Butterfill:** On that point——

**Mr. Rooker:** When the hon. Gentleman last intervened in one of my speeches on the issue of private tenants—this was at column 377 on 19 February 1986—he uttered a four-letter word. I hope that he will not do that again.

**Mr. Butterfill:** The hon. Gentleman may have to apologise to me about that, because he may remember that *Hansard* was corrected. I used the word "scrapped", not the four-letter word that appeared in *Hansard.* I remember thinking at the time that it was understandable that *Hansard* should have made the error.

I should like to know whether, in the private sector, the hon. Gentleman would include the provision of accommodation by building societies, insurance companies and pension funds. Is he opposed to their providing private sector rented accommodation, or does he regard them as more acceptable landlords?

**Mr. Rooker:** The organisations to which the hon. Gentleman has referred may fund rented accommodation, but they do not necessarily provide it themselves. Most of them will act through housing associations that are registered with the Housing Corporation, or set up registered associations and use the assured tenancy scheme, which means that the landlord must be approved by the House. Shorthold landlords have not been brought before the House for approval, and it would be a different kettle of fish if the Government were to do so.

Without saying yes to the hon. Member for Bournemouth, West (Mr. Butterfill), I want to exclude the organisations to which he has referred. In some respects they are institutional, and they may use means other than the crude private landlordism—the old fashioned style—that we came to "love" so much. Many thousands of tenants came to love and hate it so much as they were winkled out of their homes in London years ago. As I said last year, that is still happening. My hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) knows that as well as anyone in the House.

In the first half of 1986, regulated rents increased by between 8 and 9 per cent. That information was based on one set of figures that was used to produce the answer to a question on 19 November 1986, at column *248.* According to the collective view of 10 different organisations, rents increased by no less than 17 per cent. Either way, the increase is above the average wage increase. That is especially so when we consider that the concentration of tenants in the private sector comes mainly within low-income groups, who are not receiving anything like average wage increases. The Minister's argument about there being a low inflation rate does not justify an increased frequency of rent increases.

A sample carried out in 1983-84 showed that a quarter of private tenants had incomes of less than £2,600 a year. The Minister may say that such tenants can get help through housing benefit, but at the same time one of his colleagues is spending most of his time excluding people from housing benefit and reducing their eligibility to claim such benefit. The Minister's actions tonight will mean that rents will go up higher and faster, and at the same time the DHSS is reducing the number of those who are eligible for housing benefit. Approximately 1·9 million households in the private sector are eligible for housing benefit, but how many of those people will be eligible next year? The Minister should know those figures before he comes to the House with these orders, the consequences of which will be significant for thousands of families.

If we take a random borough—the London borough of Greenwich—[HON. MEMBERS: "Random?"]—I have no vested interest in Greenwich. I do not live there, I do not represent it and it is better to quote a different example from that of my city of Birmingham. In Greenwich, some 9,000 families in the private rented sector are in receipt of housing benefit. Many of those families may lose their eligibility to housing benefit once the Government's proposed changes take effect. They will lose that benefit at the same time as rents go up faster and higher as a result of tonight's orders. The Minister should consider the effects on those families before he brings orders such as this to the House.

Some of the families will be driven from their homes and as usual, the local authority will be forced to pick up the tab. The Minister has said that landlords get a low return, and I admit that that return is low at 1 or 2 per cent. net, but some of the worst housing in this country, in terms of quality and condition, can be found in the private rented sector. In many large cities and in my constituency, some of the worst housing is owned by private landlords. Nothing in these orders will improve the quality of those private rented homes. Perhaps that is the Governments intention. We might look at these orders in a different light if the consequent higher rents resulted in repairs being carried out to those homes. However, I suspect that landlords will continue in much the same way and will not carry out repairs to the homes of their tenants.

I believe that the second order on shortholds provides a positive incentive to raise rents so as to force tenants out and thus enable landlords to sell the property. That is the name of the game. The rent increases that landlords would consider equal or adequate in comparison to owner-occupied values may be as high as 200 or 300 per cent. in some areas.

I accept that tenants may register their rent, but the Minister must be aware of surveys that show that some 50 per cent. of tenants are unaware of the type of tenancy agreement that they have. Being unaware is one thing; being aware and scared stiff is something else. Some tenants are scared of the harassment that they still recieve from landlords in the late 1980s.

Shorthold tenure, especially in London—the Minister must be aware of this because it was mentioned in debates in 1980 when the tenancy was introduced — was supported by his hon. Friends only as long as fair rents were compulsory. After tonight there will no longer be compulsory fair rents in London.

The Minister cannot, in all justice, use the argument of non-registration outside London. He must be aware that things in London with regard to both housing and other aspects of life are different from life in the rest of the country. If the Minister does not know that now, he never will. It is not that London wants to be different; it is simply that London is different, whether in health, transport or any aspect of housing policy. Therefore, there are umpteen different reasons why London deserves to be treated separately.

The Minister might argue that shorthold has worked outside London, but he must be aware that outside London registered rents are much close to market rents. Nobody can claim that to be the case in London, where market rents are ridiculous and often four or five time higher than registered rents. For landlords of shorthold tenancies, the incentive will be to ensure that their tenants do not ask for a fair rent to be registered. That incentive is not as great outside London, and perhaps that is why the position is so different. It would help elucidate the argument if the Minister gave the figures for shorthold both in Greater London and outside it.

*[Mr. Rooker]*

I repeat tonight what we have already put on record, namely, that we are committed to abolishing shorthold. There may be a csae—I put it no stronger than that—for retrospectively considering some shorthold tenancies. One or two of my hon. Friends may raise this matter tonight because of their direct constituency experience. It might apply especially where there has been a mushrooming of private landlords using shorthold tenancies outside London, especially in former National Coal Board property. We give notice to the owners of that property that when we are in government we will not hesitate, should the circumstances so warrant, to bring forward retrospective legislation — *[Interruption.]* Oh, yes, the owners of those properties must take that on board. It is not open season on those properties to exploit the tenants in the way that is happening in some parts of the country.

We may have to consider retrospective legislation. It is strong action, and no Government want to take it. I do not think that this Conservative Government, who have brought in retrospective legislation, wanted to do so. However, they have not shied away from doing it where necessary, and nor did the previous Labour Government. Where there is a case to be made and warnings have been given from the Front Bench, the Government of the day are fully entitled to say that such action is warranted. Therefore, I warn those who are operating shorthold in that manner of the consequences.

We are not interested in taking the lid off rents in the private sector, and therefore we shall oppose both orders in the Lobby tonight.

9.53 pm

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg** (Hampstead and Highgate): "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down"—that is the value that the public should place on the last few sentences uttered by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), who has made open threats. Similar open threats were made during the passage of the Housing Act 1980, but they had little or no effect. I trust that they will have the same effect on this occasion.

I wish to confine my remarks to two issues, the first being phasing. I am distressed because during the past few days there has been an enormous stirring up with a compaign of falsehoods perpetrated by a number of local authorities and organisations. That is one reason why the debate is on the Floor of the House—although there is but a baker's dozen on the Opposition Benches. There might have been as many had the matter been dealt with in Committee. The debate has attracted no one to the Press Gallery and only a baker's dozen on the Opposition Benches——

**Mr. Raynsford:** Where are the Tories?

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** As the hon. Gentleman knows, when Governments introduce such measures they are not expected to have vast hordes of Members in the House. The Opposition called for the debate, but they are notable by their absence.

**Mr. Winnick:** Will the hon. Gentleman bear in mind that only two weeks ago a move by one of his hon. Friends to deregulate the privately rented sector was defeated? Apart from the fact that the payroll vote abstained for obvious political reasons, surely that shows the interest of Labour Members in defeating that attempt to deregulate the private sector in a Tory-dominated House of Commons.

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** The hon. Gentleman never learns. He is mixing up ten-minute Bills, which he knows are of little importance, with something that is actually going to happen. Private Members' Bills are, quite rightly, different from ten-minute Bills. As someone who got a ten-minute Bill through the House many years ago, I know what luck was involved and that it does not have any real political significance.

Having illustrated the genuine interest of Opposition Members—they are not here—I am disturbed to hear the hon. Member for Perry Barr say that there is no consensus on the building of properties. He must realise that one result of that would be a continued reduction in the number of rented properties available. If, as the hon. Member says, most landlords are getting a net return of between 1 and 2 per cent., they will feel that, if one of their properties became vacant, they would be better served by selling that property. That would remove the property from the rented sector, and I do not believe that that is the right thing to do.

If we are now to have the two-year phasing period, when the rent officer is working out the fair rent he will not have to take into account the fact that, as my hon. Friend the Minister rightly says, the full fair rent will not come into effect until halfway through that period. Therefore, the effect will not be greater increases, which is what the hon. Gentleman implied. I do not believe that that will happen.

The policy of the Labour party has contributed to the unfortunate shortfall in private rented property in London. Can my hon. friend the Minister tell me why the phasing requirements, in relation to registered rents for housing association tenancies, are not altered? I am not suggesting that they should be altered, but I am asking why there is that differentiation. That was put to me by a deputation which visited me yesterday, and which wanted to know—they were not friends of mine—why only the private tenants would have the phasing requirement removed. They wondered why co-ops and the like would not have it removed. I should be grateful if my hon. Friend would answer that.

Those of us who have lived in London all our lives, as has the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser), will remember that among the best private landlords were companies such as Legal and General, the Prudential, the old London County Freehold and Leasehold Properties, which built hordes of low-rented properties throughout London before the war. The only reason why they went out of business was the continued restriction on rents, which meant that they could not repair the properties properly out of the income that they received. That is why those good landlords went out of business.

I genuinely did not follow the argument of the hon. Member for Perry Barr. Does he mean that if that sort of company wishes to go back into the market it should not do so because it would be getting profits from what the hon. Gentleman would call people's homes? I should be grateful if he would elucidate that point.

**Mr. Rooker:** What I said before the intervention was probably clearer than what I said after it. Institutional bodies will probably use a different system from the previous one. They will invest in assured tenancies or in rented housing through legitimate housing associations. Generally speaking, it could be argued that that is not done for crude commercial profit, as the Freshwaters and the Rachmans of this world did in the past.

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** As the hon. Gentleman will know from my speeches in this House, I held no brief for Freshwaters or one or two others which I could and may name when we debate the Bill, following the Nugee report in this House. I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for that because the point is important and that may be a source of supply.

I am the only survivor here tonight of the ministerial team who put shorthold tenancies on the statute book. My hon. Friend the Minister is absolutely right to remove the compulsory element from London. I do not agree with the hon. Member for Perry Barr that masses of people in shorthold tenancies do not know their rights. The information given to them is in such a detailed form that they would find it impossible not to know what their rights were. Perhaps my hon. Friend will tell me whether the forms that must be provided when these orders become law will state that, although there is no compulsion for registration, it is open to the landlord or tenant to apply, if they wish. That would seem to be logical.

I am worried that shorthold tenancies have not got off the ground as we hoped they would. We believed that shorthold tenancies would provide extra rented property which could make its contribution under controlled terms towards housing people who might have wanted to work and live in London and who required a property for only one or two years. Under shorthold, landlords were prepared to accept that because they knew that at the end of the term there would be no problem of the tenant wishing to remain for ever and, indeed, the tenant's successors.

I acknowledge that shorthold has not been the success that we hoped. Again, that is because of the attitude of the Opposition, who made it clear that they were wholly against the concept. However, despite that, some people have entered into shorthold tenancies. When it is clear to the public that there is not the slightest possibility of a Labour Government for at least the next decade shorthold will begin to take off properly, especially in view of my hon. Friend's action to remove the compulsory element of registration in London.

I welcome these two orders. They will do absolutely no harm to those who require accommodation in the private sector. Indeed, they will help to preserve or restore some element of balance between the two sides in housing, and it is important that we remember continually that balance is part of our society.

10.3 pm

**Mr. Michael Meadowcroft** (Leeds, West): I agree with the hon. Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) that this is a question of balance. It is necessary to emphasise that there is a problem with rented accommodation which must be tackled. It will do no good to enforce a particular ideology for its own sake, considering the problems that people face day by day. Therefore, it is important to consider whether the Government's attempt to shift the balance from its present position will be beneficial to those in greatest need. That must be the test of the orders.

There has always been a problem with rented accommodation and it could always be affected by controlling legislation. The difficulty is that unless all housing markets are controlled, both the buying and rented markets, it is difficult to control one without upsetting the whole picture. Yet it has never been possible to decontrol the whole area, because we do not have a variety or a sufficiency of housing for those who want it to be able to pick what is suitable for them. The consequence is that we are left picking bits and pieces of it to control but always finding that unsatisfactory. I do not believe that it is possible to find a perfect way through that jungle. It will always be a question of compromise at any given time.

I accept, as the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) said, that there is a psychological prejudice against landlordism. It is a prejudice that I instinctively share, but it is not something on which one can base legislation, not least because we really need every rented accommodation unit that we can get, whatever its ownership. Therefore, perhaps in some idealistic future we may be able to act upon that prejudice, but it is not something that will influence how we decide on the orders today.

The reality is that landlordism is no more nor no less justified than any other way of making a profit out of an essential commodity of life. One has to look at it to see how to provide the best out of a difficult situation. I find the private ownership of land far more instinctively objectionable than landlordism because one cannot create more land as one can create more houses. Nevertheless, one has to determine one's views and policies according to how to provide the most accommodation units for those in need.

In my constituency if one was to look at the old terraced houses, which are popular and beloved of many people, those in the worst condition are owned by the local authority. That is the sad fact. In some cases, but not all, it is because the local authority wishes an area to have a blight on it so that it becomes a candidate for clearance and compulsory purchase. I totally reject that. People are no more fond of a public landlord than a private landlord in those circumstances.

When we have a problem of law trying in this regard, it is a problem of law to regulate the bad landlord, which has a detrimental effect on the good landlord. That is a real difficulty. Many of the good landlords, often those who have no more than half a dozen houses at most and who have treated their tenants fairly, resent the implication of the way in which legislation affects all landlords. Therefore, one has to look at whether the orders are beneficial in those circumstances.

I have had to conduct campaigns, like so many other hon. Members, against landlords who would seek to find a way round particular legislation by pretending that they are offering bed and breakfast accommodation and throwing a rasher of bacon through the door in the morning. It sometimes takes two years to enforce the law against those landlords. One uses all the resources of the press to try to combat that, but the good landlords feel themselves to be under pressure because one is talking about private landlords as a whole.

Another problem, which has been referred to already, is the geographic problem that there is not the same pressure in other parts of the country as there is in London and the south-east. The problems of trying to find

*[Mr. Michael Meadowcroft]*

accommodation in London are horrendous. In other cities, includng my own, the problem is not one of quantity but quality. There is a quantity of housing, but much of it is unlettable because people will not take it in any circumstances. That is a different problem and it will not be helped by the orders. They will not create better quality housing in other areas even if they attempt to affect the quantity in London and the south-east.

In proposing that the orders be approved, the Minister has to show that the situation in London is better than it was when the previous regulations were introduced. He has not shown that. He cannot come to us and say, "The evidence is that a variation in this way will improve the housing situation in the capital." Even on new properties, the rent differential between London and other parts of the country is 2:1. Given that, I do not see how one can argue that it is the right moment to start easing the regulations regarding shorthold tenancies or of phasing as it affects London.

There is the question of how one draws a balance between competing interests. It is interesting to draw an analogy between what happened at Question Time regarding planning regulations and the type of houses being built as residential accommodation. We heard that the free marketeers on the Conservative Benches wanted regulations to allow different kinds of houses to be built than those currently being forced through under planning regulations. They recognise quite rightly in their constituencies such as Bournemouth or Eastbourne, that the kind of houses that were needed were not those that were being built. If people in the housing market are providing houses for profit rather than housing for need, there must be even more pressure on rented accommodation. The orders tonight will not improve that position.

If the housing position is improved, there is an argument for shifting the balance more towards the landlord. However, I do not believe that the housing position has improved. I believe that it is worse. Why should the balance be tipped towards the landlord when the housing position is worse than it was?

The Minister made a great point about inflation being lower. Therefore, the argument for phasing becomes less sustainable. The problem from the Minister's point of view is that inflation in rented prices does not necessarily conform to general inflation. The suggestion is that in 1986 the inflation rate for private rented accommodation was about 17 per cent., not the Government's 4·5 per cent. figure. There again, the argument for phasing to be abolished is hardly a help when a tenant finds that his private rent does not subscribe to the general theories about inflation.

I believe that it is wrong to introduce this greater benefit to landlords at the moment. It is all very well for Conservative Members to refer to the right to rent. We should also consider the ability to rent. That question is apparent to many people who are struggling to rent at the moment. It is also strange that the Minister had to admit in his publications that shorthold has not been properly monitored. He said that there are problems in knowing how many shorthold tenancies exist. If they have not been monitored and we do not know the conditions and problems that such tenancies create, it is unfair of the Minister to come to the House today and claim that creating more of these tenancies will help by reducing the powers of control on such tenancies. I believe that that is an argument against approving these orders.

A special area of concern exists among elderly people who are living at the margin where they do not receive housing benefit. They are fearful that, because their income is phased, it does not conform to the rules of rented accommodation and they will suffer greater hardship by the abolition of phasing than many other people. The danger of removing the controls on shorthold may well increase the number of shortfold tenancies, but not in the way that the Minister would like. People may see a loophole to increase incomes from such tenancies. Therefore, as and when they can, they will create shorthold tenancies out of long tenancies to shift the market and the prices in their favour. By increasing scarcity in that way, we will not improve the position for people who have to rent.

The Minister emphasised — and indeed over-emphasised—that the regulations will not affect existing tenancies. We are not over much concerned about existing tenancies. We are concerned about how the position will change in future. I do not believe that the orders will improve the position. The people in these tenancies are often most vulnerable. I am fearful that we will establish an itinerant population moving from shorthold to shorthold who are afraid to claim and enforce their rights. They are not confident enough to enforce their rights.

**Mr. Butterfill:** Does not the hon. Gentleman realise that it would still be open to a tenant to register a fair rent? It is only the obligation to do that which is removed.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** The hon. Gentleman is correct. However, I fear that the conditions in his constituency are different from those in mine. Although we may explain people's rights to them, they only see the roof over their head which they may lose if they make life difficult for their landlord. They are not normally people who would take that risk.

It is all very well to claim that there are laws against harassment. Of course there are, but it is not easy for a weak tenant to enforce those laws against a powerful person. The regulations will not improve the situation.

The important recent case of Street *v.* Montford, of which those concerned about housing will be well aware, showed that landlords cannot so easily get away with licences. The court has now held that these create tenancies. In future, London landlords may be wary of inadvertently creating a tenancy and may prefer to go down the shorthold route, particularly if rents do not have to be registered. Such a case shows that this is the wrong time to be shifting the balance towards the landlord. The orders should be opposed because the case for them has not been made.

10.15 pm

**Mr. John Butterfill** (Bournemouth, West): On an evening when the headline in *The London Evening Standard* reads:

> "Threat to home buyers: Labour plan tax relief cut on one million mortgages",

it is appropriate that the Government should be promoting legislation that goes some small way to improving and strengthening the private rented sector. I am deeply saddened by what I have heard from the Opposition Benches, because I had hoped that we might be moving somewhat nearer to a consensus on housing in general and on the provision of housing in the private sector in particular. I can see that that is not the case both by what has been said by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) and by the signs that I am receiving from the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford), but that does not particularly surprise me, given his record.

It is profoundly sad that we are debating whether it is appropriate for accommodation to be provided by the private sector, and, if so, how the private sector can assist. I should have thought that Labour Members who complain regularly that there is insufficient investment in housing would look seriously at whether the private sector can assist and at ways in which they can encourage the private sector to take part in the process that we would all like to achieve—housing people well.

It must be wrong for us to expect the private landlord to subsidise rents. If rents are to be subsidised in the long term, they should be subsidised by the public sector and not the private sector. Elsewhere in the world — for example, in Canada and Germany—it is easy to obtain rented accommodation in the private sector. That includes not just institutional investors such as the pension funds, insurance companies, building societies or similar organisations, but individuals.

I know that the hon. Member for Perry Barr feels passionately about this, but not all private landlords are the evil, self-seeking people he believes them to be. I can introduce him to private landlords who invest in the provision of private accommodation for others because they regard it as a Christian duty to do so. They would prefer to invest their money in providing accommodation for other people less fortunate than themselves than to invest it in the stock exchange. I can see nothing reprehensible in that—I find it admirable. I can think of groups of families who invest in that way and continue to relet their properties at rents substantially below the market level because they consider that to be their Christian obligation. For the hon. Gentleman to denigrate the whole of the private sector in that way pays little tribute to the dedication of such investors.

**Mr. Winnick:** Does the hon. Gentleman accept that the initial phase of British landlordism led to the public sector being responsible for slum clearance and redevelopment? The facts about that are quite well known. The Rent Act 1957 basically did that which the hon. Gentleman is advocating. It discredited landlordism and itself to such an extent that when the hon. Gentleman's party was thrown out of office it could not even bring itself to vote against the incoming Labour Government's legislation and argued instead that that which Richard Crossman was proposing should broadly be accepted.

**Mr. Butterfill:** I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman's analysis of the problem. The problems with rent controls and the effect of such controls on the private sector go back much further than the hon. Gentleman suggests. The interference with the market that took place in the past gave rise to the shortages that he describes. Those were compounded by the war and the enormous damage that caused to our housing stock. I accept — I think it is common ground between us — that there were some appalling landlords and none of us would wish to see the return of such people. If we could reach some agreement with the Opposition by which we could encourage a reinvestment of the private sector on a responsible basis, that would be a great advantage. Surely what we are doing here goes some way towards that.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** Of course there are good landlords and I know of such people in my part of the world. Does the hon. Gentleman accept that in most places there are owners of properties on which there is little or no outstanding debt? The number of altruistic people who have to pay high debt charges on modern property is nowhere near as great as the number of landlords of older properties who do not have that problem. We will face bigger problems with modern properties than we will face with old properties.

**Mr. Butterfill:** I accept that that can apply to some extent. I do not advocate the immediate abolition of all rent controls because, like the hon. Member for Perry Barr, I do not wish to give an immediate profit to all the property speculators who have invested in the hope of getting vacant possession or making a huge hike in rents. That would not be appropriate. I should prefer a system under which the rent reflected the price paid by the landlord. I should also like to see a degree of indexation. On that basis we might be able to start to agree. We could do that if we could get over the quite inexplicable prejudices of the Opposition against the private sector as a whole. I passionately would like to see conditions improve. What we are doing tonight goes some way towards achieving that.

The shorthold system is valuable, but its expansion has been greatly limited by the sort of threats we have had from the Opposition. First, they say that they will abolish the system. Secondly, they say that they may consider retrospective legislation. Who can be surprised that the private sector has not rushed forward to invest when threats of that sort are being issued quite clearly by the Opposition Front Bench?

There are other problems with the present shorthold legislation and I should like to give an illustration from my constituency. One of my constituents owns three flats. When he became severely disabled and was unable to work, he used his savings to invest in the provision of accommodation for others. He has deep religious convictions and believed that that was a proper way to invest his money. He has let on a shorthold basis his little block of three flats. Sadly, one of the tenants was not very satisfactory. He was disruptive to the other tenants and generally behaved in a way which was upsetting to his neighbours and to the other tenants in the block. At the end of the year, my constituent sought to terminate the tenancy by giving, he thought, the correct notice under the Act. He employed a firm of solicitors to do that for him. Sadly, there was a defect in the way in which the notice was

*[Mr. Butterfill]*

served, and a further tenancy was created. Two years have gone by and my constituent still has not been able to obtain possession from his unsatisfactory tenant.

We need to look again at the question of notice. If we are to have a system whereby a landlord is able to get possession—it should be a system that is so simple that he should not need detailed legal advice—it is wrong if a landlord, having taken legal advice twice, is unable to get possession, particularly when the tenant is disruptive towards neighbours. That is an entirely different problem. I should like my hon. Friend to look at that matter and consider it further.

It is anomalous that, with regard to shorthold, one situation should apply in London and another elsewhere, particularly one that is prejudicial to the establishment of further shorthold tenancies.

Therefore, I welcome the action that my hon. Friend is taking.

10.25 pm

**Mr. Nick Raynsford** (Fulham): We are considering two shabby and vindictive little orders introduced by a shabby and discredited Government who no longer have any pretence of a housing policy. They preside over the worst escalation in a housing crisis that I, and I believe most hon. Members, have seen. It is perhaps ironic that we should hold this debate tonight when, during Question Time, the Minister gave figures showing that, in the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, under the Government's housing policy, the number of homeless households has passed 100,000 for the first time. What a disgraceful comment on the appalling failure of the Government to have a responsible housing policy.

The reason for the escalation of the housing problem is a critical shortage of rented housing, which is the result of two specific trends. One is the deliberate running down of the public sector rented housing programme, which was the deliberate policy of the Government through drastically cutting their support for councils and housing associations. The figures show only too clearly the extent to which those cuts have reduced rental options in the public sector. In England the number of new homes becoming available through council building programmes reduced from 67,000 in 1979 to just 18,000 in the past 12 months. The number of housing association homes also reduced, despite the Government's pledges to support the housing association movement. The number of new build and rehabilitated dwellings provided by housing associations reduced by approximately 50 per cent. during the lifetime of the Government. That record is their responsibility.

The other reason for the homelessness crisis is the shortage of rented housing in the private sector. There has been a continuing decline during the lifetime of the Government. The Government's policies have failed to stem that decline.

We are now presented with two orders that, we are told, will help to stimulate private renting. The evidence is against the Government. In 1957, the Conservative Government attempted, by reducing rent controls, to stimulate the private market. The evidence shows exactly how wrong that philosophy can be. The Rent Act 1957 did not usher in an increase in the number of lettings but heralded the period during which there was the sharpest decline in the number of private lettings during the whole of the century as landlords used the opportunity to get rid of their tenants and to sell their properties. On being returned to office in 1979, the present Government introduced in the Housing Act 1980 a measure that they hoped would stimulate private lettings. The then Secretary of State for the Environment, the right hon. Member for Henley (Mr. Heseltine), said:

> "I believe that we shall improve the opportunity for rented accommodation."—[*Official Report,* 15 January 1980; Vol. 976, col. 1457.]

We heard various other pledges about how the 1980 Act would improve options for rented housing. In practice, that did not happen. Between 1979 and 1986, 500,000 rented houses went off the market. The number of private rented homes declined from about 2 million to 1·5 million. The Government cannot pretend that that is our fault. They were in power during those years. The Government's 1980 Act was supposed to stem that decline and stimulate the market. They should take the responsibility for their failure.

The 1980 measures failed to stimulate private lettings, as will the two minor measures that we are debating tonight. They will cause further hardship to private tenants who have already suffered very considerably from this Government's actions on a number of fronts: from cuts in housing benefit, from the threat to remove Rent Act protection from new lettings and from the threat to change the rent registration procedures and repossession procedures, as announced in a recent consultation paper issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department. This attack on private tenants throughout the country, but particularly in the London area, will be remembered by them at the next general election.

The Minister pretended that the rents registered for private tenants have failed to keep pace with inflation. He did so by an extraordinary sleight of hand. He quoted figures that were based on 1970. Why should he have used 1970 as the base? Does he not believe that there was a Labour Government between 1974 and 1979? Is he not prepared to be honest and straightforward with the House and take the logical and sensible base? The 1979 figures are quite simple. They are figures for which this Government are responsible.

Since 1979 there has been an 87 per cent. increase in the level of mean registered rents for unfurnished tenancies in England and Wales. In the last two years—to put the Minister's comments into context, since he referred to the reduction in inflation—the increase in the registered rent levels has been 18 per cent., far ahead of the level of inflation. What is the possible justification, therefore, for claiming that rent levels have not kept pace with inflation and should be increased? It is a completely dishonest and specious argument that is justified by bogus statistics from a Government who are desperate to try to cover up their own failings.

**Mr. Butterfill:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Raynsford:** Yes. Although the Minister would not give way to me when I was about to rise to correct him on those figures, I shall happily give way to the hon. Gentleman.

**Mr. Butterfill:** I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman. Will he tell us what the increase in the cost of living has been since 1979? Is it not true to say that since 1979 the increase in the cost of renting accommodation has been less than the increase in the cost of living?

**Mr. Raynsford:** I was quoting the figures for the period from 1979 to 1985.

**Mr. Butterfill:** The hon. Gentleman is being selective again.

**Mr. Raynsford:** No. That is the latest period for which figures are available from the Department. I took them straight out of the latest published housing and construction statistics.

The Minister has been extraordinarily generous in giving us statistics on shorthold tenancies. I am sure that he would like the House, therefore, to have the most up-to-date statistics. I am quoting his Department's figures. He may not like them, nor may Conservative Members, but they are their figures.

The title of the first of these orders is the Rent (Relief from Phasing) Order. It provides relief from phasing for landlords, but it does not provide relief from phasing for tenants. It removes relief from steep rent increases. Many of my constituents are facing very steep rent increases. Rent officers in the London area are fixing rents at figures that are substantially higher than the rate of inflation. There is no justification for the order. It is being moved on a bogus premise and it should be rejected.

The second order is the Protected Shorthold Tenancies (Rent Registration) Order. Here the Government are ratting on commitments that were given by previous Ministers. I say that advisedly. During the debate on the Housing Bill in 1980 the then Minister for Housing was challenged about what would happen, because a power was available to Ministers to vary the provision for rent registration. The then Minister for Housing said:

> "However, I cannot agree that the shorthold proposals are basically unreasonable or unfair to tenants. Tenants will have to pay no more than a fair rent as provided by other rent legislation . . . There will be no deregistration to market rents."—[*Official Report*, 15 January 1980; Vol. 976, c. 1564.]

Tonight we have a simple case of the Government reneging on Minister's pledges.

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** The quotation that the hon. Gentleman has given destroys the snide case that he has been making. The Minister said that there would be no deregulation to market rents. What this order is doing is getting deregulation to fair rents, but it is still permitting the regulation to be applied if the tenants want it. There is a difference between market rents and fair rents, and the hon. Gentleman knows that.

**Mr. Raynsford:** The hon. Gentleman knows from his experience of the London housing market that the majority of lettings in London are outside the rent registration procedures. Figures suggest that a small minority of lettings in London are registered. The problem with this safeguard is that it will subject—as has been made clear by Opposition Members—tenants, who are by definition in an insecure position, to pressures from landlords against getting the rent registered. Tenants will be told that if they apply for rent registration they will be out. That is the kind of pressure that is being exerted on tenants in London, and it will intensify as a result of this shabby order.

We know that the pledges given by the Ministers cannot be trusted. What surprises me is that the orders are before us not for a sound policy reason, not even for a policy reason based upon proper analysis, but on the basis of a vague hope that a few extra shortholds will be conjured into existence in London. What an appalling comment. The Minister has been unable to give us any figures on the number of shorthold tenancies, when he is proposing an order which is designed to increase the number of shorthold tenancies. It is a pretty sad comment that the Government's grasp of the subject is so poor that they do not have an analysis of the current position. Perhaps the Minister is able to give us figures, but a few weeks ago, one of his colleagues, in answer to me, was unable to do so.

The problem with these orders is that they are mean-spirited measures that will penalise a number of private tenants, increase insecurity and anxiety, and fail abjectly in their supposed objective of creating new lettings. I hope that the House will reject these shabby and mean-spirited orders.

10.37 pm

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** (Leicester, East): Speaking after the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) is quite depressing, because of his jaundiced and snide remarks. These are good measures, and all the hon. Gentleman is seeking to do is deter potential landlords from offering shortholds. This scare and smear tactic is completely unacceptable to people who are desperately seeking accommodation in London and elsewhere and who have a real opportunity under these two measures, which are welcomed by those who want to work in London. The Labour party spends its whole time knocking the Government over the unemployment figures. My hon. Friend the Minister is making a positive contribution and Labour Members baulk at it.

The shortage of short-term rented accommodation is becoming almost a national crisis. Whether or not the problem is mainly in London, it has certainly affected the employment situation. We all know that shorthold has been possible since 28 November 1980, but because it has been so difficult to remove difficult tenants who do not pay their rent, many landlords have hesitated to put their houses out to rent.

It is a smear tactic to criticise the landlords. The majority of potential landlords are decent people. Some of them have large properties. As the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft) said in his excellent speech, there are housing problems. I do not think that I am risking anything by saying that, if the hon. Gentleman ever wishes to join the Conservatives, we would welcome him, especially in considering housing matters.

We certainly need more private sector rented accommodation. The orders will ensure that more properties become available. I shall continue to express concern at the lateness of repairs on properties sometimes, but, nevertheless, the measures are welcome. Years ago, private sector rented accommodation was a growth industry. Only abuses and the failure to repair property led to things going wrong. Because tenants had security of tenure, many potential landlords were deterred from letting property.

The shorthold requirements, giving a fixed term tenancy, whether for one year or five years, will encourage many potential landlords to come forward. It is unfair for the hon. Member for Fulham to rubbish the tenant protections in the orders. It is clear to all Conservative members that any tenant on a shorthold tenancy will be

*[Mr. Peter Bruinvels]*

safe for the full period of the tenancy, provided that he does not break the conditions of the tenancy. That is a fair, just and equitable way of dealing with the housing shortage, especially in London.

The arrangements for shorthold tenancies make it possible, subject to the usual conditions, for the tenancy to be liable for renewal after the shorthold period ends. That is a good provision. Fair rents may still be registered for all shorthold property. I do not believe that the majority of landlords will abuse the system. Of course, I believe in a market economy. Rents obviously must be fair. I should think that the proposed fair rent charges will be agreed on both sides. A landlord will have the right to repossess at the end of the shorthold tenancy, and that must be welcome news. At least a future tenant will know that he can go to London or Leicester for a minimum of five years, provided he honours the conditions of the tenancy. That will mean labour mobility, which must mean good news for employers who want to take on extra staff and for potential landlords who can increase their reserves by letting out part of their property. It is a crying shame that many houses fall into disrepair because no extra funds are coming into the household. As my hon. Friend the Minister made clear, the ability of any tenant to claim housing benefit on higher rents will not be affected by these changes.

The orders are good news for the tenants who want to move to better jobs. They are good news for the employers. They will ensure that housing becomes available to all. They will ensure that the landlord and the tenant have rights. I hope that houses will be kept in good repair. On that basis, we should support the orders.

10.43 pm

**Mr. Geoffrey Lofthouse** (Pontefract and Castleford): I was interested to hear the hon. Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) say that the orders are good news for all. There are other places apart from London, and I think that the mining communities will not share his views. The authorities there did not wait for these two shabby orders before starting to implement Rachman tactics with former National Coal Board houses. The hon. Member for Bournemouth, West (Mr. Butterfill) said that he does not support the racketeers cashing in on short-term tenancies. I do not know whether the Minister, or indeed the House, knows what is happening at present. Coal Board estates, homes belonging to miners who have worked in the mining industry all their lives, are being flogged off at auctions, being put out to tender, and going for very low prices. Then, within days, some of the purchasers, who are not known to the tenants, are offering to flog them off to the tenants at prices far in excess of what they purchased them for, knowing full well that the tenants are not in a position to purchase them.

**Mr. Butterfill:** Is it not true, though, that the properties are offered first to the tenants before they are sold by public auction? They are only sold when the tenants decline to buy.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** It is true of some of the properties, but not all. The fact is that the tenants have not been able to purchase them. Some of them are elderly, retired miners who are unable to get mortgages.

Let me describe a classic case of a shorthold tenancy. I have in my possession a letter from a firm of solicitors to a couple residing just outside the borders of my constituency. It is to offer them a shorthold tenancy of a Coal Board house purchased only a few weeks previously and it says:

> "We act on behalf of the owners of the above property, your proposed Landlords, and are informed by their Managing Agents, Messrs,. Michael A. Wrest & Co. of Cockerham Hall Mews, Huddersfield Road, Barnsley, that you have agreed to take a tenancy of the above property for a period of one year subject to Contract."

Nowhere does it say who the landlord is. It goes on to give the terms of the agreement, as follows:

> "The weekly rent is thirty-five pounds. The commencement date is 30th January 1987."

Many of these miners have, over the years, enjoyed low rents, in accordance with their agreements with the Coal Board. Apart from that, many of the sitting tenants have had a fair rent fixed for their properties. That is about £21 a week, including rates. This agreement is offering the property to these tenants at £35 a week plus general rate and water rate.

The letter goes on:

> "The agreement to be used is a 'Protected Shorthold Tenancy'. Under its terms your Landlord is committed to granting you a tenancy of the property for one year. At the end of the year it may be terminated by Landlord and possession of the property can be recovered. You can give one month's notice of termination at any time."

We have heard from Conservative Members, quite rightly, that there is a right to apply to have a fair rent fixed. In accordance with law that is right, but in practice these people who have a roof over their heads for the short period of 12 months will be frightened to death to go and ask for a fair rent to be fixed because they believe the landlord may then turn them out at the end of the 12 months. That is what will happen.

The letter continues:

> "Payments you must make."

This is over and above the £35 a week plus the general rate and water rate. It states:

> "When you sign the Tenancy Agreement you will have to make the following payments: four weeks rent in advance, £140; breakage deposit, £150; legal fees, £63·50. Total amount required, £353·50."

In the area that I represent we call that key money, and if someone cannot pay it he does not get the key.

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): The sums to which my hon. Friend has referred are substantial, and perhaps more substantial to him than to Conservative Members. Will he estimate the price that the company paid for the houses and the profit that is being made?

**Mr. Lofthouse:** I do not have the exact figures, but the houses have been available in the area for £2,500 to £3,000. We are talking about landlords who are moving into these markets and recouping their money within two years. If that can be considered as fair within the context of short-term tenancy agreements, what cannot? If that is the type of landlord that we are being asked to sustain, who else are we to support? We have heard about Christian gentlemen who put their money into housing because they want to provide homes for others, and I do not deny that they are to be found, but there are landlords who take a different view.

There are areas where people are desperate for homes. Some of my constituents who are anxious for a tenancy have, through no fault of their own, never held a job since they left school. They are desperate for a home and they will take almost anything that is available. If someone in that position is able to find £350 and he obtains a tenancy, he may qualify for a rent rebate, but that will mean that the state will be sustaining racketeer landlords who are charging excessive rents.

**Mr. Rooker:** If the local authority does not agree that the rent is fair, it is not required to meet all the costs of the rent in housing benefit.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** I appreciate that.

Unfortunately, there are those who take on the agreements that I have described who find that they cannot meet their commitments. When that happens, they are out on the street in two months' time in the lap of the social services department and the local authority.

So-called landlords—they are racketeers—have gone to auctions and purchased tenancies for knock-down prices in an attempt to cash in on the unfortunates who have no option but to accept their terms. If that is the case for short-term tenancies, I do not want it, and I do not think that many Conservative Members do. Youngsters who are desperate for homes are willing to put their signatures to the agreements that I have described because they have no option but to do so. They want somewhere to live. They want somewhere to take their babies or small children. They want to move away from their in-laws. They are desperate, and they are being forced into accepting the conditions of racketeers. If the orders are paving the way for the actions of these so-called landlords to be made legal, they should be slung out.

10.55 pm

**Mr. Mike Woodcock** (Ellesmere Port and Neston): I am not sure how the speech of the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) was related to the orders before the House.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** I was talking about short-term tenancies.

**Mr. Woodcock:** I understand the problems that the hon. Gentleman was discussing, but the orders bear no relation to those problems.

I welcome the improvements to the working of the Rent Act 1977, although they are fairly minor. If owners of properties have waited two years for a review of rent, why should they wait a further year to collect the rent that has been determined at today's values? Whatever the situation in the housing market there is no justice in that delay. Bringing London's protected shorthold tenancies into line with those in the rest of the country will increase the supply of housing accommodation in the capital.

Although I offer my hon. Friend the Minister mild congratulations on introducing these minor orders, I must remind him that since the Government have been in power the national stock of private rented accommodation has decreased by 25 per cent. from 2 million units to 1·5 million. At the same time, vast numbers of people desperately need to rent accommodation. They may need temporary accommodation. They may be moving between homes, the victims of broken homes, new households or many others.

Local authorities and housing associations cannot always meet those needs. There is no reason why they should. The law should bring together people who need accommodation and those who are prepared to invest in housing. All to often it has kept the two groups apart.

Tonight's orders are sensible, but the Minister needs to go much further to rejuvenate the private rented sector. The Minister should also consider the basis on which rent officers determine fair rents. They may be called fair rents, but there they are not economic rents. If they were economic more people would be moving into the private sector rather than out of it.

It is in everyone's interests to have more investment in housing. I should like the Minister to introduce an order to allow a rent registration that is determined within a protected shorthold tenancy to die with that tenancy. The present rules prohibit that. An application for the registration of a fair rent cannot be made within two years. That has resulted in vast numbers of properties in London and elsewhere remaining empty until the end of two years. The Minister should consider applying that sensible reform on the cessation of any tenancy or in any circumstance where both landlord and tenant jointly apply for the cancellation of a registered rent. The present rules leave properties standing empty.

The Minister should also consider ending the provision whereby local authorities can apply for the registration of a fair rent even when both landlord and tenant do not wish that to happen. That provision is being used by some left-wing authorities to help to destroy what is left of the private rented sector.

The orders are sensible, but they are relatively minimal. I urge my hon. Friend to go further and allow the private rented sector to play as important a part in meeting housing needs as already happens in many countries in western Europe and the United States.

10.58 pm

**Mr. Jeremy Hanley** (Richmond and Barnes): I apologise for my absence during the first few minutes of the debate, but I was in Manchester on parliamentary business until 7 o'clock. The fact that I was able to return especially for the debate is thanks to the efficiency of British Rail and my wife's excellent driving.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** Is she a train driver?

**Mr. Hanley:** No, but I have no doubt that she would be as good at that as she is at driving a car.

I speak tonight with a heavy heart. My hon. Friend the Minister is one of the most sensitive Housing Ministers for many years. He has shown great sensitivity in dealing with the problems of the former and existing council estates in Castelnau in my constituency. In fact, his concentration on the particular problems of the Booth PRC estate there has won him many friends.

However, in exactly the same ward the private tenants —and there are many of them in my constituency—cause me great concern. They have missed out on the vast increase in house prices, which has been particularly exaggerated in my constituency. Many of them have fixed or very low incomes. Indeed, many of them have lost housing benefit.

The Minister has said on many occasions that we need another 1 million housing units, but on each occasion, and whenever he has mentioned reforms of the Rent Acts, he has said that existing tenants would be protected. I have passed on letters from him to my constituents when they

*[Mr. Hanley]*

have been whipped up by scares from Labour or Liberal politicians claiming that the Rent Acts will cause great problems to private tenants.

However, one of the orders we are considering does affect existing tenants. I know that all rights cannot remain enshrined for all time, but in this matter many of my private tenants are gravely affected. Many have written to me, and one of them said:

> "In the last two rent reviews of my flat, the Richmond rent officer has leaned heavily on the side of the landlord, specifically to increase the landlord's return on investment. We have been told that this will continue until these rents equal those on the open, uncontrolled market . . . Furthermore, the rent officer's latest award to the landlord of our flat was a rent increase totalling 98 per cent. It would have created considerable hardship to have to pay this at once instead of in two phases. For those on fixed incomes—like a great many in the estate where I live—or those whose wages or salaries do not increase anything remotely approaching 98 per cent. over a two-year period, the hardship would be most severe."

That was one of 25 letters that I have received only this week.

During our conversations over the past two days, when I drew attention to this grave matter, the Minister said that he had not received anything like that sort of representation from any other part of the country. All that I can say is that the people in my constituency tend to be extremely well informed and well ahead of public opinion trends. I can assure the Minister that, after tonight, many more people will have heard of it.

Another constituent wrote saying:

> "The complex of flats in which I live—for 18 years—were relatively recently acquired by a company . . . Following an external face lift and decoration of the common parts my rent, from 28th May 1986, was increased from £1,340 to £2,740—a 103 per cent. increase . . . Complexes such as ours acquired by large, and often foreign, organisations, make a mockery of such a proposition."

Another wrote saying:

> "My husband and I are both pensioners and we have been private tenants here for the last 20 years."

That is not 20 years clocking up discounts to buy their own property; that is not 20 years clocking up the right to buy. They cannot move and take their rights with them. They have lived there for 20 years because they could not afford to live anywhere else. Even if they could have put themselves on to the council housing list, they were probably either too proud or too generous to this country to do so. One is 68 and the other 71, and in addition the wife has to have a part-time job to help pay the rent. They receive a rate rebate of £13 per fortnight, but, as the wife says:

> "The rents went up last year, so I managed to do another five hours a week to compensate, and the council immediately knocked at least a pound off the allowance. You see we are borderline cases . . . ex-service personnel (as if that meant a thing these days)."

Yet another constituent wrote:

> "The elimination of the phased increases in Fair Rents over two years may well force many tenants to seek support or alternative accommodation from the Local Authorities, thus increasing the demands on rates and taxes. As a resident in a purpose built block of flats"—*[Interruption.]*

This is a very serious matter, and only Liberals would laugh at it. The letter continued:

> "I have to inform you that when the flats . . . become vacant they are not relet but sold to long leaseholders, thereby giving the Landlord the opportunity to make a quick and exorbitant profit followed by equally exorbitant service charges."

Another constituent has written and this lady might be of interest to the Government. She writes:

> "Since your Government came into office you have already reduced the period of re-registration of rents from 3 years to two years.
>
> I would like to point out, and there are many more people in a situation like myself, who have landlords whose only aim is money, money and more money, and who demand high rent increases at each re-registration, that if it were not for the protection of the Rent Officer, we would all be out on the streets without a home. . . I would also point out to you that where I live, the number of people voting Tory is very high indeed, but I for one will not be voting for you again and I have had others say this to me."

That constituent is a private secretary to a member of the Cabinet. She is changing her loyalties because she believes that she has been badly treated.

She continues:

> "I am told that Mr. Patten is proposing this 'in line with inflation which is now down to 3%'. . . . Only last week we are told the Water Rate is going up by 5½%"

—and, she says, that the Liberal council will increase her rates by 16 per cent.

Those increases will fall very hard on the private tenants and I suspect that none of them will have faced a rent increase of as little as the present rate of inflation.

I could quote from many other letters, but time precludes that. However, I shall mention one from an old-age pensioner, whose rent increased from £1,085 in February 1985 to £1,760. Thanks to the two-year phasing it went from £1,085, to £1,462 to £1,760.

I am afraid that it is no comfort to my constituents that that last bit of generosity to tenants will be taken away tonight. Why change that generosity and hurt many of those who have supported the Government in the past and who have also supported the nation fearlessly? Why do that just to support landlords, many of whom are corporations and many of whom are based abroad?

As I have said to my hon. Friend the Minister in conversations during the past few days, many people in my constituency are well-informed and they will make sacrifices to help the Government. That is the sort of person who has made sacrifices for us in the past, and if, by voting against this order tonight, I shall be sacrificing my future, I hope that that will be for the many who have, as I have said, sacrificed their past to help all of our futures.

11.7 pm

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): At Question Time today we had an admission of the record number of those who were rendered homeless last year. The figure was over 100,000. If one considers the area of greatest housing stress, Greater London, one sees from the figures published only a few months ago by the Association of London Authorities that in the 16 stress Labour authorities in London the number of people in bed and breakfast accommodation was forecast to rise from about 6,600 in the first quarter of this year to about 12,000 in two year's time, in the first quarter of 1989. That is another sign of the growing and extraordinary crisis facing those who are less well-off in the capital city and elsewhere too.

The first question that one has to ask oneself is whether the two orders will make any contribution to solving the extraordinary housing crisis, especially in our urban conurbations. The answer must be that the orders will make no contribution whatever in that direction. In fact, the order that deals with shorthold tenancies will contribute to the growing queue of homelessness in the same way as the statistics that were garnered by my hon. Friend the Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) show the number of owner-occupiers who are now joining the homeless queue. Therefore, these orders will do nothing to address the major renting crisis.

It is argued that private landlords have a contribution to make towards providing housing, but no evidence has emerged from the debate that that is so. Generally speaking, private landlords fall into two categories. There are the private landlords who are not in the business for gain, of whom there are not many and often they are not competent to look after such a large capital asset as a home for someone else. I do not say that maliciously. The cause of much deterioration in our private housing is partly that rents are not sufficient to meet repair costs, and everybody recognises that.

The second type of private landlord may have the competence to look after one or two houses, but he has no interest in doing it. He is the commercial private landlord, who is simply in the business to extract as much gain as possible. Both parties have a great deal of experience, going back to the Rent Acts, but nothing that has happened in the past 30 years gives the slightest indication that relaxations or changes in rent control will contribute to additional private sector housing provision.

The right way to proceed is to encourage local authorities to build and rent—over the past eight years their programmes have been savaged — housing associations to build and rent, and responsible, licensed professional landlords to provide housing under assured tenancy schemes. A contribution to the condition of privately rented accommodation can be made by giving private tenants the right to buy in the same way as public sector tenants have that right.

The relief from phasing order has no effect on the supply of accommodation. We were given various figures about rent rises recorded by rent officers. The figures provided in parliamentary questions show a rent rise of about 9 per cent. per annum, which is more or less standard across the country. The evidence garnered by private tenants' organisations shows an average rent rise imposed by rent officers of about 17 per cent. The evidence that we have heard in a courageous speech from the hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) shows rent rises of up to 98 per cent. In my constituency there may be isolated examples of private tenants' rent increases of about 60 per cent. They are not unimportant to the tenants concerned.

All those rent rises seem to affect the group of people who fall outside the housing benefit safety net. They have probably saved or contributed towards an occupational pension, and they have the most to lose. They lost from the withdrawal of the electricity scheme introduced by the Labour Government and they are shattered to receive a rate rise of up to 70 per cent. They come to my advice bureau and say, "I do not know how I can continue the sort of life that I have led with this sort of rent rise."

**Mr. Hanley:** I am most grateful to the hon. Gentleman for allowing me to intervene and for his compliment. However, I am afraid that in one letter which time precluded me from reading out a constituent said that the real fear of removing the phasing of tenancies was caused by the remote possibility of a Labour Government being elected and taking us back to the high levels of inflation that we experienced in the time scale that caused phasing originally. That, coupled with the inflation rates that we experienced during the Lib-Lab pact, is a serious fear for those people.

**Mr. Fraser:** The hon. Gentleman has partly lost the admiration that he earned for his courageous speech.

The order relating to ending the obligation to register a rent for protected shorthold tenancies will create the risk of a larger number of people eventually coming into the homeless queue. There is a gross abuse of Rent Act accommodation by private landlords throughout much of Greater London. Very few shorthold tenances are created, partly because there is the requirement to register the rent, and partly because the provisions about notice are regarded by most landlords as being difficult to comply with.

The central reason why private landlords do not go in for granting shorthold tenancies is that the attention of the tenant is drawn to the obligation to register the rent. Therefore, they engage in a whole series of other strategies to get high, uncontrolled rents. Sometimes they use the advice of the company let, and sometimes they trade on the ignorance of tenants who believe that furnished tenancies—they provide a minimum of furniture—are not subject to control. In many cases they do not rely upon any loophole in the law. They used to rely upon licences, but that has been brought to an end by the House of Lords case in Street and Montford. However, they have relied on the sheer ignorance of the tenants. Many landlords exploit the shortage of housing to rent in central London and demand very high rents from tenants.

After a time the tenants find that they are not able to keep up with the high rents. They often do not qualify for housing benefit at the full rate, and eventually they find that they are in debt and cannot keep up the payments. They have then to look to the private sector or the homeless queue for their next tranche of accommodation.

There is the risk that if tenants are properly advised they will go to the rent officer and get a registered rent. If they take legal advice from a law centre, or a solicitor, or whatever, they can establish a protected tenancy and the landlord is defeated. However, very few people do that. The removal of registration of rents from shorthold tenancies in central London will give those landlords a legal cover that was not previously available. They will have the advantage of the unregistered rent and the advantage of the absence of security of tenure. Therefore, although it will not add to the supply of accommodation, it will add to the supply of people going on to the homeless list. That is why I believe that the last order that I mentioned runs counter to any assistance that could be given to the relief of homelessness and the shortage of housing.

If the Government were serious about these matters, they would not dip their toes in the pool of decontrol. They would be addressing their minds much more seriously to the central problems of homelessness and the shortage of housing to rent in the capital.

11.18 pm

**Mr. John Patten:** This has been an extremely interesting debate, almost without exception. There have been some thought-provoking contributions. I have been given pause

*[Mr. John Patten]*

for thought by several things that have been said, and perhaps we will get a chance to air them in a debate in the not too distant future.

It was clear from the characteristically forceful and thoughtful contribution of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) that he wants the Rent Act strengthened and that he wants to see the end of the private sector in Britain. Britain is currently losing 70,000 private rented tenancies a year. The sector is vanishing and it will be gone by the year 2000. That is what the Labour party and the hon. Member for Perry Barr want to see, but with some important exceptions, which he acknowledged and which I should like to reinforce.

The hon. Member once more asserted his support and the support of his party for shared ownership and assured tenancies. I welcome that. It is important that those messages continue to be given to the housing association movement and investing institutions that wish to become involved in those forms of tenure. He also gave a fairly unqualified welcome for the thought, under certain conditions, of building societies and pension funds investing in this sort of tenure. That is important. His hon. Friend the Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) talked about the need for licensed professional landlords. That is an area of agreement between the Labour party and the Conservative party upon which we can build in the future. I welcome that consensus, although we fundamentally disagree about the private rented sector as a whole.

The hon. Member for Perry Barr asked about the statistics of rent increases in recent years in the private rented sector. I think that he based his ideas mainly on the interesting brief circulated by Shelter on behalf of 10 local associations representing people in the private rented sector. In particular, the hon. Gentleman quoted a 17 per cent. rent rise in the first half of 1986. That statistic is based upon the kind of calculation that Ministers are normally accused of trying to get away with. That figure actually relates to rent for the previous two years. The rents were really rising at the rate of 8·5 per cent. a year. Sometimes the Government are criticised for misusing statistics. I shall have to speak to my friend Sheila Mckechnie the next time I meet her and ensure that in future we have a common understanding about the basis of statistics, such as that quoted by the hon. Member for Perry Barr.

The most important point is that private rents rose by 340 per cent. between 1970 and 1986. That must be compared to the rise in the retail prices index during the same period of 417 per cent. Local authority rents increased by more during that time, by 581 per cent., and average earnings increased by 579 per cent. That is the true picture over 16 years, and that shows the true scale of the rise in private rents. That rise is set in context when those figures are considered together.

It is also very important to recognise that the average unfurnished weekly tenancy in England and Wales is let at £19·63 and the average for a furnished let is £28. The figures for London are £24·92 and £35·94 respectively. Some of the figures——

**Mr. Lofthouse** *rose*——

**Mr. Patten:** I shall consider the points made by the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) in a moment. He raised some very important and disturbing points, which I shall try to address shortly.

The hon. Member for Perry Barr asked how many people in private rented tenancies enjoyed housing benefit. The exact number is 626,000. That is nearly one third of all private sector tenants. The hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Fulham (Mr. Raynsford) are correct, in that we do not have up-to-date figures of the number of shortholds. We have the figures relating to 1981, when shorthold records were kept in the fair rent registrations for the country, and there were about 5,000 such tenancies then. We have not kept the figures since then, although the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys in its examination of new lettings for the Department in 1986, showed that shorthold is a widely understood and appreciated form of tenure in the country outside London.

The hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford caused me considerable concern. I know that in recent weeks there have been discussions with British Coal about the sale and disposal of ex-Coal Board houses. I understand that under the new approach auction will be a matter only of last resort, and that will be welcomed.

The hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford produced some disturbing pieces of evidence in the letter that he read out. I would be extremely grateful if the hon. Gentleman would pass that correspondence to me, in the same way as his hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) has passed me correspondence across the Dispatch Box, so that I can examine that information and reply as soon as possible.

The contribution on these matters from the Liberal Benches came from the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft), and I congratulate the hon. Gentleman on his new role as the housing spokesman for the alliance. He made a remarkable contribution, which was widely appreciated on the Conservative Benches, although having made his remarkable contribution he finished by saying that he would vote against the two orders. None the less, the first seven eighths of the hon. Gentleman's speech was splendid stuff and we were about to offer him a job on the basis of his comments.

The hon. Gentleman shot holes through the Labour Front Bench argument about the immorality of making profits from renting. Any of my hon. Friends who were not in the Chamber when he made his speech should look in tomorrow's *Hansard* at his argument. What he said is important, because we want respectable and responsible landlordism, as much in the public and in the private sector. Again, there is a wide agreement across the Chamber that that is what we want to see.

Just as it is important that we welcome the limited concessions from the Labour party about shared tenancies and shared ownership, and the possibility of building society and pension fund investment in the private rented sector, so I welcome what seemed to be implicit in the hon. Gentleman's speech—that it is not alliance policy to be completely against the private sector, and in certain circumstances the alliance would be prepared to look again at this. I am not seeking to get the hon. Gentleman into a corner and make pledges that we can use in the general election. If he is called in the debate on Tuesday, he can make his views known then. However, he has made the important statement that the alliance is not against the private rented sector.

Some important messages are going out from the speeches made by the hon. Members for Perry Barr and for Leeds, West to investing institutions, such as the pension funds and the building societies, which are queueing up to invest in rented housing as responsible landlords. We all wish to see that.

It was marvellous to hear the critical analysis of my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead and Highgate (Sir G. Finsberg) of the two orders. He was right about the importance of phasing. I was interested to hear his remarks about shortholds, because he was one of the architects of the shorthold idea in the early 1980s. He asked me specifically whether new forms on shortholds will say that it will be open to the tenant or the landlord to get a fair rent registered. The answer to that is a clear and unequivocal yes, and I hope that he will forgive me if I write to him soon about the detailed point raised by his friends about housing associations.

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg:** My non-friends.

**Mr. Patten:** I apologise — my hon. Friend's non-friends.

My hon. Friends the Members for Bournemouth, West (Mr. Butterfill) for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) and for Ellesmere Port and Neston (Mr. Woodcock) all made substantial contributions. They recognised that if we can find ways of getting some consensus between the parties about some parts of private renting, it will be possible to house the homeless, those seeking jobs in new areas, and young people at the end of housing queues. We need greater investment in housing and more diversity of sources into different forms of tenure. I welcome that.

My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) made a thoughtful and brave speech in the interests of his constituents. I regret that he has decided that he will vote against us. Perhaps in the last two minutes he will reconsider his position. I have sympathy with his views and with the position of the tenants concerned. However, the case in question is not typical, and the rent increases that he quoted at least in part reflect substantial expenditure on the properties to which he referred. The average rent of an unfurnished property in London is £25 a week. Increases above the rate of inflation are often the direct consequence of rent control. Rent rises were held down in the 1970s, with the result that a catching-up period was, alas, inevitable.

I hope that the House recognises the case for making these orders. They will encourage the provision of more homes for rent in our capital and in Britain as a whole. I think that they will also help to fill some empty homes. That is our main consideration, and I ask the House to support these modest but worthwhile measures.

*Question put:—*

*The House divided:* Ayes 155, Noes 92.

**Division No. 81]** **[11.30 pm**

## AYES

Baldry, Tony
Bevan, David Gilroy
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Brandon-Bravo, Martin
Bruinvels, Peter
Bulmer, Esmond
Burt, Alistair
Butterfill, John
Cockeram, Eric
Colvin, Michael
Cope, John
Durant, Tony
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Forth, Eric
Franks, Cecil
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Freeman, Roger
Galley, Roy
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gow, Ian
Gregory, Conal
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Griffiths, Peter *(Portsm'th N)*
Ground, Patrick
Gummer, Rt Hon John S
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hannam, John
Hargreaves, Kenneth
Harris, David
Harvey, Robert
Hawkins, Sir Paul *(N'folk SW)*
Hayes, J.
Heddle, John
Hind, Kenneth
Hirst, Michael
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Holt, Richard
Howarth, Alan *(Stratf'd-on-A)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Hubbard-Miles, Peter
Jackson, Robert
Jenkin, Rt Hon Patrick
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Jones, Gwilym *(Cardiff N)*
Jones, Robert *(Herts W)*
Key, Robert
King, Roger *(B'ham N'field)*
Knight, Greg *(Derby N)*
Knight, Dame Jill *(Edgbaston)*
Knowles, Michael
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Leigh, Edward *(Gainsbor'gh)*
Lennox-Boyd, Hon Mark
Lightbown, David
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
Major, John
Malone, Gerald
Marland, Paul
Mather, Sir Carol
Maude, Hon Francis
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mayhew, Sir Patrick
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Iain *(Meriden)*
Moate, Roger
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Osborn, Sir John
Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Pollock, Alexander
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rowe, Andrew
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Stanbrook, Ivor
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael
Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Allan *(Eastwood)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Wakeham, Rt Hon John
Walden, George
Waller, Gary
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Whitfield, John
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wood, Timothy
Woodcock, Michael

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Richard Ryder and
Mr. Michael Portillo.

## NOES

Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Beith, A. J.
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bermingham, Gerald
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, Gordon *(D'f'mline E)*
Brown, Hugh D. *(Provan)*
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Caborn, Richard
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*

Cook, Robin F. *(Livingston)*
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Cunningham, Dr John
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eadie, Alex
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Faulds, Andrew
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freud, Clement
George, Bruce
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hamilton, James *(M'well N)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Hardy, Peter
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Jones, Barry *(Alyn & Deeside)*
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leighton, Ronald
Livsey, Richard
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
McWilliam, John
Madden, Max
Marek, Dr John
Martin, Michael
Maxton, John
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
O'Neill, Martin
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rogers, Allan
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Rowlands, Ted
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Skinner, Dennis
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Strang, Gavin
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Welsh, Michael
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. Chris Smith.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the draft Rent (Relief from Phasing) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 13th January, be approved.

## SHORTHOLD TENANCIES (RENT REGISTRATION)

*Resolved,*

That the draft Protected Shorthold Tenancies (Rent Registration) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 13th January, be approved.—*[Mr. John Patten.]*

## Seasonal Workers (Definition)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

11.40 pm

**Mr. Allan Rogers** (Rhondda): This issue has been in front of me and the Minister for at least a year. On 17 January 1986 I wrote to the Minister about one of my constituents who had been told that he could not receive benefit when he went to sign on for unemployment benefit because he was deemed to be a seasonal worker. When he came to see me, he told me of the derisory amount of supplementary benefit that had been offered to him because he was not entitled to unemployment benefit. He also told me that unemployed people in the Rhondda were being classified as seasonal workers. I did not understand what he told me then, but in the last year I have become an expert on seasonal workers, if only to rebut the lengthy answers that I have received from various Departments.

I took up this matter initially with the Department of Employment and asked why my constituent had been classified as a seasonal worker. In his reply the Under-Secretary of State at that time referred to the regulations covering seasonal workers and then tried to explain why somebody who lives in what was probably the most industrialised constituency in Great Britain should be so classified. My constituent had been able to work only for periods during the three previous years, and he was deemed to have established a pattern of work that meant that he was caught by this legislation.

The National Insurance Advisory Committee, which reported in accordance with section 138 of the Social Security Act 1975, refers to this problem. The committee concluded that in 1952 the regulations were in general working satisfactorily, although it had reservations about some of the case law. It recommended

> "that the definitions should be redrafted to make it clear that the application of the regulations should not be restricted to periods comparable with the annual seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter) and that, to avoid the pattern being confused by the effects of industrial recessions, the definition of seasonal worker should be limited so that it applied only to employment which was seasonal in consequence of factors inherent in the nature or conditions of the industry concerned."

The report states that it must be a seasonal industry for people to be called seasonal workers. That is why it is odd that we have people called seasonal workers, although they are working in normal industrial activity. The report states that industrial recession limited the opportunities of employment at times when people were not employed. One of the conditions currently extant for people qualifying for benefit is that they must reasonably pursue employment during the periods when they are not engaged in the so-called seasonal activity.

I pointed out in my correspondence with the Minister that those conditions would be acceptable if alternative employment was available. In an area such as Rhondda, where there is over 30 per cent. male unemployment, people leave the register — indeed, they have been exhorted to do so—and obtain jobs. However, if they do so they fall into the trap of being deemed seasonal workers if they do that work for three years. That makes nonsense of the Department of Employment "availability for work" questionnaire, which is supposed to be a scientific measurement of the number of people who want to work.

My constituents are laid off, so they go to the Department of Employment and fill in the questionnaire to say that they are ready to work, and then they are classified as seasonal workers because they have worked only when there has been a slight upturn in the economy.

At a time of recession or low industrial and economic activity, any fluctuations in the economy are local and seasonal. One example—which does not apply to my constituency—is the fact that the Central Electricity Generating Board is contracting out maintenance on its power stations. That can be done only on a seasonal basis—when there is not much demand for electricity supply. The CEGB will shut down the power stations for maintenance work. If that happens over a three-year period and that is the only time that people can get jobs, because it is the only time the CEGB shuts down, they are classified as seasonal workers. That is why I was concerned about the issue.

I sought the debate almost out of frustration. My last letter to the Department was written on 12 November. Last Thursday, I was successful in obtaining this Adjournment debate and, out of the blue, on Tuesday 3 February I received an answer from the Minister apologising for the delay in answering my letter of 12 November. People might say that Adjournment debates are not useful. This debate has been useful, because it prompted a reply from the Minister after a three-month delay. In his letter, the Minister says:

> "You will be interested to learn therefore that we have recently referred the question of the seasonal workers' regulations to the Social Security Advisory Committee."

I was annoyed, because for a year I was in continual and active correspondence with the Department, and on 20 November—whether it was due to my pressure or other people's pressure, or perhaps I made the Department rethink the issue—the Department referred the matter to the Social Security Advisory Committee without the decency of letting me know that that had been done. If I had not applied for this Adjournment debate and the matter had not been raised tonight, I would not have received this information.

The deadline for submissions to the SSAC is 12 February. I received the information only this week. I am worried because trade unions, organisations and individuals who might want to submit evidence will not be able to do so. I hope that the Under-Secretary of State will extend the deadline.

In 1977, the last time the advisory committee sat, it received seven representations—five from employers and organisations connected with the fish and fish-processing industry, one from the TUC and one from one of its affiliated organisations. The problem has increased enormously since 1977. But if the dissemination of information and the demand for representations were the same then as they are now, it is no wonder that the advisory committee does not receive representations.

This important issue should be thoroughly aired and considered in the present context. Over the past year, I have said continually in my correspondence that the definitions in the social security regulations are valid only in the context in which they operate. Whereas they might well have been valid in the 1930s, 1940s or 1950s, and certainly in the 1970s, they are not valid today because the context of employment has changed. Unemployment is no longer running at 3 per cent. or 4 per cent.; it is much higher.

To show how the context changes, I shall refer to the principal classes of claimants in 1935. In 1935, they included people who worked in holiday resorts—waitresses, servants in boarding houses and hotels, drivers and conductors, shop assistants, amusement and entertainment workers, pier, beach and swimming attendants, yacht hands and seamen on pleasure boats. In other localities, they included fishermen, fish workers, ice cream makers and vendors, bookmakers' clerks—I do not know why that last job is seasonal but I suppose that it is because there is a flat season and a season over the sticks—maltsters, brickyard workers, beet sugar workers and professional footballers. I mention the last group in particular to demonstrate how the context has changed. When the regulations were designed, some professional workers were classified as seasonal workers.

Time has moved on. My time to speak is rapidly running out. I have achieved a small success in getting the Minister to look at the regulations again. I am pleased that he will do so. I hope that he will accept in good spirit my criticism of the delays in replying to my letter and of the fact that I did not receive any notice that the matter would be referred to the Social Security Advisory Committee. I hope that the Minister will extend the deadline for the receipt of representations.

11.53 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Lyell):** I am grateful to the hon. Member for Rhondda (Mr. Rogers) for raising this topic, which is pertinent, and for explaining his concern about his constituents and about the possible position of other people who face the same problem.

The hon. Gentleman drew attention to some problems that have attended the operation of the rules about seasonal workers since their inception as long ago as the days, not of recent recessions, but of the recession which preceded the second world war.

I am aware that the hon. Gentleman has written on a number of occasions about the problem affecting his own constituent, and the particular case to which he has referred has been considered, as he knows, by the appeal authorities on two occasions, the latest being a hearing by the social security commissioner on 26 January 1987, whose decision is still awaited. In view of the independent role of these statutory authorities, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the substance of the particular case.

I appreciate the genuine concern that the hon. Member has shown and I can best reply to the points he has made by explaining the real dilemma that the administration of these rules has presented not only to the present Government but to many Governments in the past.

Let me first explain briefly who is treated as a seasonal worker in the unemployment benefit system. The regulations say that a seasonal worker is

> "a person whose normal employment is for part or parts only of a year in an occupation or occupations of which the availability or extent varies at approximately the same time or times in successive years; or any other person who normally restricts his employment to the same, or substantially the same, part or parts only of the year."

A person is treated as a seasonal worker only after three years in such work. I shall return to that point later. I should make it plain that a seasonal worker is not

*[Mr. Nicholas Lyell]*

automatically disentitled to benefit during his off season but has to satisfy an additional condition to qualify. Again, I shall return to that later.

Long before the Beveridge report, it was recognised that without special rules seasonal workers would be in a position to take advantage of an unemployment insurance system by claiming benefit payments for several months each year, year in and year out. This poses two problems. The first is cost, the burden of which would fall on other contributors. The second is a problem of principle. A person should not be able to receive unemployment benefit for days or periods on which he would not normally work, so effectively subsidising his income by means of a non-means-tested benefit.

It was to solve these problems that restrictions on the payment of unemployment benefit to seasonal workers were introduced as early as 1931 following the first report of the Royal Commission on unemployment insurance. In 1946—and the hon. Gentleman has rightly traced some of the history—a report of the then National Insurance Advisory Committee on benefit entitlement for these workers confirmed the need for additional conditions to be applied to seasonal workers. More recently, in 1977, a second report by the National Insurance Advisory Committee concluded that additional conditions continued to be necessary.

Unemployment benefit is not a means-tested benefit. it is available to all unemployed persons who satisfy the contribution conditions and are available for employment, unless specific rules exclude them. It is possible for persons receiving this daily benefit to be in employment on some days and unemployed on others. There are therefore a number of rules whose broad purpose is to ensure that this benefit does not become a non-means-tested supplement to normal income, perhaps as a consequence removing the incentive to enter more fully into the employment field. I fully recognise that one of the points that the hon. Gentleman is making is that that particular aspect does not apply in cases such as that of his constituent. Examples of these rules are those which prevent payment of benefit to persons who do not normally work on Saturdays or who customarily work for fewer than six days per week. The rules affecting seasonal workers are designed to achieve this same end but operate over a longer time scale. It would be inconsistent for persons who normally work for part of the week to be denied benefit while it was paid to those who normally work for only part of the year.

National Insurance contributions are intended to insure workers against the risk of unemployment, but it would amount to insurance against a virtual certainty if benefit were paid automatically to people whose work regularly involved spells of unemployment at or about the same time each year. The payment of unemployment benefit for regular periods each year without restriction to persons who have adopted a seasonal pattern of work would be unfair to the general body of contributors. This is because the payment of unemployment benefit in the normal course is limited to a total of 312 days in any single period. A seasonal worker would never exhaust his entitlement; it would be renewed after each season. It is not surprising therefore that advisory committees over the years — indeed, over the decades — have accepted the necessity for special rules to apply to seasonal workers.

I come to the matter of safeguards. The present legislation provides a number of safeguards to ensure as far as possible that persons are not unfairly treated as seasonal workers. The additional condition is not applied until a person has become a seasonal worker as defined in the regulations. By virtue of case law he is not treated as a seasonal worker until he has completed a three-year pattern of seasonal employment. It is of course possible for a person apparently to acquire a seasonal pattern of employment in any one year, but it would be unlikely that the same set of circumstances would operate fortuitously again during the following year. It would be most improbable that a similar pattern of seasonal work had operated for three years when that person was not truly a seasonal worker. It is that position that the hon. Gentleman asks to be reconsidered, and I understand his argument. As a further safeguard, all periods of less than seven consecutive days unemployment are ignored for the purpose of establishing the off season period, and unless the aggregate off season is greater than seven weeks the additional condition does not apply.

As I have mentioned, all claims to benefit from a person regarded as a seasonal worker are subject to an additional condition. In simple terms, benefit is not payable for any day in the off season unless the claimant has had, or can reasonably expect to obtain, a substantial amount of employment in the off season. That may be highly pertinent. The term "substantial amount of employment" generally means at least a quarter of the off season. A seasonal worker who has the misfortune to become unemployed during his on season is not required to satisfy an additional condition and is free to claim benefit in the usual way.

Now the pros of seasonal working. There are many circumstances in which the advantages that seasonal employment offers far outweigh any considerations of benefit entitlement for the off season. It can provide work during convenient periods of the year or hours of work that are particularly suited, for example, to individual commitments to families, hobbies and study; and it can sometimes be lucrative work so that the season can provide a good living for the whole year. There are people who choose, and have always chosen, seasonal work for those and all kinds of reasons. I think that there can be no argument that benefit should not be paid for the off season in these circumstances. The additional condition is not a disincentive for these people, but it prevents abuse of the system. In most cases earnings over the season, if supplemented by income-related benefits, exceed an income from benefits alone.

Now the cons of seasonal working. I recognise, of course, that there is another side to this coin, as has been so clearly explained by the hon. Gentleman. In some places seasonal employment may be the only work that is available locally. People genuinely seeking permanent employment may have little option but to accept seasonal employment for the period that it is available. The hon. Gentleman argues that that is not what would normally be thought of as seasonal employment of the sort that applies in the case which he has raised. I have no doubt that it is a matter that is under consideration in the case that is before the commissioner, and one that will be considered by the advisory committee.

After a few years these people are regarded as seasonal workers, and they may well experience a sense of injustice when the seasonal worker rules are applied to their claim to benefit. This sense of injustice, although understandable, is rarely related to hardship. I wish to reassure the hon. Gentleman that the seasonal worker rules are applicable only to claims for unemployment benefit. It is, as I know he recognises, open to any person affected by these rules to make a claim for supplementary benefit in the normal way, but he has pointed out that in the case of the constituent on whose behalf he has raised this debate that is not an adequate recompense.

There are rules in the supplementary benefit system whereby substantial net earnings in the season—at least two and a half times the benefit requirements of the claimant and his dependents — may reduce and even extinguish this benefit in the off season. There is no rule such as applies to unemployment benefit to prevent payment of benefit altogether.

The dilemma which has faced successive Governments over the years is how to distinguish between those persons who have every intention of accepting work when the opportunity arises and those who are quite content and indeed choose to work for certain times of the year at their own convenience. The essential difference is in the intention of the individual, but benefit staff cannot be mind readers. It is desirable that there should be objective rules. Our intention is that those rules should work fairly. It has often been said that the acid test of an employment intention is the offer of a job. In areas where jobs are readily available such a test would be easy to apply. However, this approach is unlikely to be seen as satisfactory in a national context. Even in times of generally plentiful employment there are areas where jobs are harder to obtain than others and this always applied particularly in many areas where there is seasonal work. consequently, this test is not one which is easy to apply on a uniform basis and is not perhaps a solution to the problem.

Following representations made last year, including those of the hon. Gentleman and others, but especially in the light of debate in Committee on what became the Social Security Act 1986, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State decided to refer the question of the operation of the additional condition applying to seasonal workers to the Social Security Advisory Committee. In particular, the committee was invited to consider those conditions in the light of labour market changes during the past 10 years. I am sure that the hon. Gentleman welcomes that.

In November the committee publicly invited comments and representations and said that it would accept these up to 12 February 1987. I appreciate the hon. Gentleman's point about shortage of time and I apologise to him for the fact that his letter was not given an earlier reply and that that reply, although in the pipeline, was immediately stimulated by the Adjournment debate.

The hon. Gentleman may wish to approach the Committee, but I undertake to send the committee a copy of the report of the debate and I will specifially draw its attention to the desirability of extending the time in which representations can be made. However, that will be a matter for the committee to decide. When the committee's report is received, I will carefully consider any recommendations to improve the working of the rules. Clearly, at this stage I cannot anticipate or make commitments on the outcome of that consideration.

The case that the hon. Gentleman has raised has brought the matter to the notice of the House and I assure him that it will be considered most carefully.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at six minutes past Twelve o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Thursday 5 February 1987*

*The House met at half-past Two o'clock*

## PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

## PRIVATE BUSINESS

YORK CITY COUNCIL BILL *[LORDS] (By Order)*

BEXLEY LONDON BOROUGH COUNCIL BILL *(By Order)*

CITY OF WESTMINSTER BILL *(By Order)*

TEIGNMOUTH QUAY COMPANY BILL *(By Order)*

LONDON DOCKLANDS RAILWAY (BECKTON) BILL *(By Order)*

BRITISH RAILWAYS BILL *(By Order)*

*Orders for Second Reading read.*
*To be read a Second time upon Thursday 12 February.*

GRAMPIAN REGIONAL COUNCIL (HARBOURS) ORDER CONFIRMATION

Mr. Secretary Rifkind presented a Bill to confirm a Provisional Order under section 7 of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act 1936, relating to Grampian Regional Council (Harbours): And the same was read the First time; and ordered to be considered upon Wednesday 11 February and to be printed. [Bill 65.]

# Oral Answers to Questions

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Metropolitan Police Precept

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department by what percentage above the rate of inflation the cumulative increase in the Metropolitan police precept has been since 1979.

**The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hurd):** No direct comparison is possible of precepts from 1979 to 1986 because of changes to the rate support grant arrangements in 1981 and 1983. The ratepayers' contribution to Metropolitan police expenditure was £174 million in 1981-82, rising to £258 million in 1986-87. This represents an increase of just over 15·5 per cent. above the rate of inflation.

**Mr. Cohen:** Did not London's local authority associations recently tell the Home Secretary that they thought that the Metropolitan police accounting and financial management systems were archaic, that there was little budgetary control and that the basic financial management system was insufficient to make sensible decisions? When will the Minister stop neglecting this matter and carry out his job of ensuring that value is obtained for the money handed out by London taxpayers and ratepayers? Is he aware that if he does not do that the crime rate will continue to worsen?

**Mr. Hurd:** Value for money is extremely important in Metropolitan police expenditure, as in that of any other police authority. As the hon. Gentleman knows, the Metropolitan police keep in close touch with London local authorities and are always seeking means of obtaining greater value for money and, indeed, of getting police officers on to the streets.

**Mr. Greenway:** Will my right hon. Friend congratulate the Metropolitan police on their magnificent efforts, in apprehending the rapists in the Ealing vicarage case? It took them 10 days and nights to achieve that, and they have not had the support that they should have from the courts.

**Mr. Hurd:** Yes, I will indeed do that.

**Mr. Alex Carlile:** Will the Home Secretary consider increasing the Metropolitan police precept so that the special branch can be trained to draft search warrants properly?

**Mr. Hurd:** That has been amply debated in the House. I have nothing to add to what has already been said.

**Mr. Marlow:** What would happen to the cost of the Metropolitan police if they were put under the democratic supervision of Mr. Bernie Grant, and who could then expect a knock on the door at 3 am?

**Mr. Hurd:** It would be a disaster for the Metropolitan police and, indeed, for other police forces if the Labour party were ever in a position to implement the policy that it has now clearly set out, that police forces should be under the supervision of local councils.

### Police Officers (Compensation)

2. **Mrs. Golding** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers received compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board in 1985 and 1986.

**The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Mellor):** In the financial year 1985-86 the board resolved a total of 1,755 cases involving injuries to police officers on duty, including cases in which no award was made.

**Mrs. Golding:** I am sure that all hon. Members welcome the talks that the Minister has been having with the Police Federation to try to enable benefits to be continued. Will the Minister also have talks with the train drivers' union, as members of that union suffer nervous shock as a result of the increase in suicides on the railways these days? Will the Minister assure the House that he will have such talks soon, and, when he does, will he remember that but for the actions of two people closely related to him who were also railwaymen he would not grace the House with his presence today?

**Mr. Mellor:** The hon. Lady refers to my grandfathers. As she well knows, both were railway workers and obviously I am proud of that fact. I shall certainly be willing to see Mr. Buckton and his colleagues. My difficulty is that the criminal injuries compensation scheme is intended to deal with criminal injuries arising from crimes of violence. However tragic the consequences for a number of train drivers, it is difficult to see the nervous shock that they suffer as a result of the thoroughly unpleasant experience of hitting suicides as being quite in that context. That is why I do not want to hold out too many hopes, but if the unions wish to see me I shall, of course, see them.

**Mr. John Mark Taylor:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the risk of injury to policemen would be very much less if Opposition Members could restrain their warlike friends at Wapping?

**Mr. Mellor:** In the last incident at Wapping, 150 police officers were injured. I hope that anyone with any influence over those who do that sort of thing will call for restraint.

**Mr. Du[illegible]:** Will the Minister confirm that the Criminal Justice Bill, as drafted, effectively excludes many police officers from making claims under the criminal injuries compensation scheme and that, furthermore, the recent lifting of the lower threshold for eligibility from £400 to £550 will debar some 28 per cent. of all claimants, including many police officers? Is not the truth that the Government care little about victims, whether they be ordinary citizens or policemen?

**Mr. Mellor:** I cannot agree with the hon. Gentleman, since in the next financial year we shall be spending, in real terms, three and a half times as much as the Labour Government did on the criminal injuries compensation scheme. On the hon. Gentleman's point about the police, in the Bill as drafted there is one marginal but significant difference concerning the rights of the police. We have agreed to correct it so that the Bill will reflect the present position regarding the police. On the question of the lower limit, everyone agrees that there should be a threshold. Around 20 per cent. of those who are eligible at present will not be eligible under the new threshold. The new threshold is equivalent to approximately three times the weekly national average wage. That was the basis upon which the scheme was first established in 1964.

**Mr. Holt:** Does my hon. Friend accept that, whatever the figure, it is insufficient to compensate the police of this country for their dedication when they stand up to gunmen, armed robbers and the people who man the picket lines at Wapping and elsewhere?

**Mr. Mellor:** I agree with my hon. Friend. It is one of the proudest claims of this Government that we have markedly improved the pay and conditions of the police to compensate them for the very real risks inherent in carrying out their vital task.

### Voluntary Bodies (Funding)

3. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received from voluntary bodies concerning their funding; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Home Office makes grants to more than 100 voluntary organisations and to about 350 hostels and local bodies providing accommodation or facilities for offenders. We have received 19 representations about funding in the current financial year. We have been able to offer additional resources in eight cases and a further five cases are still under consideration.

**Mr. Kirkwood:** Leaving aside the important problem of the lack of adequate resources for some of these organisations, does the Minister agree that there is a lack of consistency in the way in which all Government Departments process applications from and give grants to voluntary organisations? Will he give the House an undertaking that he will be prepared to review the procedures used by his Department and others so that a common, logical and consistent system can be applied to all Departments and all voluntary organisations?

**Mr. Mellor:** I can speak only for the Home Office, but we are always willing to look at the basis upon which we make grants. Indeed, we have a close relationship with the various vital bodies to which we make grants. Our willingness always to reconsider the level of funding in appropriate circumstances is testimony to the free interchange of information between us.

**Mr. Waller:** Does my hon. Friend accept that we should back those bodies which are very successfully providing alternatives to custody for young offenders? Is he aware that many local authority social services departments resent the success that such bodies are enjoying in providing intermediate treatment and that local authority funding is therefore being withdrawn? Will he have a word with his right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services to see whether a more secure future can be provided for these very valuable bodies?

**Mr. Mellor:** I know of the local case that concerns my hon. Friend. The Government have put some £15 million of new resources into intermediate treatment schemes, and it is regrettable that the schemes are not receiving the support that they should from some local authorities in taking up that funding, even when the schemes have shown themselves to be successful. It would be regrettable if the Government were left to pick up the bill on a continuing basis when local authorities, which serve local communities, have everything to gain from these facilities being in existence in their areas.

### Greater Manchester (Police Car Pursuits)

4. **Mr. Litherland** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Greater Manchester as to the number of deaths and serious accidents resulting from police car pursuits in the Greater Manchester area during the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Douglas Hogg):** The chief constable of Greater Manchester has informed me that from 1 June 1986 to 31 December 1986 his force's police vehicls were involved in one fatal accident, in which a person was killed, 11 accidents causing serious injury, and 82 accidents in which there was slight injury. These figures include all accidents, not just those arising from pursuits. Information for the rest of 1986 and earlier years can be obtained only at disproportionate cost, but with effect from the beginning of 1987 arrangements have been made for collecting statistics on police vehicle accidents involving death or serious injury in all force areas.

**Mr. Litherland:** Is the Minister aware that in a recent car pursuit in the centre of Manchester there was a tragic loss of life — that of a young, innocent 17-year-old, Tracey McCaig? Will he consider issuing strict instructions to the chief constable of Greater Manchester to adhere to the policy in the police drivers' manual, which says:

"No emergency is so urgent as to justify an accident"?

We are talking about deaths. When will the Minister accept responsibility and take some action?

**Mr. Hogg:** The death of Tracey McCaig was a tragedy, and I know that the House will wish to express its sympathy to her family and friends. However, it is necessary to put it into perspective. In 1985, in the Greater Manchester area, there was a fleet of about 1,000 vehicles which covered about 20 million miles and were involved in a total of 1,583 accidents. Nevertheless, that accident was a tragedy.

**Sir Philip Goodhart:** As the problem of police pursuits is not confined to Greater Manchester——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Unfortunately, the original question is.

### Police (Firearms)

5. **Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any proposals to increase the training available to authorised firearms users in the police force.

**Mr. Hurd:** I have accepted the conclusion of the Home Office working group on police use of firearms that the recommended length of initial and refresher training for authorised firearms officers is sufficient.

**Mrs. Dunwoody:** Is the Home Secretary satisfied that on all occasions only fully trained officers will be issued with firearms? There are increasing numbers of occasions when firearms are issued. Would it not be better to have longer, more specialised training, and fewer people involved in the issue of firearms?

**Mr. Hurd:** The hon. Lady may wish to look at the summary of the working group's proposals, which I have put in the Library. I entirely agree with her — it is important that the number of authorised firearms officers be reduced. There was a reduction of 21 per cent. between the end of 1983 and the end of 1985, and the report points to a further reduction. In addition, the number of occasions on which the police have drawn firearms has also been declining.

**Sir John Farr:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that what matters is not necessarily the amount of training but the type of training? Does he also agree that it is important that people of the right calibre are selected for firearms training in the first place?

**Mr. Hurd:** My hon. Friend has put his finger on the two essential points — the selection of officers in the first place and the content of the training. The authority required for the drawing and use of firearms is also an important element.

**Mr. Stuart Holland:** The Home Secretary will be aware of the unanswered questions surrounding the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce in my constituency. Will he fulfil his commitment of 11 November 1985 to the Lambeth police consultative group that he would publish the findings of the inquiry if disciplinary charges were not brought against Inspector Lovelock?

**Mr. Hurd:** It is not for me to publish those findings. When I wrote to Mr. Parkinson the letter that the hon. Gentleman has seen, the Police Complaints Authority was intending to publish a summary of the investigation which took place under its supervision. Since then, Inspector Lovelock has faced trial on these matters. As a result, the PCA decided that it would not re-issue a lot of material that had come out in the trial but would issue a press release instead. The hon. Gentleman has seen that press release.

If the hon. Gentleman wishes to pursue the matter, I shall be glad to arrange for him to meet Sir Cecil Clothier. In response to several press reports, I should like to make it clear, regarding the possible consumption of alcohol the day before, that I understand that the investigation showed that Inspector Lovelock had had one drink at a retirement party the evening before the raid on Mrs. Groce's home.

**Mr. Canavan:** Is it not an absolute disgrace that innocent people can be gunned down by policemen on the street or even in their homes and the police seem to get off scot-free? In view of the experience of even more violent societies, such as the United States of America, is it not likely that the increasing practice of policemen in this country using guns will lead to an increase in the number of criminals carrying guns? Will not the resultant violent and vicious circle lead to even more innocent people being injured or killed?

**Mr. Hurd:** The hon. Gentleman is wrong and prejudiced on all points. There have been at least two well-reported cases recently in which police officers have been prosecuted in the courts for the use of firearms. The hon. Gentleman is wrong on his basic facts. It is important that those facts should be understood. The number of authorised firearms officers in the police service has been declining sharply. The number of operations on which police officers have drawn firearms has also been declining in recent years. The total number of occasions on which the police used firearms in England and Wales in 1985 was seven. The total for New York city in the same year was well over 200.

**Mr. Soley:** Will the Home Secretary answer this specific question? Is it not true that the report which recommended no increase in training did so because the number of times that officers were authorised to draw arms had not significantly increased? Will the right hon. Gentleman take it from me that, given the consequences of the recent killings for individuals, society and the police, that is not a satisfactory argument for not increasing training and is entirely unacceptable to the House?

**Mr. Hurd:** The hon. Gentleman has not taken into account the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr). What is crucial is not the length of training, but its content and effectiveness. I am willing to discuss this point with the hon. Gentleman or with any other hon. Member at any time. The content and effectiveness of the training, together with the selection of officers, are crucial. I hope that the hon. Gentleman, with his respect for accuracy, will not pursue the legend that the use of firearms by police is increasing.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that it is outrageous and dangerous nonsense to suggest that criminals carry guns because policemen carry guns? If it were not for the criminals, policemen would not need to carry guns. The attitude "It was a wicked dog—it bit me when I kicked it" is outrageous. Does my right hon. Friend agree that the attitude expressed by the Opposition encourages the need for policemen to carry guns?

**Mr. Hurd:** One of the reassuring things which I have found as Home Secretary is the conviction among all sections of the police—from the chief officers to the Police Federation—that they want to adhere as closely as possible to the tradition of unarmed British policing, and I entirely agree with them. Of course there are occasions, as my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Mr. Beaumont-Dark) has said, when armed criminals or armed suspects are about and the police need to draw and protect themselves with firearms. The police and I are determined that those occasions should be kept to a minimum.

### Licensing Laws

6. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to seek to amend the licensing laws.

**The Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. David Waddington):** The Government believe that there is a strong case for some relaxation of the restrictions on licensing hours and are carefully considering what measures would be appropriate.

**Mr. MacKay:** As the Bill introduced by my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart), which sensibly sought to amend the licensing laws, was widely regarded in the country but was effectively talked out last Friday, does my right hon. and learned Friend think that it would be right and proper for the House to have an opportunity to vote on such legislation in the very near future?

**Mr. Waddington:** I know of the disappointment felt by many hon. Members when the Bill was talked out and that many hon. Members recognise that the time has come for some reform of the licensing laws.

**Mr. Canavan:** Time, gentlemen, please.

**Mr. Waddington:** My hon. Friend will know, however, that whether the Government give time for a private Member's measure is nothing to do with me.

**Mr. Bagier:** Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman agree that the licensing laws are archaic and out of date and that if the Bill had been given a fair wind last Friday it would probably have been passed by the House? Does he agree that it is nonsense for drinking on controlled premises to be so restrictive when people can now buy drinks at off-licences, supermarkets and so many other places? That has created a situation which worries many hon. Members. Will the right hon.and learned Gentleman ensure that at the earliest possible opportunity there is some alteration in the laws to make them more sensible?

**Mr. Waddington:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for expressing his views so forcefully and it is nice to know that there is strong support from hon. Members on both sides of the House for some necessary reform of the licensing laws. However, I cannot help the hon. Gentleman further than I have done already, because thought must be given to the precise measure of reform that should be introduced.

**Mr. Allan Stewart:** I am grateful to my right hon. and learned Friend for what he has said. However, is he aware that more than 160 right hon. and hon. Members were present on Friday to support the Licensing (Amendment) Bill? Does he agree that the climate of opinion is now such that the status quo is no longer an option? Does he further agree that it would be reasonable, before the Second Reading debate on 27 March, for the Government to announce either that they will give a modest allocation of time to the private Member's Bill, or make an absolute commitment to their own legislation at the earliest opportunity?

**Mr. Waddington:** I cannot add to what I said a few minutes ago about whether the Government should provide time for that measure. However, I am quite sure that many hon. Members on both sides of the House are grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood (Mr. Stewart) for having introduced that measure. I do not believe that there are many hon. Members who feel that he has wasted his time. It is as a result of the efforts of people such as my hon. Friend the Member for Eastwood that there has been a movement in public opinion over the months and that we have got nearer the time when that reform will come about.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** Will the Minister distinguish between flexible hours and extended hours and advise the House whether he favours the former more than the latter?

**Mr. Waddington:** I mentioned earlier that no decision has been reached as to the precise nature of any legislation. Our preferred system would not impose heavy work loads on the courts and police, but it would be important to maintain proper safeguards on licensed outlets and protect the public from added noise and nuisance. Obviously, one must bear in mind the risk of added noise and nuisance when making a decision as to what the latest closing hour should be.

**Mr. Gregory:** Will my right hon. and learned Friend publish, in the appropriate place, the overwhelming market research that his Department has undertaken to show that it is in the public interest to reform the present antiquated laws, which were brought in 71 years ago in wartime conditions?

**Mr. Waddington:** There has been a fair amount of research into that matter. No doubt my hon. Friend and, indeed, hon. Members on both sides of the House, will have read the results of the study by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys into what has happened in Scotland since the change in the law there in 1976. Any impartial person would conclude from that study that no deleterious results had occurred in Scotland as a result of the liberalisation that was introduced there.

**Mr. Mason:** In view of the Minister's determined support—he is obviously speaking on behalf of the Government—will he be more specific and tell the House what he intends to do? Will he allow more time for the private Member's Bill, or will he introduce legislation this Session?

**Mr. Waddington:** I have already told the House, in reply to questions from other hon. Members, that the question whether the Government should give time for a private Member's Bill is not a matter for me. The right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the Government have never given time for any private Member's Bill during the course of this Parliament, so he may think it unlikely that the Government will give time for this measure. I thought that I had been fairly forthcoming in answer to all these questions, and I cannot tell the right hon. Gentleman more about the precise timing of the introduction of any measure which may be introduced.

**Mr. Robert Atkins:** Does my right hon. and learned Friend recognise that the call "Time, ladies and gentlemen please" is well overdue for the reform of these antiquated laws? Does he agree that the area that we have the honour to represent, Lancashire, if no other, is firmly and forcefully in favour of change, and change now?

**Mr. Waddington:** Lancashire folk are sensible folk, and I have no doubt that they are in favour of reform.

### Fraud

7. **Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fraud cases have been investigated by the Metropolitan police's fraud investigation squad; and how many have resulted in conviction.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner that 511 new investigations were undertaken by the Metropolitan police company fraud investigation squad during 1986. Information about the number of investigations which result in conviction is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Cox:** I note that reply, but is the Minister aware that it shows the ever-increasing number of fraud cases that are now coming to the surface — some of them extremely complex and many of them in the City? Against the background, can he give an assurance that the police will have the required number of personnel and facilities to enable them to tackle this growing amount of crime?

**Mr. Hogg:** As the hon. Gentleman will know, the Government are already extremely worried about this and for that reason have introduced through the Criminal Justic Bill provisions to give a new serious fraud office extensive powers of investigation. We have also greatly increased the powers of the courts to try such cases. I hope that we shall have the hon. Gentleman's congratulations and support.

**Mr. Dykes:** May I congratulate the Government on the measures taken so far, but, sadly, also say that the fraud squad still is relatively overwhelmed? Therefore, will my hon. Friend consider the need to increase yet again the number of personnel and to intensify their traning in depth?

**Mr. Hogg:** My hon. Friend is always right to draw attention to these matters, but the figures are perhaps not so discouraging as he thinks. In 1985, for example, the police cleared up about 68 per cent. of all recorded cases of fraud and of the cases tried at the Crown Court involving fraud, acquittals accounted for only about 11 per cent.

**Mr. Skinner:** If the special branch and the Metropolitan police have so many people that they can clear out the archives of the BBC in Scotland, why can they not get down to the City of London, which is just round the corner, and clean out the crooks there? If there is a problem with personnel, why not transfer a few from one force to the other?

**Mr. Hogg:** It is a pity that the hon. Gentleman cannot take serious matters seriously.

**Mr. Jessel:** Can more accountants and lawyers be recruited, as I ask in question No. 47?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is a bit unfair.

**Mr. Hogg:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Alex Carlile:** Will the Minister give an assurance on behalf of his right hon. Friend the Home Secretary that sufficient extra officers will be seconded to the City and the commercial fraud department to ensure, not only that existing fraud investigations can continue apace, but that there will be sufficient officers to bring to trial quickly those who may be guilty of frauds in connection with the affairs of Guinness plc?

**Mr. Hogg:** There is no evidence at the moment that the relevant police squads are undermanned.

### Civil Defence

8. **Mr. Stevens** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department's planning assumptions for civil protection allow for enemy use of chemical weapons against United Kingdom military bases and other targets.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Yes, such use cannot entirely be ruled out.

**Mr. Stevens:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that reply. In view of the acceptance of the fact that targets may be attacked by a chemical weapon, has he any plans to arrange for the issue of advice to the public?

**Mr. Hogg:** I endeavour to be as helpful to my hon. Friend and to the House as possible. We are reviewing these matters to see what additional precautions are required.

### Crime Statistics

9. **Mr. Mikardo** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department expects to publish the crime figures for 1986.

12. **Mr. Lofthouse** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for reports from chief constables on the change in the number of burglaries and thefts in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available compared with the totals in the 12 months ended March 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** The main crime figures for the first three quarters of 1986 have already been published. Those for the fourth quarter should be published in March. These include the number of burglaries and thefts recorded by police forces. Sixty-six per cent. more burglaries and 40 per cent. more thefts were recorded in the 12 months ending in September 1986 than in the 12 months before March 1979.

**Mr. Mikardo:** Does the Minister not find it strange that the effects of the policies of his Government, who claim to be better at law and order than anyone else, are first, an ever-increasing rise in crime, and secondly, a pathetically poor performance in clear-up rate?

**Mr. Hurd:** Certainly I would not claim that we have solved the crime problem. We can say that we have strengthened the police. There are 10,000 more police officers than there were. We have improved their equipment and their co-operation with the community, as the 18,000 neighbourhood watch schemes show. We have given them necessary powers over terrorism. All this would be undermined and perhaps destroyed if the police forces were subject to what, according to *The Times*, is the original and authentic wording of Labour party proposals and put under the supervision of local councils.

**Mr. Lofthouse:** The Home Secretary will have heard his hon. Friend the Minister of State, in answer to an earlier question today, talk about the improvement in policemen's pay under this Government. Will the Home Secretary, as the person responsible for law and order and crime in Britain, tell the House why he believes that there has been an increase in the crime rate and a decrease in the detection rate during the lifetime of this Government?

**Mr. Hurd:** Because during the lifetime of this Government, as during the lifetime of the previous Government, the rate of recorded crime in Britain has continued to rise steadily. As regards the crimes which are perhaps of most concern to people—offences of violence against the person—although the figures have continued to rise, they have risen at half the rate at which they rose during the lifetime of the Labour Government.

**Mr. Wheeler:** Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Metropolitan police and police forces generally have a very good and improving clear-up rate for serious crime? Does he further agree that the great problem is with the 95 per cent. of property crime, which is now being addressed by crime prevention work? Does he agree that that is at last beginning to prove successful?

**Mr. Hurd:** I entirely agree. I have given the figure for the neighbourhood watch schemes, 18,000, which is a record. I would point out — my hon. Freind already knows this — that, in relation to burglaries, which the second question covered, one quarter of burglaries in Britain do not involve forced entry. Either a widow or a door has been left unsecured. That shows the enormous scope for crime prevention, and we are concentrating on it.

**Mr. Chris Smith:** Does the Home Secretary agree that this Government have made major cuts in real crime prevention work, such as work to improve housing which is down by two thirds, and on work to light our streets better, where rate support grant to local authorities has been cut? Are not those the main reasons why crime has increased in this country?

**Mr. Hurd:** One thing on which I would have thought everyone who studies the Audit Commission report would agree is that simply putting money into traditional local authority schemes is not the right way in which to achieve greater security. The hon. Gentleman is right, not in saying that there should be more local government spending, but in saying that we should target our spending more effectively on street lighting, caretakers on housing estates and on the proper design of housing. That is exactly what we are doing.

**Mr. Dorrell:** Is it not essential, if we are to maintain the efficiency of the police, that chief constables maintain full responsibility for the operational control of men under their command? Is it not impossible to square that necessity with any concept of democratic supervision? Does my right hon. Friend agree with the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) that the Labour party must choose between an effective police force and its commitment to democratic supervision?

**Mr. Hurd:** There has obviously been some embarrassed shuffling in the Labour party about the wording of its proposals on this because of the difficulty to which my hon. Friend draws attention. *The Times* did a useful job of exposing that on its front page yesterday. I recommend the text that was published to the attention of my right hon. and hon. Friends.

**Mr. Kaufman:** Is the Home Secretary aware how delighted we are that the hon. Member for Loughborough (Mr. Dorrell) totally agrees with the Labour party that there should be no control over police operations by local police authorities and that there should be no supervision of the police by local police authorities? Neither is Labour party policy, and we repudiate both. That being so, will the right hon. Gentleman now explain why crime has risen to record levels under the Conservative Government, when the Prime Minister personally promised that she would reduce it? Is it that the Prime Minister made that promise knowing that she could not keep it, or has she tried to keep it and failed?

**Mr. Hurd:** Our commitment was to give priority to law and order. The facts and figures that I have given show that we have abundantly done that.

**Mr. Kaufman:** But failed.

**Mr. Hurd:** The right hon. Gentleman is dodging the question. As I understand it, the story in *The Times* bears it out. The Labour party believes that, while operational matters, as it fails to define them, should continue to be under the control of the police, police priorities should be under the supervision of local authorities.

**Mr. Kaufman:** No.

**Mr. Hurd:** Well, there are different versions and the right hon. Gentleman is shuffling between them, but any one of them would be deeply damaging to the police.

### Prisons

10. **Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a statement on the control of costs and management of construction of new prisons and procurement of supplies and stores for them.

**Mr. Hurd:** The design and construction of new prisons is undertaken by the Property Services Agency of the Department of the Environment, which is responsible, in consultation with the Home Office for cost control and management of construction programmes. The supply of equipment and stores for new prisons is undertaken in accordance with normal Government procurement arrangements. In the Home Office we have recently reviewed those arrangements to ensure that we receive proper value for money.

**Mr. Latham:** In view of the gross waste of public money which has taken place at the new Stocken prison in my constituency, of which my right hon. Friend is aware, will he consider introducing an experienced business man from the private sector to supervise the building, design and furnishing of new prisons?

**Mr. Hurd:** The Stocken prison is an illustration of the dangers of stop-go. The prison was designed in the early 1970s and scrapped, as a result of the Labour Government's cuts, in 1976. It had to be brought forward urgently when we took office, so the old design, which is below standard, was taken off the shelf and put into effect. The thrust of my hon. Friend's question is right. I expect he knows that the PSA is putting more resources into site supervision, which is, I believe, the key to most of this, and it is increasingly using outside private enterprise consultants to do that. My hon. Friend will know that the Environment Select Committee is looking into PSA operations.

**Mr. Heffer:** Although nobody would disagree with the view that construction must be cost-effective, is it not clear that the programme of building new prisons and improving existing ones must be speeded up because the problem of prison overcrowding, which affects prisoners and those who look after them, has reached crisis proportions? Is it not necessary for the Government to take speedy action to deal with this growing crisis?

**Mr. Hurd:** The hon. Gentleman is entirely right. That is why we are pressing ahead with the programme to build 16 more new prisons and refurbishing a large number of traditional prisons. He is perfectly correct. However, our task would be much easier if this matter had not been so shamefully neglected by our predecessors.

### Civil Defence College

11. **Mr. Hind** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider changing the name of the Civil Defence College, Easingwold to the Civil Protection College.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** There are no present plans to change the name of the Civil Defence College.

**Mr. Hind:** Does my hon. Friend agree that the correct approach to emergency planning is to pursue a broad all-hazards policy—[HON. MEMBERS: "Reading."]—which will also embrace peacetime emergencies? Can my right hon. Friend give us an undertaking that future courses at the college will reflect that attitude?

**Mr. Hogg:** Indeed, the public are firmly committed to an all-hazards approach. The Government will not forgive those local authorities, notably Labour-controlled authorities, which refuse to discharge their statutory obligations.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Engagements

Q1. **Mr. Ernie Roberts** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 5 February.

**The Prime Minister (Mrs. Margaret Thatcher):** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, including one with the President of the Commission of the European Communities. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

**Mr. Roberts:** Will the Prime Minister take into account the views of the massive lobby yesterday against Sizewell B? Will she take note of the fact that the Layfield report, which is two years out of date, did not consider the massive disaster at Chernobyl?

**The Prime Minister:** As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the whole report is now before the House. He is also aware that it will be debated in the House before my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy makes his decision.

**Mr. Thornton:** Does not my right hon. Friend agree that the sentences that were passed in the Ealing vicarage case not only fall short of the guidelines laid down by the Lord Chief Justice, but also very much fly in the face of the way in which the public show their revulsion of such crimes? Will my right hon. Friend and her right hon. Friend the Home Secretary examine the present Criminal Justice Bill and consider how that can be strengthened to give effect to Lord Lane's proposals?

**The Prime Minister:** I am sure that the whole House shares my hon. Friend's deep concern about the dreadful crime of rape. As he knows, it is the Government's task to ensure that sufficient maximum sentences are available for the courts to deal with these matters. I think my hon. Friend is also aware that clause 29 of the Criminal Justice Bill before the House allows the Attorney-General to seek leave to refer to the Court of Appeal cases which seem to him to raise issues of public importance. This is intended to enable proper sentencing standards to be maintained. A similar clause has been before Parliament before, but that was lost in another place, greatly to our regret. We undertook to bring a similar clause back before the House. That can now be found in the Criminal Justice Bill and it will allow the House the opportunity to secure sentencing guidelines laid down by the Court of Appeal.

**Mr. Kinnock:** I agree very broadly with the Prime Minister's comments about the sentences. I simply offer the view that, while it is necessary for judges to remain detached in the name of the law, sometimes they show an insenstitivity to the suffering of victims which is difficult to comprehend.

Will the Prime Minister join me in congratulating the Democratic Members of the United States House of Representatives who unanimously condemned the United States nuclear test in the Nevada desert on Tuesday? Will she convey to President Reagan the regret and opposition felt by many in this country to the United States making that test? In the course of doing that, will she invite the Soviet Union to extend its 18-month moratorium on testing? Will she communicate with General Secretary Gorbachev and urge him not to make a precipitate response by resuming testing?

**The Prime Minister:** First, with regard to what the right hon. Gentleman said about the matter of rape and sentences for it, I must point out that in January 1985, in the debates on what is now the Prosecution of Offences Act, both the Opposition and the alliance voted solidly to oppose our proposal to enable lenient sentences to be referred to the Court of Appeal by the Attorney-General. I take it from what the right hon. Gentleman says that this time they will support clause 29 of the Criminal Justice Bill. *[Interruption.]* I know that the right hon. Gentleman does not like facts. He finds them embarrasing.

With regard to the United States underground nuclear testing, I point out that the United States, like the United Kingdom, sees substantial difficulties over verification before we can get a full, comprehensive test ban treaty. I understand that the arrangement agreed at Reykjavik was for a step-by-step approach to nuclear testing, and that should go by way of ratifying the threshold test ban treaty and the treaty on peaceful nuclear explosions.

**Mr. Kinnock:** May I first say — [HON. MEMBERS: "No."] The right hon. Lady will want to reflect on the use to which she put the previous question, which I thought was a matter of common view among us. Notwithstanding her efforts to make party points out of what is — *[Interruption.]* The fact remains that the clause in the Prosecution Offences Act would not have had the bearing that I presume the right hon. Lady would want it to have on this kind of case.

May I say to the Prime Minister—[HON. MEMBERS: "Question."] As the test undertaken on Tuesday was obviously outside the laboratory, has the right hon. Lady sought assurances from President Reagan that it was not connected with the star wars project, and therefore not in breach of the strict interpretation of the ABM treaty, which once again last week was wisely and strongly endorsed by the Foreign Secretary?

**The Prime Minister:** I have said that the essential item in the comprehensive test ban treaty is verification. I have part of the ABM treaty in front of me. Interpretation of it must be a matter for the parties who signed it. It is they who are best at interpreting it.

**Mr. Gale:** Will my right hon. Friend consider that the people of Scotland have enjoyed for the past 10 years responsible changes in the licensing laws not enjoyed by people of England and Wales? Will she acknowledge that the recent filibuster of a private Member's Bill to change the law in England and Wales did not represent the will of the House? Could she ask her business managers to allow a little more time to allow this modest Bill to go through the House?

**The Prime Minister:** As my hon. Friend is aware, the Government do not give time for private Members' Bills, and we would be in great difficulty if we were to break that rule and give it to one. We shall be interested in the views that the House takes on that matter.

Q2. **Mr. Cartwright** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 5 February.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Cartwright:** Has the Prime Minister seen reports that senior figures in the United States Administration are pressing for an early decision to deploy part of the star wars system? As the Prime Minister has rightly and frequently endorsed the original, narrow definition of the ABM treaty, will she take every possible action to dissuade President Reagan from listening to the advice from those who seem determined to wreck the ABM treaty and kill the chance of an early summit meeting?

**The Prime Minister:** There is no reason to think that any decisions on deployment of SDI are imminent, and it is perfectly legitimate, I understand, under the treaty to go ahead with SDI research while arms reductions are negotiated. The hon. Gentleman will be aware that new systems are dealt with under agreed statement D attached to the treaty and signed by both sides.

**Mr. Lawrence:** Is my right hon. Friend aware that this week a visiting Soviet delegation announced concessions that the Soviets are prepared to make on human rights, and they are most welcome? Does she agree that one of the main reasons for the concessions is that the West is insisting on remaining strong in defence and developing the strategic defence initiative?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. I think that the fact that the West is staying absolutely strong in defence is bringing about many changes in the approach of the Soviet Union. Also, the Soviet Union has considerable internal difficulties which may be leading it to make some changes in areas such as human rights, where, otherwise, we have not got very far in previous years.

**Mr. Willie W. Hamilton:** As the Prime Minister is on record as having said that she would be prepared to press the nuclear button, does she not think that it would have been more honest if, in the Government film to be circulated to our schools, she had appeared personally and repeated that? Does she not agree that millions of our people are deeply angry about the use of taxpayers' money to brainwash our schoolchildren with blatant party political propaganda?

**The Prime Minister:** Point No. 1: a nuclear deterrent that has been the best peace——

**Mr. Hamilton:** Press the button——

**The Prime Minister:** I am coming to that.

A nuclear deterrent that has been the best peace policy of this century would not be a deterrent unless those in charge were prepared to press that button. It would not have been a deterrent in any previous Government who had it either. The hon. Gentleman wants to abandon the nuclear deterrent. We will not do that. Secondly, that film is not a party political film. It is a film on Government information—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**The Prime Minister:** —about how the Government discharge their duty to secure the defence of the realm. The only people who will say that it is party political are those who wish not to have any duty to defend the realm, such as Opposition Members.

Q3. **Mr. Amess** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 5 February.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Amess:** When the Prime Minister visits Moscow next month and meets Mr. Gorbachev, will she stand firm in her resolve to achieve peace through multilateral, rather than unilateral, disarmament? Will she also take the opportunity to point out to Mr. Gorbachev that the Soviet Union's record on individual human rights leaves much to be desired?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I shall be discussing with Mr. Gorbachev the prospects for arms reductions. Unilateral disarmament, which is the policy of the Labour party, would remove any incentive for the Russians to negotiate as well as expose this country's security to grave risks.

Unilateral nuclear disarmament would expose Britain to grave risks and abolish the nuclear deterrent, which has been the best peace policy for 40 years.

With regard to my hon. Friend's other comments, I shall, as in past discussions, have human rights issues very much in mind and raise them with the Soviet Government.

**Mr. Donald Stewart:** Is the right hon. Lady aware, in the light of Monday's debate on the Royal Navy, in which hon. Members from both sides condemned the disappearance of the merchant fleet, that the intention of the Secretary of State for Transport to increase light dues on merchant vessels and fishing boats is regarded with the gravest concern and may well be the death knell for what remains of the Merchant Navy? Does she agree that that is a real danger to national security?

**The Prime Minister:** As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport made a statement on this matter some weeks ago because he was concerned about having sufficient officers and men in the merchant marine. He therefore made three proposals which will help to secure that end. I may also point out to the right hon. Gentleman, because we are often asked to reintroduce the 100 per cent. first-year capital allowances, that in fact the flagging out of the Merchant Marine came while we had those allowances.

Q4. **Mr. Nelson** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 5 February.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Nelson:** Has my right hon. Friend seen the reports today that the Labour party has joined the Liberal party and the SDP — *[Interruption.]* — and re-affirmed its intention of making large numbers of home buyers pay much more for their mortgages? Is this not yet further evidence — *[Interruption.]* — that only the Conservative party and the Conservative Government will protect the interests of home buyers?

**The Prime Minister:** Yes, I agree wholeheartedly with my hon. Friend. The Conservative party and Government are now the only people who do not want to limit in any way the present system of mortgage interest tax relief for home buyers.

Q5. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 5 February.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave gave some moments ago.

**Mr. Boyes:** Will the Prime Minister acknowledge that as a result of the raid on BBC Scotland the special branch now has in its possession a BBC memo that says the programmes made by Duncan Campbell would not damage the national interest and that there was no possibility of prosecution under the Official Secrets Act? Will the Prime Minister further acknowledge that, after the meetings between Duncan Campbell and the Attorney General, his attention was drawn to the fact that Duncan Campbell did not in any way want to damage the national interest, as the Attorney General requested? Consequently, Duncan Campbell acted in a responsible manner, and it is the Government who have acted irresponsibly.

**The Prime Minister:** As the hon. Gentleman is aware, the police properly obtained the search warrant from the courts, which decided that it should issue it. With regard to any material taken away by the police, its use and decisions on any prosecutions are matters for the prosecuting authorities, not for the Government.

**Mr. Dewar:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does it arise directly out of questions?

**Mr. Dewar:** Yes. It arises out of the last exchange between the Prime Minister and my hon. Friend the Member for Houghton and Washington (Mr. Boyes). You will be aware that on Tuesday there was a debate — *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I have not begun to hear the point of order.

**Mr. Dewar:** You will recall that there was a debate on Tuesday into the matter of the warrant which was issued for the search of the BBC premises in Glasgow. There emerged in that debate a very sharp difference of opinion between the Solicitor-General for Scotland and the Secretary of State for Scotland as to the involvement of the Law Officers and the duty they had in respect of the issue of that warrant.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** Tuesday.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I cannot hear what is being said.

**Mr. Dewar:** This clash and difference of view is still unresolved and was very evident during the course of those exchanges. The Lord Advocate yesterday in another place made a statement which made it clear that, in his view, the Secretary of State for Scotland was wrong in his opinions, and confirmed the views expressed by the Lord Advocate. It seems to me to be a very unsatisfactory situation that matters of fundamental importance and of great public concern should have been ventilated in another place and should have arisen directly out of a debate in this House when Members of this House have no opportunity of probing or examining the principal actors in that dispute. As there is no sign of a statement from Ministers, may we have your help and advice on how we can get at these important issues?

**Mr. Speaker:** What is said from the Front Bench, or, indeed, in another place, is not a matter for me, so I cannot help the hon. Gentleman.

**The Secretary of State for Scotland (Mr. Malcolm Rifkind):** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think that it is fair to point out that my noble Friend the Lord Advocate in another place, when expressly asked, confirmed that in his view there was no disparity between what he said and what I or my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General for Scotland had said.

**Mr. Dewar** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. As the Secretary of State had volunteered a comment, I must allow a response.

**Mr. Dewar:** The Lord Advocate perhaps did not read the debate as carefully as did hon. Members. You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that the Secretary of State for Scotland — I use this as just a representative quote — said:

> "the width of any warrant sought is a matter not for the police or for the Lord Advocate but for the courts."

Clearly, throughout his speech, he was trying to imply that there was no ministerial involvement, while the Solicitor-General for Scotland said that the Lord Advocate was "there to ensure that . . . the warrant . . . does not go beyond what is required." [*Official Report*, 3 February 1987, Vol 109, c 852-57.]

It is clear from that that there is a complete incompatibility of view as to the duty of the Law Officers between the Secretary of State and the Solicitor-General. If — I make this point because it is important — the Solicitor-General is correct and there was a direct ministerial responsibility in the hands of the Law Officers, the way in which that warrant was drafted, and the very different way in which it was drafted in Scotland as against England, lies at the heart of the public controversy and alarm, and the House should, in the form of a statement from the relevant Ministers, have a chance to debate it.

**Mr. Speaker:** None of that is a matter for me, nor was the question addressed to me.

**Sir William Clark:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. It cannot be further to that point of order. The point of order was put to me and I was prepared to answer it, but in my place the Secretary of State for Scotland volunteered a comment. I allowed a response. There can be nothing further to that point of order.

**Sir William Clark:** On a new point of order, Mr. Speaker. I was clearly under the impression that you prefaced your remarks to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Carscadden (Mr. Dewar) by asking whether his point of order arose out of questions and he said that it did. As it is quite obvious that it did not arise out of questions, was that not an abuse of the so-called point of order? Indeed, some of us on the Back Benches would never get away with that, so why did the hon. Gentleman?

**Mr. Speaker:** I think that it did arise out of the previous question. If I ask an hon. Member whether his point of order arises directly out of questions and he says that it does, in honour I accept that, and I believe that that point of order did so arise.

**Mr. Mikardo:** Further to that point of order, Mr. Speaker. Is not the suggestion that you permitted an abuse a direct criticism of the Chair?

**Mr. Nicholls:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Do I understand that your ruling means that when you ask an hon. Member whether his point of order arises out of questions, provided that it arises out of questions that day, last week or some other Question Time, it becomes in order? Or does that apply only to the Front Benches?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman knows the rule perfectly well.

**Mr. Nicholls:** I do not.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let me spell it out clearly to the House. I take points of order immedately after questions if they arise as a result of questions. Otherwise, I take them after any applications under Standing Order No. 20.

**Mr. Dickens:** On a new point of order arising out of questions, Mr. Speaker. You will recall that earlier we had many questions about the crime figures of the nation. You may not have heard, but I ought to tell you that this morning at the Old Bailey Judge Miskin gave — *[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Would the hon. Gentleman kindly look at me please? May I make one other comment which I think the whole House should have reaffirmed? Points of order must be matters on which I can rule. With all charity to the hon. Gentleman, I am not responsible by any stretch of the imagination for what any judge at the Old Bailey may say.

**Mr. Dickens** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** It must be a point of order for me.

**Mr. Dickens:** I have never sought to go against your ruling, Mr. Speaker. Therefore, the point that I am putting to you for your ruling is as follows. How can this House pass legislation about sentencing when our judges live in a different world?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is not a matter for me, but the hon. Gentleman has parliamentary options open to him.

**Mr. Cohen:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does this arise out of Questions?

**Mr. Cohen:** Yes. You will have heard the Prime Minister speak about the defence policy of the Labour party as unilateral disarmament. It is not that: it is unilateral nuclear disarmament. I know, Mr. Speaker, that you are sensitive about the wording that can be used in the House. If the Prime Minister or any Conservative Member uses that term again, would it be in order to call them liars?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that the word liar is unparliamentary. Unilateral disarmament or unilateral nuclear disarment are not unparliamentary terms.

## Business of the House

3.43 pm

**Mr. Neil Kinnock** (Islwyn): May I ask the Leader of the House to tell us the business for next week?

**The Lord Privy Seal and Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. John Biffen):** The business for next week will be as follows:

MONDAY 9 FEBRUARY—Until seven o'clock, private Members' motions.

Remaining stages of the Social Fund (Maternity and Funeral Expenses) Bill.

Motions relating to the Dockyard Services (Devonport) (Designation and Appointed Day) Order and the Dockyard Services (Rosyth) (Designation and Appointed Day) Order.

TUESDAY 10 FEBRUARY—Opposition Day (7th allotted day). There will be a debate on an Opposition motion entitled "The Housing Crisis and the Rise in Homelessness".

Motion on the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984 (Continuance) Order.

WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY—Timetable motion on the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. (Scotland) Bill.

Remaining stages of the Petroleum Bill.

Motions on Scottish housing grant and revenue orders. Details will be given in the *Official Report*.

THURSDAY 12 FEBRUARY—There will be a debate on a Government motion on the Government's employment and training initiatives, European Community document No. 10119/86 on an action programme for employment growth will be relevant to the debate.

FRIDAY 13 FEBRUARY—Private Members' Bills.

MONDAY 16 FEBRUARY — Second Reading of the Broadcasting Bill (Lords).

It is expected that the Chairman of Ways and Means will name opposed private business for consideration at seven o'clock.

*Debate on Thursday 12 February: Relevant European Document, 10119/86, "Action programme on employment growth"; Relevant Report of European Legislation Committee, HC 22-ii (1986-87), para 3.*

**Mr. Kinnock:** I am grateful to the right hon. Gentleman.

The Government's decision to put a guillotine on the Abolition of Domestic Rates, etc. (Scotland) Bill is a disgrace. Every part of the legislative process of this Bill has been marked by the Government's disregard for the proper process of informed debate. This Bill is unfair and completely unwanted by the people of Scotland. Will the Government reconsider their decision and at least allow further time for the Scottish people to have their case put fully in the House?

On a further point about Scotland, is the Leader of the House aware that, in the matter of the decision to close the Caterpillar tractor plant at Uddingston, with a loss of over 1,200 jobs, the Secretary of State for Scotland has so far made several statements outside the House voicing his amazement and disappointment but has made no statement to the House since the last Scottish Question Time? Bearing in mind the enthusiastic and optimistic references to Caterpillar that the Secretary of State made in his new year message, does the Leader of the House not think it high time that his right hon. Friend came to the House to make a statement, preferably in a debate—in any case, very quickly—before he becomes a mere public mourner for private crimes committed by the Caterpillar company?

Yesterday, the Lord Advocate—this matter has already been referred to in the House today—made a statement in the other place about the raid that the special branch carried out on the BBC in Scotland. I understand that, in response to a letter from my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), the Solicitor-General for Scotland said that he was willing to make a statement about the matter in the House of Commons. In view of that, and in view of the inconsistency between what the Secretary of State for Scotland told the House on Tuesday and what the Lord Advocate told the other place yesterday, does the Leader of the House agree that the Solicitor-General for Scotland's offer to make a statement here should be taken up immediately, and, at the very latest at the beginning of next week?

Has the Leader of the House seen the article in today's edition of *The Guardian* that suggests that the Zircon details were published in an industrial newsletter called "Interspace" in 1984? Will he ask the Home Secretary to investigate this report and get him to make a statement to the House next week? It is clear that such information could affect the context of the Government's present actions under the Official Secrets Act.

Once again, I ask the Leader of the House to give urgent consideration to having a debate on the great and growing crisis of the decline in Britain's Merchant Navy. I realise that the issue was referred to in the debates on the Navy earlier this week, particularly in excellent speeches by my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) and the right hon. Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann), In the last seven years, the fleet has shrunk by over 50 per cent. to fewer than 500 vessels. Surely, as I have said before, that must be a matter of great national interest and worthy of a debate in Government time. I urge the Leader of the House to make that time available.

Finally, in view of the confidence shown in market forces that led to the sale of Westland plc to Sikorsky a year ago, recent news of the company's financial crisis must come as a severe disappointment to the Government, as indeed it does to the Opposition and to Westland's workers. Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us whether the Government will bail out the company? Will he arrange for a statement to be made on the issue by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry early next week?

**Mr. Biffen:** I shall take up the six points raised by the right hon. Gentleman. Already, up to 86 hours have been devoted to the Abolition of Domestic Rates, etc. (Scotland) Bill. So far, we have reached only clause 17 of a Bill that contains 34 clauses and six schedules. That is a reasonable background against which to understand the Government's proposals. I thank the right hon. Gentleman for giving us a trailer of the arguments that will be used by the Opposition in that item of business on Wednesday.

My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland, as the right hon. Gentleman has acknowledged, has made clear his opposition to the closure of the Caterpillar factory. I shall draw his attention to the request that a statement be made on this topic.

*[Mr. Biffen]*

The Leader of the Opposition referred to matters that were the subject of exchanges earlier today about remarks by the Lord Advocate in another place. I understand that my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General for Scotland has never committed himself to making a statement, but I shall look into the points that the right hon. Gentleman has raised. I make this observation in the context that, in any case, my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General will answer questions on Wednesday.

I assure the Leader of the Opposition that *The Guardian* newspaper is not my early morning reading. It has that engaging—[HON. MEMBERS: "*The Sun.*"] I rightly have a different set of priorities, and I accept the guidance proffered by the right hon. Gentleman. That apart, I shall of course refer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department to the point that he raised.

As the right hon. Gentleman said, the Merchant Navy featured in powerful contributions by the right hon. Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Mr. Callaghan) and by my right hon. Friend the Member for Taunton (Sir E. du Cann), and I do not think that I can offer the early prospect of a further debate on the Merchant Navy, since it was debated only a few days ago. *[Interruption.]* I just wonder how many debates on the Merchant Navy the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) cheerfully fielded during his days in office. I suspect that he encountered many more local difficulties than I ever have to encounter.

As to Westland, I shall draw the attention of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to the point that the right hon. Gentleman raised.

**Sir George Young** (Ealing, Acton): In view of the widespread public debate about the sentences following the crimes committed at the Ealing vicarage, which is in my constituency, I wonder whether my right hon. Friend could find time for a general debate on sentencing policy, in particular on the place of rape in the general tariff of sentences that is apparently available at the moment?

**Mr. Biffen:** The passage of the Criminal Justice Bill might conceivably enable my hon. Friend to make the speech that he has in mind. I realise that this recent event has caught the full mind and the full distaste of the public at large, and also that of this House. I shall bear in mind my hon. Friend's request about the possibility of a debate on sentencing policy, but I have to say that there can be no early prospect of such a debate in Government time.

**Mr. David Alton** (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): In view of the growing and widespread public concern about the whereabouts of Mr. Terry Waite, will the Leader of the House find out whether there is anything useful that the Government can tell the House next week about his whereabouts and his present condition? Also, does he agree that the film "Keeping the Peace" ought to be shown in the precincts some time next week? Before films of this kind are made, does he not think that it would be useful if discussions were held with the other parties to ensure that a proper balance is maintained between propaganda and public information?

**Mr. Biffen:** Of course I shall refer to my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs the point that the hon. Gentleman has made about Mr. Waite. As to his second point, he raises—perhaps deliberately and in a highly contentious fashion—a protest about what I believe is an estimable film, although I have not yet seen it.

**Sir John Page** (Harrow, West): In view of the calm sunshine in which the Government are at present basking, will the Leader of the House be kind enough to try to find time for a very short debate on early-day motion 367 about the floodlighting of the statute of Sir Winston Churchill in Parliament Square?

*[That this House would welcome the permanent floodlighting of the statue of Sir Winston Churchill in Parliament Square as a reminder of his special place in British history and in order to create a new night-time landmark in London; and calls upon the Secretary of State for the Environment to make the necessary arrangements forthwith.]*

That suggestion was put to me by one of the police officers in the House, remembering how very economical and effective is the lighting of the statue of George V in Abingdon place.

**Mr. Biffen:** If I am basking in political sunshine, there must be some redress under misleading merchandise marks. As to my hon. Friend's specific point about the statue of Sir Winston Churchill, I shall refer it to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, and I am sure that it will have widespread support.

**Mr. Allen McKay** (Barnsley, West and Penistone): Will the Leader of the House take into consideration the widespread concern, particularly of south Yorkshire Members of Parliament, about the differences of opinion between Her Majesty's fire service inspectorate and the Secretary of State for the Environment regarding the viability of the manning of the south Yorkshire fire services, which is leading to inadequate fire cover for the people of south Yorkshire?

**Mr. Biffen:** I can best help the hon. Gentleman by referring that point to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** (Tatton): Does my right hon. Friend agree that the whole House will welcome the opportunity that is presented by next Tuesday's debate on the order to continue the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984? It must be particularly welcome to the Leader of the Opposition, with his new-found interest in and commitment to national security. It gives him the opportunity of whipping his right hon. and hon. Friends to support the government on this Bill. Has the right hon. Gentleman given any indication yet of what the policy of the Labour party will be on Tuesday?

**Mr. Biffen:** No, but I think that my hon. Friend should try to learn to be an optimist and to hope that the Labour party will be with us in the Lobby supporting their measure.

**Mr. Jack Ashley** (Stoke-on-Trent, South): Is the Leader of the House aware that people such as haemophiliacs who have AIDS as a result of blood transfusions from the National Health Service could eventually be considered victims of manslaughter by the NHS and could certainly be considered to be victims of medical accidents? Could we therefore have a debate on the case for paying them no-fault compensation?

**Mr. Biffen:** I see no prospect of time being available for a debate—on an admittedly important topic—over the next few weeks, but the right hon. Gentleman might try to use his skill and authority in an Adjournment debate.

**Mr. Michael Forsyth** (Stirling): In considering the Leader of the Opposition's synthetic outrage about the timetabling of the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. (Scotland) Bill, will my right hon. Friend bear in mind that the Labour party has made it perfectly clear in Committee that it is committed to retaining the rating system, wants regular revaluations and wishes to extend rating to cover agricultural land and buildings? Will my right hon. Friend also bear in mind the strictures of the *Glasgow Herald*, which denounced the Opposition's performance on the basis that it is weak, flabby, ineffective and confused?

**Mr. Biffen:** I hope that the debate on Wednesday on timetable provisions will give the Labour party an opportunity to demonstrate that it will continue to retain these anachronistic forms of taxation, including the rating of agricultural land. I will bear in mind my hon. Friend's other point.

**Mr. Gregor MacKenzie** (Glasgow, Rutherglen): Will the Leader of the House reconsider his decision to timetable the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. (Scotland) Bill, which is probably the most controversial, important and fundamental Bill of a Scottish character that has come before the House for many years? It deserves our consideration. There is no reason to rush the Bill through, because there is no business waiting to go into the Scottish Standing Committee. Therefore, there is no rush of other business for Scottish Members.

**Mr. Biffen:** I do not expect to become a folk hero for timetabling the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. (Scotland) Bill, but neither do I expect to be a victim of deeply held abuse and hatred from those who nominally have to oppose the measure.

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** (Bury St. Edmunds): Regarding the draft Police (Northern Ireland) Order, is my right hon. Friend aware that the present take-it-or-leave-it procedure, whereby we debate this type of order, causes considerable difficulties for hon. Members? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, although that order applies to a Northern Ireland matter that has been debated in the United Kingdom, it departs from that matter in significant ways. Under the present procedure, there is no way in which those hon. Members who wish the order to go through as a whole can debate or amend particular parts of the order that are different in Northern Ireland. Will my right hon. Friend put his inventive mind to work to see whether various resolutions can be put forward so that the House can discuss, and if necessary vote on, those matters that are essentially different from those that have been debated already in the case of England and Wales?

**Mr. Biffen:** There are sound reasons why the conventions have developed in the way that they have. None the less, my hon. Friend has made a legitimate point. Perhaps we can consider it further through the usual channels.

**Mr. James Lamond** (Oldham, Central and Royton): I assume that the Prime Minister will be making a statement following her visit to the Soviet Union, but has the Leader of the House noticed that, more than seven weeks ahead of that visit, hon. Members are telling the right hon. Lady of matters that they would like her to raise while she is there? Will the Leader of the House ask the Prime Minister to make a statement before her visit to the Soviet Union, so that she can outline the matters with which she intends to deal, answer questions and take note of points that hon. Members might like her to raise?

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): She is electioneering.

**Mr. Biffen:** It is perfectly natural that a lively interest should be shown on both sides of the House about the impending visit by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to Russia. No doubt that interest will intensify, much to the discomfort of the hon. Member for Bolsover (Mr. Skinner).

**Mr. Skinner:** Fancy using the hustings in Moscow.

**Mr. Biffen:** Where would we be without the hon. Gentleman? I am not sure that there is a good case for the innovation sought by the hon. Member for Oldham, Central and Royton (Mr. Lamond), but I shall certainly draw my right hon. Friend's attention to it.

**Mr. Tom Sackville** (Bolton, West): In view of the widespread condemnation of the Soviet Union's failure to observe the Helsinki Accord, will my right hon. Friend find time for a debate on the case of Anatoly Koryagin, a distinguished psychiatrist, who was imprisoned following his protests at the abuse of psychiatry in the Soviet Union, who has been systematically tortured by starvation, cold and lack of medical facilities and who, contrary to announcements in the press last week, has still not been released? In fact, his wife and family have heard nothing from him and fear that he may be close to death.

**Mr. Biffen:** I think that my hon. Friend will realise why it would be a little hazardous for me to undertake to find Government time for such a debate, but I am sure that he will concede the opportunities that exist for an Adjournment debate on the subject.

**Mr. Robert Maclennan** (Caithness and Sutherland): I recognise that the Leader of the House has no ambition to be a folk hero in Scotland—an ambition that he will certainly not realise. But is there any reason why he should court the role of the pantomime demon king by introducing the absurd timetable motion on the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. (Scotland) Bill, in view of the fact that the Committee has sat for a mere five weeks and has already completed consideration of half the Bill—17 clauses in 17 sittings? For what sort of productivity is the right hon. Gentleman looking? Why is he acting in a fashion that is close to unconstitutional?

**Mr. Biffen:** The hon. Gentleman makes up for the mildness of his manner with the absurd exaggeration of his speech and charges. I have portrayed a very reasonable case. As the hon. Gentleman said, 86 hours have been devoted to the Bill and the Committee is only half way through the clauses. It is perfectly reasonable, therefore, to have measured progress hereafter with the assistance of a timetable.

**Mr. Eric Forth** (Mid-Worcestershire): Will my right hon. Friend arrange for a debate on the procedures and privileges of the House, especially since the film which you, Mr. Speaker, said should not be shown in the House is apparently being shown with impunity the length and breadth of the land, encouraged by the Opposition? The Leader of the Opposition has apparently made no attempt

*[Mr. Eric Forth]*

to stop the filming, despite his original statement that he believed that it was not in the national interest that the film should be shown. Will my right hon. Friend give the House an opportunity to review its position and that of the Opposition and the relationship between national security and your role, Mr. Speaker, and that of the Leader of the Opposition?

**Mr. Biffen:** I shall bear in mind the points so forcefully put by my hon. Friend. The House may prefer to await the report which will eventually be received from the Privileges Committee.

**Mr. Bruce Millan** (Glasgow, Govan): Reverting to the special branch raid on BBC Glasgow, is the Leader of the House aware that we have seen not only the statement by the Lord Advocate in the other place yesterday but the terms of the warrant which the Lord Advocate was involved in drawing up and which he approved? It is clear from the warrant that it was directed not just at the one Zircon film but at all six films in the series "The Secret Society". In those circumstances, the matter cannot possibly be allowed to rest, since Ministers deliberately obscured the terms of the warrant in the debate in the House on Thursday. Another statement must be made in the House on this important matter.

**Mr. Biffen:** I note what the right hon. Gentleman says. I am sorry that he uses language that implies deception by my right hon. Friends—[*Interruption.*]—and I am sorry that he chooses to repeat it from a sedentary position. I cannot add anything to the answer that I gave the leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Michael Latham** (Rutland and Melton): May I appeal yet again to my right hon. Friend's rural—indeed rustic—sense of benevelence to find out whether he can provide time for a debate on agriculture? Is he aware that the Common Market's decisions before Christmas have not been unanimously received with enthusiasm by the farming community? Is it not high time that we had a debate on those decisions?

**Mr. Biffen:** I thank my hon. Friend. I shall bear his points very much in mind. I think that my hon. Friend understands that a great many agricultural affairs are now directed through the activities of the European Community and that gives us some opportunities from time to time. I shall, however, further consider my hon. Friend's point.

**Mr. Hugh Brown** (Glasgow, Provan): Will the Leader of the House reconsider Wednesday's business on the Abolition of Domestic Rates etc. (Scotland) Bill? Is he aware that the Government got off to a bad start in Committee by moving an unprecedented and provocative sittings motion, the like of which I have never seen before? Will the right hon. Gentleman consider whether a narrow distinction may be drawn on the part of many Scottish Members between filibustering and natural verbosity?

**Mr. Biffen:** I notice the delicate distinction which the hon. Gentleman throws out as a lifeline for Wednesday's debate.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** (Leicester, East): When may we have a debate on Lord Chief Justice Lane's guidelines on sentencing in rape cases? Does my right hon. Friend accept that outrage is felt throughout the country at the fact that the average sentence for rape is only three and a half years and that only 20 months are served? May we have an opportunity to provide for stiffer sentences—a minimum of 25 years with no parole — and a right of appeal against the absurdly lenient sentences which are being imposed, even by Mr. Justice Leonard in the Ealing vicarage case?

**Mr. Biffen:** My hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) raised this point and I gave as measured a reply as I could. I hope that my hon. Friend will accept that answer as having anticipated his question.

**Mr. David Clelland** (Tyne Bridge): I draw the attenion of the Leader of the House to early-day motion 524 on Council Aid.

*[That this House congratulates the Metropolitan Borough of Gateshead Council and War on Want on the successful launch of Council aid; recognises the potential of this latest initiative to relieve poverty and suffering in the Third World; and calls upon local authorities throughout the United Kingdom to play their full part, collectively and individually, to support Council Aid during 1987.]*

The motion has the support of right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House. Will the right hon. Gentleman join us in congratulating Gateshead metropolitan borough council and War on Want on their efforts to encourage local authorities to raise funds for the Third World during 1987? Will the right hon. Gentleman arrange for an early debate on the Third World's continuing problems, which have not gone away because the television cameras were withdrawn?

**Mr. Biffen:** I note the hon. Gentleman's comments. It is certainly powerfully true that the problems remain long after the passing fashion of the media. I shall look at the early-day motion and ensure that it is drawn to the attention of the relevant Minister.

**Mr. Richard Holt** (Langbaurgh): I was rather disappointed by my right hon. Friend's answer to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley). Instead of saying that there would not be a debate on the narrow subject which was raised, my right hon. Friend should urge an early debate on the whole subject of AIDS so that the House has the opportunity to give a lead to the country on the dangerous nature of this disease and its effects and to clear up much of the ignorance and superstition that exists.

**Mr. Biffen:** I note what my hon. Friend says. I should have thought that the House had an extremely good, comprehensive and instructive debate just before Christmas. In some sense, we have moved on to the more specific issues mentioned by the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South and I shall not commend the expectation of Government time for another general debate.

**Mr. James Hamilton** (Motherwell, North): Will the Leader of the House pay special attention to the request by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition on the Caterpillar tractor company? Will he bear in mind that that company acted ruthlessly and viciously from square one? Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that a statement is made by the Secretary of State for Scotland, because he was involved in discussions with the American company before and after it was closed? The right hon.

and learned Gentleman did not have the courtesy to come to the House and declare himself. Will the Leader of the House make it clear that the Secretary of State for Scotland must tell us where he stands on this issue? Does the right hon. and learned Gentleman align himself with the Opposition and the workers at the Caterpillar factory?

**Mr. Biffen:** My right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State has made his position very clear. I hope that he will be fully supported and have his position endorsed by Scottish Opposition Members. Of course, I shall add to the point that I shall be making because of the requests by the Leader of the Opposition by including the hon. Gentleman's request.

**Mr. Andrew MacKay** (Berkshire, East): Further to the question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young), will my right hon. Friend acknowledge that there is immense concern in the country and the House following the incredible sentences imposed in the Ealing vicarage rape case? Bearing that in mind, would it not be wise, notwithstanding the fact that the Criminal Justice Bill is before the House, to have a full debate on sentencing and the judiciary so that the public can note where individual hon. Members stand?

**Mr. Biffen:** I note the interest evinced by my hon. Friend in two major topics. None the less, I am obliged to let my original answer stand. I shall certainly take note of my hon. Friend's point.

**Mr. Jim Craigen** (Glasgow, Maryhill): Will the right hon. Gentleman explain why there is such unwarranted haste in cutting the parliamentary time available to debate the poll tax legislation in Scotland, which will not do away with revaluation for the non-domestic sector? If the poll tax is such a good idea, why was not a Bill introduced in the current session to institute such a tax in England and Wales?

**Mr. Biffen:** I am grateful for the felicitous concern that the hon. Gentleman shows for ratepayers in England and Wales. However, for the moment we should confine ourselves to the reality which is that there is a Bill for Scotland. I take note of the argument that will be deployed on Wednesday.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): My right hon. Friend will be aware of page 154 of "Erskine May", which states——

**Mr. Biffen** *indicated dissent.*

**Mr. Marlow:** Well, can I remind my right hon. Friend that it says that any act which has the effect of bringing the House into ridicule is a contempt of the House? My right hon. Friend will be aware—*[Laughter.]* Shall I start again? I reinforce the point made by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth). My hon. Friend will be aware of Mr. Speaker's ruling and of the fact that the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition has said that the Zircon affair is a matter of grave national security. He will also be aware of the fact that Front Bench spokesmen of the Labour party have been spraying the wretched film around Scotland with gay and uncontrolled abandon. Does my right hon. Friend feel that that brings the House into contempt? It certainly brings the Labour party into contempt. Would it be a proper issue to put before the Committee of Privileges?

**Mr. Biffen:** If I might show a supreme act of political cowardice, I would say that this behaviour of hon. Members is more a matter for Mr. Speaker than for myself.

**Mr. Skinner:** Does the Leader of the House recall that before Christmas I raised the issue of the need for a Government statement on the sale of coal board houses and the speculators who are involved? In view of the continuing controversy, as reported in several newspapers this week, could the Government make a statement on the matter now, as it appears that they have intervened?

I had to smile when the right hon. Gentleman spoke about the Prime Minister's trip to Moscow—I really could not help it—because I recall that in 1980 the Prime Minister said to British athletes "Don't go to Moscow". The Prime Minister's little bout of hypocrisy in gallivanting off to Moscow could only be improved by inviting Seb Coe and Steve Ovett to accompany her on the plane, so that they can show her the way around.

**Mr. Biffen:** I shall of course draw the attention of my right hon. Friend to practically every suggestion that comes from the hon. Gentleman, including that one. I shall consider the first point that he raised and see whether a ministerial answer can be given.

**Mr. Harry Greenway** (Ealing, North): May I support my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) and other hon. Members, and ask my right hon. Friend to reconsider his decision not to hold an early debate on sentencing policy and on the wider issues relating to rape trials, bearing in mind the appallingly low sentences which were passed in the Ealing vicarage rape case, the fact that the police, who worked for 10 days and nights to bring those culprits to book, must feel let down, and the huge disturbance that it has created in the whole community of Ealing and beyond?

Will my right hon. Friend reconsider his decision and allow a debate to enable hon. Members to consider the role of the judiciary in such matters, and not least the fact that the family in this case, like those in other cases, feels that the woman's point of view has not been properly understood by a male judge and that a male judge should be supported, or replaced, by a female judge in future rape trials?

**Mr. Biffen:** I gave a measured but, I thought, none the less reasonable reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton (Sir G. Young) which took a realistic view of the demands made upon the time of the House. Of course, I take account of the point made by my hon. Friend, and by other hon. Members on both sides of the House. However, I should make it quite clear that the substantive answer is the one that I gave to the first question that was raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Ealing, Acton.

**Mr. Speaker:** I call the other Member for Leicester—*[Laughter.]* These things happen to us all. I am so sorry. Mr. Janner.

**Mr. Greville Janner** (Leicester, West): Leaving on one side the unhappy mistakes of democracy in the east of the city of Leicester, the west of which I am pleased to represent, may I ask the Leader of the House if he will be good enough to inquire of the Prime Minister why, on 7 November 1986, when she promised an urgent reply to my letter about the whereabouts and the nature of the 17

*[Mr. Greville Janner]*

alleged war criminals in this country, she still has not replied? Will the right hon. Gentleman ask the Prime Minister to make a statement on that subject, perhaps redefining the word "urgency", and, at the same time, will she refer to the previously secret documents that were revealed in the excellent Scottish television programme that was repeated on Channel 4 last night, which appeared to support the allegation that Britain has become a safe haven for some Nazi war criminals, including Antanas Gecas, who is living in comfort in Edinburgh and who, on television last night admitted to war crimes?

**Mr. Biffen:** As I have said repeatedly to the hon. and learned Gentleman, I shall not enter into the merits of his proposition but shall inquire why there have been difficulties in providing an answer for him.

**Mr. Patrick Nicholls** (Teignbridge): May I draw one other matter to the attention of my right hon. Friend, which might yet make him change his mind about a debate on sentencing policy? Can he confirm that, even under the welcome provision in clause 29 of the Criminal Justice Bill, those who receive grossly over-lenient sentences cannot be put in jeopardy of facing a correct sentence? If the prosecution, the defence and the country have a proper interest in ensuring that the right sentences are imposed, should we not grasp this nettle and give the prosecution a proper right of appeal and, if necessary, continue to put that proposition to their Lordships until they see the light of day?

**Mr. Biffen:** I am not clear from what my hon. Friend has said whether that is impossible with the passage of the current Criminal Justice Bill. Of course, I shall take into account what he has said about the desire in the House for these matters to be more widely debated, but I have already said that my initial reaction is not to allow a wider debate.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): Reverting to the question raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Millan), the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor-General for Scotland cannot all be right. Why can we not go back to the old days when a personal statement would be made that would be acceptable to the House to clarify such difficult matters?

Reverting to the question raised by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition about the Zircon affair, my Adjournment debate tomorrow at 2.30 pm is highly relevant to prosecution policy in relation to the Official Secrets Act. Will he suggest that the Solicitor-General, who is to reply to that debate, makes an authoritative statement on "Interspace" issues 46 and 61, which seem to give the impression that the Zircon project was known to those who subscribe to that magazine, such as the technical experts at GCHQ and doubtless also those in the Kremlin.

Finally, as one who has always received great personal courtesy from him, I should like to say that we very much regret the illness of the Attorney-General and hope that he will recover soon.

**Mr. Biffen:** I thank the hon. Gentleman very much for his kind words about my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General.

I imagine that the hon. Gentleman's second point was a hint of some of the lines that he will take in the Adjournment debate tomorrow, and I shall see that they are conveyed to the Minister who is to reply. On this first point, he will understand that I have tried to set out the position, as it is seen from the Treasury Bench, to his right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Michael Meadowcroft** (Leeds, West): Is the Leader of the House aware of the growing concern about the complex but important question of extra-territoriality, and especially the efforts of the United States to enforce its law in the United Kingdom? Is he aware that in the House last week a Defence Minister said that a committee within the MOD is considering extra-territoriality, which takes it beyond the normal DTI responsibility. Therefore, is there not a case for an urgent debate on the whole question, rather than trying to confine it to interdepartmental conferences and actions, which are clearly having no effect.

**Mr. Biffen:** The hon. Gentleman raises a matter of great, and I suspect growing, significance which now covers more than just one Government Department. I cannot offer the prospect of a debate in Government time in the near future, but perhaps the hon. Gentleman might like to try his chances in an Adjournment debate.

**Mr. Tony Favell** (Stockport): While discussing the possibility of a debate on sentencing policy with the Home Secretary, will my right hon. Friend applaud both the decision of the Court of Appeal this week not to interfere with two five-year imprisonment sentences imposed on two young men for mugging a bus conductor, and the statement that those who indulge in mugging, especially of women at night, can expect long custodial sentences?

**Mr. Biffen:** I note what my hon. Friend says. As far as possible, I have always made it my practice not to comment on court sentencing and I hope that he will understand if I prefer to keep to that policy today.

**Mr. John Home Robertson** (East Lothian): Does the Leader of the House not see that the Government have no mandate whatever to seek to impose on the people of Scotland a mediaeval poll tax which will discriminate against those on low incomes? Since he will have the embarrassing misfortune of moving the timetable motion of Wednesday, may I recommend that he looks at the *Official Report* of the Committee proceedings? That reveals the Government's extraordinarily lackadaisical attitude in Committee, which made it abundantly clear from the start that they want hours, not clauses, and that they are seeking to conceal the effects of the Bill on the Scottish people?

**Mr. Biffen:** If the Government wanted hours, I have the impression that they have some good allies on the Opposition Benches.

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** (Denton and Reddish): Is the Leader of the House aware of the overwhelming evidence to the Education Select Committee about the hardship being suffered by students on the present level of grants and its strong recommendation to the Government that they should increase grants for next year by more than the rate of inflation to alleviate that hardship? As the Government took absolutely no notice of that Select Committee report, presumably because they want to impose loans on students, could we at least have the opportunity to debate the report and the Government's response to it?

**Mr. Biffen:** I shall look into the point raised by the hon. Gentleman, but I must tell him that in the immediate future I see no possibility of Government time being available. However, I would be at one with him in stressing the importance of the issue.

**Mr. Stuart Holland** (Vauxhall): Will the Leader of the House urge the Home Secretary to find time next week to make a statement on why he broke a commitment to the Lambeth police consultative group to publish the inquiry of the Police Complaints Authority into the circumstances surrounding the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce, not least since there are many open questions on the matter—for example the issue that the Home Secretary raised today, of how much Inspector Lovelock had been drinking the night before the shooting and why his request that he should not be assigned to that raid was not met? Will the Leader of the House also urge the Home Secretary to make a statement on the massive police raid on the Vauxhall tavern in my constituency on 24 January, which appears to have been unwarranted as no complaints have been received from any member of the public about alleged drunkenness in that public house?

**Mr. Biffen:** The hon. Gentleman makes several serious allegations on which I cannot comment. I shall certainly raise with my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary the hon. Gentleman's request for consideration and a statement.

## Private Rented Housing

4.22 pm

**The Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction (Mr. John Patten):** I should like to make a statement on private rented housing.

The Government are keen to encourage the provision of private housing for letting by a greater variety of agencies than at present and to increase freedom of choice for people wishing to rent their homes. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I propose, therefore, to give local authorities an explicit statutory power to provide financial assistance to the private sector, including housing associations, in order to assist in the provision of rented housing using private sources of finance. We envisage that financial assistance might be particularly appropriate for the support of schemes involving assured tenancies. We propose to include the necessary provisions in the Local Government Bill this Session.

Local authorities will be able to use these powers to keep the rents of new housing developments by the private sector to levels which prospective tenants can be expected to afford. The purpose is also to give further encouragement to the introduction of private finance into the provision of such housing. I hope that authorities and others concerned will make the maximum use of these powers to encourage the development of schemes by responsible landlords for rented housing, particularly in areas where needs are greatest.

It is important, however, that such financial assistance should not be used simply to featherbed private sector provision by removing all risk from it and converting it into a concealed form of private sector lending to the public sector. The legislation we are proposing will, therefore, require that such financial assistance should be provided only with our consent. The Government expect local authorities to contain the cost of financial assistance within their existing programmes. We envisage that assistance would normally take the form of annual grants to bridge the gap between financing the costs of a development and the expected rental income, but other forms of assistance will be covered by our proposals.

There are four key matters on which we would normally wish to be satisfied before giving consent. First, the commercial risk of the development should rest substantially with the private sector and, in particular, the local authority's commitment shold not be an open-ended one to meet any differences that might arise between cost and income. Secondly, the level of financial assistance should not exceed in amount or value 30 per cent. of the overall cost of the scheme. Thirdly, the activity of managing and maintaining the houses concerned should be carried out by the private sector participant and not by the authority offering financial assistance. Fourthly, if local authority land is involved, the land should be sold freehold or on a lease of not less than 99 years.

Other factors that we might also wish to take into account in deciding to give or withhold consent are the overall costs of a scheme, the proposed tenure mix, whether tenants should have the right to buy, rights given to the authority to nominate tenants, the likely proportion of tenants receiving housing benefit and the proposed rent levels.

*[Mr. John Patten]*

Some authorities are already planning to assist the provision of housing by private sector landlords using certain existing powers. It is important that such schemes should be developed in accordance with the criteria that I have indicated above. We are, therefore, proposing that the Local Government Bill should include a provision that, with effect from midnight tonight, local authorities shall not without our consent give financial assistance to or for the benefit of other persons, including registered housing associations, or enter into agreements to give such assistance in connection with the acquisition, construction, conversion, rehabilitation, improvement, maintenance or management of accommodation for letting or licensing, including hostels and lodging houses. We do not, however, propose that consent should be required with respect to assistance which is expressly required by an obligation imposed by an agreement made on or before today. Financial assistance given without our consent after today will be declared to be unlawful and transactions relating to financial assistance entered into without our consent after today will be declared void. Financial assistance for these proposals includes grants, loans, guarantees and indemnities, subscribing for share or loan capital, and the provision of benefits through the transfer of land or other property, the provision of goods, services or facilities, the carrying out of works, and the making of other payments.

We propose to initiate consultations immediately on the details of our proposals. I am placing in the Library copies of a document which sets out the proposals fully and which explains certain exemptions we propose to make from the requirements for consent. Copies of the document and of this statement are today being sent to all local authorities and to the local authority associations. Copies are also being sent to the Housing Corporation, the National Federation of Housing Associations and other interested parties. Meanwhile, I would advise any local authorities and others who are actively contemplating schemes to seek the guidance of my Department or the Welsh Office.

**Mr. Jeff Rooker** (Birmingham, Perry Barr): We are grateful to the Minister for coming to the House to make a statement on this issue. It would have been wholly unacceptable to make such a statement in a written parliamentary reply.

**Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop** (Tiverton): The Minister would not do that.

**Mr. Rooker:** It has been done in the past and I am thanking the Minister for his courtesy in coming to the House to make this statement.

We accept that the Minister is consulting on this matter and, as the issue is not straightforward, I shall confine myself to a few questions. At the beginning of the statement the Minister said that the Government wish to encourage the provision of private rented housing and that some local authorities which he did not identify are already participating in or contemplating such schemes. There is one well-known scheme which I have visited in Sheffield. Has the Minister's decision to make the statement today and to give the proposals effect from midnight tonight anything to do with the proposals of Sheffield in conjunction with the United Kingdom Housing Trust and the Nationwide building society? Or is the statement meant to be a positive encouragement to such schemes as the one proposed in Sheffield, which will bring into being about 2,000 new homes to rent? That must be a good thing in anyone's book.

How is the position in Sheffield affected by this statement? It is important that the Minister answers that question. Will he also say how section 58 of the Housing Associations Act 1985 will be affected as a result of the other qualifications in his statement. That section empowers local authorities to assist and promote housing associations. That is perfectly acceptable current legislation and it is used by local authorities. Is there any proposal to remove those powers?

The Minister referred to factors that the Government, or Ministers, would take into account before approving such schemes. I realise that in the circumstances of a brief parliamentary statement the Minister could not go into a lot of detail, especially as he is to consult, but it behoves us to put some questions to him now. Will he say now that he will refuse any scheme which gives no nomination rights to a local authority for its tenants or those on the waiting list? I ask that because, in the annexe to the document that he is placing in the Library, it is clearly envisaged that there are possibilities of there being no nomination rights for a local authority. The thing would not operate unless the local authority was putting some money into the scheme anyway. The Minister should give a categorical answer that he will refuse any scheme that does not allow nomination rights for those on the waiting list.

The right to buy is not available to tenants of charitable housing associations. What will be the Minister's view on that, given the complex nature of the schemes that will come up under the proposals? If the local authority gives money to the private sector in the way envisaged in the statement, will all the funds count against the public sector borrowing requirement? I ask that because it is well known that the Treasury looks on housing associations as the public sector, although legally for housing purposes they are in the private sector. It is important that money that is intended to pull new money into housing in the form of partnership is not immediately stamped on by the Treasury by counting the whole lot as public sector borrowing. Such a proposal, if the Treasury operates it, will kill stone dead the proposal of the North housing association for 4,000 new homes to rent all over the country.

The Minister referred in his statement to the fact that such proposals may come under the assured tenancy scheme, but he did not make it clear that they all will. Will Parliament be asked to approve the landlords as it does under the assured tenancy scheme? If other schemes are worked up for this sort of proposal, when public money and local authorities are involved, will Parliament be asked to approve the landlords? The Minister used the phrase "responsible landlords". Our constituents need to know that those landlords are responsible. One way in which to do that, which is not perfect, is by approval of the House of Commons. That would have avoided for a start some of the problems that Labour Members are having in the coal communities over the current problems there.

Is any new money envisaged? Clearly the proposal for assured tenancies is designed to bring new money into housing and not to curtail funds. We want a statement that it is envisaged that this scheme will mean net new money.

Will the fact that the Minister will be looking in detail at the proportion of tenants or prospective tenants on housing benefit as is stated in the annex, paragraph 22, be a possible reason for his stopping Conservative-controlled authorities simply handing over the whole of their housing investment programme allocation to the private sector when they clearly cannot, and do not in the case of authorities such as Bromley, want to cope with their housing problems?

If Ministers are to take a decision about schemes and the number of tenants who may or may not be on housing benefit, what will happen to a scheme and a tenant who may at some time in the future lose his job and have to go on housing benefit? Does that mean that it is foreseen that he may be thrown out of the tenancy if any limit that Ministers have placed on the number of tenants who may be receiving housing benefit in any one scheme is broken? Yesterday, at Question Time the Secretary of State spoke about the need to

> "attract private money to run up as many hostels as quickly as possible . . . high quality hostels and temporary accommodation of all kinds."—[*Official Report*, 4 February 1987; Vol. 109, c. 985.]

As it is envisaged in the statement that hostels will be used, will the Minister kindly give us an example of a high-quality private hostel of the sort envisaged that would help people in greatest need? That is the term that the Minister used. As I understand it from the statement in the annexe, the Secretary of State will be asked to seek details of the tenants before he will consent to a scheme. He may need the details of the tenants in broad terms, but he will still need details. Is this not getting a little bit too much involved in detail for a Secretary of State or other Minister, and will it not encourage a massive bureaucracy if such a scheme gets off the ground?

We assume that the consultation will be genuine, unlike the rate support grant consultation, and we will await a detailed response until the legislative proposals come forward.

I finish with a brief caveat in the sense of a minor complaint. It is that the statement on the annunciator over the lunch period — "Private Rented Housing" — was somewhat misleading. Given our short debate last night, there will be one hon. Member who will be really pleased that the statement did not bring about what he thought it would. That is the hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) who explained to us last night that one of his constituents, who said that she had been a lifelong Tory voter, would not vote Tory again because of the minor element of rent control mentioned last night. The hon. Member for Richmond and Barnes said that that constituent is the secretary of a Cabinet Minister. It turns out that she is also the secretary of a Labour and of a Liberal Member, which is even more complicated, but at least it shows that the fears that the hon. Member or Richmond and Barnes may have had about the annunciator title, because it was somewhat misleading, have not been realised.

**Mr. John Patten:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman for all the questions that he has asked about this important issue. My hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes (Mr. Hanley) is not in his accustomed place. He can speak for himself, as he did very well last night before voting against the Government. The hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) will find, if he looks at the *Official Report* when it is published tomorrow, that the threat issued by that secretary, who I am sure serves so many Members in this House dutifully, was that she would never vote Conservative again unless my hon. Friend the Member for Richmond and Barnes stood up and argued her case. He certainly did that last night—to the chagrin of my right hon. Friend the Chief Whip.

On the matter of the annunciator's announcement of what the statement was about, we are rather limited in what we can do. It is not a very big screen and cannot contain too many words. It aptly summed up exactly what this statement is about, introducing a fruitful partnership between the public sector and the private sector in the provision of rented housing. There is a limited amount of public sector involvement in rented housing, as the hon. Member for Perry Barr will have seen from the consultation paper and from listening to my statement. That involvement is about 30 per cent. That is an exact description of what we are seeking to do through this positive statement.

Let me begin by apologising for the convoluted nature of part of the statement. I found myself necessarily reading, for legal reasons, sentences of which Bernard Levin would have been proud as they contained a substantial number of words. I can fully understand that the hon. Member for Perry Barr will need time to look at some of its implications. His first question concerned the Sheffield scheme, of which I am well aware. If Sheffield enters into contractual obligations before midnight tonight, the consent of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, who I am pleased to see on the Front Bench this afternoon, will not be required. Any scheme that is entered into before midnight tonight will not require his consent.

On the hon. Gentleman's second and important point about the Housing Associations Act 1985, section 58 will continue, but subject to the consent of the Secretary of State.

The hon. Gentleman's third question concerned nomination rights. Local authorities want these powers. The Association of Metropolitan Authorities said during the last housing consultative council, which is led by the hon. Gentleman's friend, Mr. Betts, that it would like powers similar to those that the Housing Corporation and housing associations already enjoy. If local authorities are to enter undertakings such as these with funding institutions, they will want nomination rights. Of course there will be a mixture of nomination rights and other forms of finding tenants, otherwise local authorities will not want to enter joint funding arrangements.

Fourthly, the hon. Gentleman asked about the right to buy. We envisaged that any transfer of council tenants into new forms of tenure must involve the transfer with them of the right to buy, for it is a right. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I want to develop new forms of mixed tenure. If we bring in entirely new tenants through the introduction of private funding into rented housing, the right to buy would probably not apply. We want a genuine development of the range of choice, more rented housing and to re-establish the right to rent.

The hon. Gentleman's fifth question concerned assured tanancies. If any assured tenancy landlord applies to be registered, that, as the hon. Gentleman knows, is subject to a resolution of the House and can be prayed against. That system will continue.

The hon. Gentleman's sixth question was about new money. That is exactly what the statement is about and what the new policy is concerned with. We are bringing

*[Mr. John Patten]*

new money into the provision of housing. If Sheffield, or some other council, enters an agreement with a private sector funding institution and offers to provide 30 per cent. of the cost from public funds, for every £1 that it puts in, it will get £3 from the private sector. Councils' money will therefore go much further. We have to ensure, however, that the private sector is not featherbedded against risk. One or two of the schemes that we have seen so far, including some operated by councils about which the hon. Member for Perry Barr knows, seem to be featherbedding the private sector unnecessarily.

As for housing benefit, paragraph 22 of the consultation paper outlines exactly what we are consulting on. When my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State decides whether to issue a consent to a new scheme being introduced by a council, he will wish to take into account whether a disproportionate amount of the tenants who are going into that development receive housing benefit.

We want to ensure that there is more private letting and more diversity of tenure. What I have announced will give councils throughout the country an opportunity to do just that.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I remind the House that we have further business today before opposed private business at 7 pm. I ask for brief questions, important though this matter is.

**Sir Peter Hordern** (Horsham): Will capital allowances for councils be taken into account in this scheme? Will councils suffer under their present restraint? Following the question asked by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker), will private sector contributions be counted in the public sector borrowing requirement calculations? However good these schemes are — I commend my hon. Friend on his announcement—is he aware that there is no alternative to a free market in first-time lettings?

**Mr. Patten:** Indeed. I take my hon. Friend's third point very much to heart. He knows that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State does as well. As for my hon. Friend's second question, no—any private money will not score in terms of public expenditure.

**Mr. Michael Meadowcroft** (Leeds, West): I warmly welcome the aims that were suggested in the first two sentences of the Minister's statement, but I regret that every following sentence diminished the prospect of achieving those aims. Why are the Government so paranoid about local authorities, which try to ameliorate the quite ludicrous limitation of 20 per cent. of capital receipts for housing expenditure by legitimately using section 58 of the Housing Associations Act 1985, that they try to constrict the use of that Act? May I suggest that there is a real difficulty? The Minister says — it is probably accepted by all of us — that he wants to get more money into housing from outside sources but, by catch-all provisions in the statement, he inhibits the entrance of that money into the market. Surely there is an irony here which the Minister must recognise.

**Mr. Patten:** I do not see any irony, nor do I recognise it. I should have said in reply to the first question asked by my hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Sir P. Hordern), which was echoed by the hon. Member for Leeds, West (Mr. Meadowcroft), that this is a revenue scheme and not a capital scheme. It is a means of funding the revenue differences between financing the cost of building and the expected rental income. We are trying to encourage private investing institutions to invest in housing. That is positive.

When the hon. Member for Leeds, West has had a chance, with his characteristic fairness, to reflect on the statement and its Bernard Levinesque-length sentences, he will see that there is much positive, forward-looking opportunity for local councils such as that in Leeds. I know that the hon. Gentleman is worried about housing problems in Leeds, and I hope that he will encourage his council to consider in a positive way what I have announced.

**Mr. John Heddle** (Mid-Staffordshire): Would my hon. Friend care to speculate on whether his announcement will be widely welcomed by the Building Societies Association, pension funds and other investing institutions, which, no doubt, could provide the responsible finance to enable there to be an increase in private rented accommodation for those who deserve the right to rent? Can he confirm that the scheme will also apply to short-term tenancies as to assured tenancies? Can he further confirm that the midnight guillotine is a means of stopping Left-wing councils such as Sheffield and others, which I invite him to mention, raiding the private purse and avoiding my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State's cash limits by clever, creative accounting?

**Mr. Patten:** I must leave the Building Societies Association, pension funds and other potential investment institutions to speak for themselves. I naturally hope that they will warmly welcome my announcement. I know that many of those institutions have funds and that, with a certain amount of security and a certain amount of risk, they want to co-operate with local councils to help provide a wider range of rented housing. There are some local authorities, which I can perhaps name—Brent, Camden, Lewisham, Sefton, which I know is a hung council, and Lambeth, for example — which would seem to seek to circumvent the Government's housing policy. After midnight tonight, they will no longer be able to put such schemes into effect as they will have to seek the consent of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State.

**Mr. Reg Freeson** (Brent, East): The Minister has said that the money will not count as public expenditure. He will appreciate that, until now, with one or two minor exceptions in national terms, it has been a strict Treasury rule that any private money which is married to housing association grant or its equivalent should count as public expenditure. Are we to understand from the answer that the Minister has given twice previously that money in the scheme that he has announced today will not count as public expenditure and that when, in future, the Housing Corporation undertakes similar schemes marrying housing association grant to private capital, that money also will not be included as public expenditure? The 30 per cent. figure has been referred to. Before it is finally decided on, may I urge the Minister, with full, serious concern about the housing situation in London, not to stick rigidly to that figure for London costs? If he does, he will get little result in this part of the country, whatever may be achieved elsewhere.

**Mr. Patten:** I respect the right hon. Gentleman's views as a London Member and as a distinguished former Housing Minister. I take his point about London. If he looks at the statement, he will find in it the word "normally".

As for the 30 per cent. and what is or is not public expenditure, the scheme parallels a scheme which was recently introduced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State in which additional funding has been given to the Housing Corporation to involve mixed funding — a 30-70 percentage split — between the public and the private sector to help house the homeless and young job movers in London. That is why I believe that the Association of Metropolitan Authorities wanted such a scheme. It was not long ago, heavens above, at the Housing Consultative Council that I was asked to bring about such a positive scheme which would enable all local authorities of all political forms to bring in private money. We have responded very quickly to that and I hope that that has been recognised.

**Sir Brandon Rhys-Williams** (Kensington): I welcome the Minister's statement most warmly because it shows the genuine nature of the Government's commitment to the revival of the private rented sector, which is particularly important for inner London. May I ask my hon. Friend, in the course of his consultations, to give particular attention to the special needs of people living or wishing to live in flats who may have difficulty with the finance of co-ownership schemes and other new forms of tenure for flats?

**Mr. Patten:** That is certainly something which local councils, including the council in my hon. Friend's constituency, can examine. I know that my hon. Friend, with his long-standing interest in the rights and welfare of flat dwellers in London, in the public and private sectors, will put these points to his local council.

**Mr. William O'Brien** (Normanton): The Minister has referred to his intention to help various agencies and to ensure that rent levels are within the limit that people can afford to pay. Does he have any comment about the private operators who have bought Coal Board houses when the Coal Board refused to sell to sitting tenants? These private operators, having bought those houses, are now offering shorthold tenancies. That is a breach of tenants' protection. Can the Minister tell us how my constituents who are suffering because of the recent sale of NCB houses will be able to meet the proposed massive rent increases which are to be levied or have been requested by the rent officer? Can he also tell us what guidelines are being offered to rent officers to ensure that rents are kept at a reasonable level of increase and so ensure that rents are not allowed to rise so steeply that people cannot afford to pay them?

**Mr. Patten:** That point was raised by the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) last night during the debate on the orders. I undertook to write to the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford. If I may, I will involve the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien) in that correspondence in an attempt to deal with those points. These are very complicated issues.

**Mr. W. Benyon** (Milton Keynes): I warmly welcome the statement but does my hon. Friend agree that the prerequisite for the scheme's success is that the private sector participants should have confidence in the future? Many of us believe that going down the avenue of assured tenancies is the right way to proceed and that should be greatly extended in future.

**Mr. Patten:** That is something on which, happily, there is all-party consent. That point was repeated last night by the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) speaking on behalf of the official Opposition, and I believe that support for the assured tenancy scheme is also shared by the alliance parties——

**Mr. Meadowcroft** *indicated assent.*

**Mr. Patten:** —whose spokesman is giving his assent at the moment. If councils use these schemes in the right way and with the consent of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, we will achieve that certainty about the future. Central Government, local government and the funding institutions will form a fruitful relationship and partnership to provide more homes for people. That will bring about the eventual breakdown of the barriers between owner-occupation and council housing which damages our society.

**Mr. Richard Caborn** (Sheffield, Central): May I press the Minister a little further. I am sorry that I have been out of the Chamber, but I have telephoned Sheffield council, which is extremely concerned about the statement, especially in the light of the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker). How far must the contracts have progressed in Sheffield, which, as the Minister knows, involve 2,000 builds, in the relationship that he has just described between the public and private sectors? The council wants to know how far down the road the contract must have proceeded. Must there be an absolute position with regard to the signatures on the contract before midnight tonight? I want some guidance on that.

**Mr. Patten:** It has to be legally binding before midnight tonight.

**Mr. James Hill** (Southampton, Test): My hon. Friend is to be congratulated. This is a very difficult path to travel and he must travel in harness with the Opposition because housing is a very emotive subject.

First, could not my hon. Friend make all the transactions freehold? It is common practice in a lease, which can be binding for 99 years, for many provisions to be written in, and that may dissuade some institutions. I would have thought that freehold was the best way to proceed.

Secondly, does the limit on financial aid—or shall we call it a grant?—of 30 per cent. include the freehold land and the properties thereon? If it does, my hon. Friend will have a great deal of success with the institutions.

Thirdly, has my hon. Friend pondered the fact that for some time local government has been able to sell off parts of council property to institutions, and that my local authority has not sold one scrap?

Finally, does my hon. Friend believe that high-rise blocks of flats in urban conurbations are an ideal purchase for an institution?

**Mr. Patten:** We are of course consulting and I shall bear in mind my hon. Friend's comments about the inhibiting effect of a 99-year lease. That is an important point and

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we hope that people who will respond to the consultation process in the private sector as much as the public sector will make those points.

I do not believe that the "grant"—which is the generic phrase that I have been using, because it is a grant from the public sector—must be a grant simply in terms of money. It could also involve loans, guarantees and land at low cost. That might well be of interest to institutions.

We want to consider my hon. Friend's point about selling off blocks of property in public ownership. Councils up and down the country are doing that—and Oldham and Salford councils have been particularly successful—through their co-operation with the private sector.

I believe that blocks of flats can be very good investments. Those investments can be realised only if there is positive management such as exists in some excellent London boroughs such as Wandsworth.

**Mr. Peter Hardy** (Wentworth): Whatever the merits of the scheme, does the Minister accept that if it is to have any chance of meaningful success and engender the confidence to which he has already referred there must be some assurance among local authorities that the additional calls upon housing investment will be matched by an increase in the housing investment allocation? A very real assurance is needed with regard to that.

If the Minister is to demonstrate good faith with the private sector, would he at least ensure that some of the more scandalous aspects of the sale of Coal Board houses are properly investigated by his Department so that the House and the country can be assured that we are not simply featherbedding the greedy and being unconcerned about the irresponsible?

**Mr. Patten:** I understand that British Coal has been reviewing its procedures about Coal Board houses. I have been advised that auctions are to be used as a last resort. If the hon. Gentleman wishes, I will include him in the correspondence that I am starting with the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Mr. Lofthouse) and the hon. Member for Normanton (Mr. O'Brien).

**Mr. Robin Squire** (Hornchurch): I warmly welcome the statement by my hon. Friend which can be seen as a landmark in the expansion of the private rented sector after many years of decline. Does my hon. Friend accept that if the assured tenancy scheme grows considerably—as most of us would like—that will bring nearer the day when most, if not all, non-resident, private rent landlords will be registered?

**Mr. Patten:** We want to see responsible landlordism returned to this country in the interests of increasing the supply of homes for those people who want homes in the rented sector. The assured tenancy has an important part to play in that. We are determined as a Government to restore the right to rent.

**Mr. David Winnick** (Walsall, North): Is the Minister aware that the word "midnight" is becoming of special significance to this dictatorial Government? His announcement today will be a heavy blow for those schemes in Sheffield and elsewhere in which there has been co-operation between local authorities and housing associations. Can the Minister tell the Opposition why we should not tell the people in Greenwich and elsewhere that if the Government are re-elected they intend largely to deregulate the privately rented sector, abolish security of tenure at least for new lettings and bring back once again all the evils of Rachmanism?

**Mr. Patten:** What the hon. Gentleman should be doing when he goes to Greenwich is encouraging the council leadership to get itself involved in such partnerships between the public and private sector and start bringing in £3 or £4 of private sector money for every £1 of public sector money, which will make the housing investment programme money go that much further.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Nottingham, North): I wonder whether my hon. Friend would agree with me that sensible and rational debate on this subject has been greatly helped by, and the country should be greatly grateful for, to the positive attitude of the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker).

**Mr. Rooker:** Thanks very much.

**Mr. Marlow:** That is the hon. Gentleman's constituency. I hope that is helpful to him.

I wonder whether my hon. Friend could answer his question about how he would define the responsible landlord. Finally, would my hon. Friend agree with me that the haemorrhage of private rented accommodation is not going to be staunched until such time as landords who find they have voids find it more profitable to put them on the rented market rather than to sell them?

**Mr. Patten:** The hon. Member for Perry Barr made it clear in the debate last night that he is dead against the re-introduction of the private rented sector. I deplore that, and I regard him as an extremely dangerous man for that reason.

**Mr. Rooker:** Thank you.

**Mr. Patten:** I hope that that helps the hon. Gentleman with his general management committee.

My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) is right. The motif is responsible landlordism. We want to see that back, as much in the public sector as in the private sector.

**Mr. Eric S. Heffer** (Liverpool, Walton): When did we ever have responsible landlordism?

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): Will the Minister assure the House that, under the scheme that he has outlined, rent levels will not rise above those of the relevant local authority in the area concerned? Will he assure us that security of tenure will be the same as in the local authority concerned, and will he say why he has come to the House to tell us that he wishes to bring private sector finance into local government as an investment when exactly the same Government and Minister have refused capital allocation to areas of housing stress, and forced more people into the housing waiting list, with resulting homelessness? His panacea is to bring back Rachmanism through the private enterprise scheme.

**Mr. Patten** *rose*——

**Mr. Winnick:** Will the Minister answer my question while he is at it?

**Mr. Patten:** The hon. Gentleman asked two specific questions rather than making generalised statements. The local authorities concerned will be entering agreements with private investors, so will have great control over a range of matters, including rent levels, and that will be clear on the face of any agreement made between the local authorities and funding institutions.

Secondly, the hon. Gentleman said that he wished to see more money put into the provision of housing in the stress areas, and I share that aim. This is one of the ways to ensure that more money is brought into providing homes for people who need them. That is why I hope that the private and public sector involvement in councils will grow.

**Sir Kenneth Lewis** (Stamford and Spalding): Is my hon. Friend aware that one of the reasons for the increase in price for moderate-sized houses in London and other places is that there is no possibility of people finding houses to let? Therefore, what he has said is commendable, but limited. Once having started on this scheme, if it is taken up, will he give it a push and, if necessary, make more money available?

**Mr. Patten:** I welcome my hon. Friend's welcome. He said that this all looks a bit limited, but it has only been since fairly recently that we have been able to debate the private rented sector without all Labour Members foaming at the mouth, although one or two of them still do, and saying that it was impolite to debate the subject at all. Now, although the Opposition have set their face against the reintroduction of old model private sector renting, they are prepared to talk, as are the alliance parties, about ways to get public and private sector money together. That is a positive message going from the House.

**Mr. Dennis Skinner** (Bolsover): Is not the truth of the matter that, as institutions will enter the housing market and will want a return on their money, they will get it either from the local authorities—the ratepayers—or, as the statement makes clear, if there is to be no featherbedding and they do not get it from the local authorities, the money must come out of the tenants' pockets? That will mean a massive increase in rents for those living in such flats and houses. This is another step down the road to de-control. It also does nothing for the crisis facing about 50 coal mining constituencies, where speculators are making money hand over fist, faster than Rachman ever made it, while the Government do not have the guts to relieve the hardship of thousands of tenants affected in this way.

**Mr. Patten:** We debated this issue last night. It is a pity that the hon. Gentleman——

**Mr. Skinner:** I was here.

**Mr. Patten:** I am so sorry. The hon. Gentleman was here.

**Mr. Skinner:** We did not get an answer.

**Mr. Patten:** I am trying to give an answer to the hon. Gentleman's question.

The whole point of this scheme is to make it possible for local authorities, by donations and grants, to bridge the gap between the cost of providing houses and the rents. The hon. Gentleman has misunderstood the system that has been outlined. He has also misunderstood the fact that Labour-controlled councils have been talking to the City and funding institutions in the interest of getting these schemes going.

**Mr. John Fraser** (Norwood): The Minister announced that he would choose retrospective legislation to annul agreements entered into after midnight tonight. Does he realise the massive amount of management time that goes into constructing the sort of agreement that Sheffield intends to, or may have, entered into with the private sector to provide up to 2,000 homes to let? Therefore, will the Minister confirm that, provided that a mutually binding, legal obligation has been entered into, which involves giving financial assistance in the terms of the statement, and provided that the legal obligation exists to provide that assistance, he will not attempt to annul such an agreement that has been entered into before midnight tonight?

**Mr. Patten:** Yes, I can confirm that, provided that an agreement between Sheffield, or any other council, on the one hand, and any set of funding institutions or individual funding institutions on the other has been brought to legally binding fruition by midnight tonight, that will not be covered by future legislation. However, if some local authorities have schemes that they have been working up and they feel themselves to be disappointed by the legislation that my right hon. Friend is about to introduce, they can speedily turn those schemes into the sort of schemes to which my right hon. Friend would readily give consent. We want to encourage that.

## Stocksbridge Engineering Steel Works

5.8 pm

**Mr. Martin Flannery** (Sheffield, Hillsborough): I beg to move the Adjournment of the House, under Standing Order No. 20, for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration.

Yesterday evening, at about 4 o'clock, in my constituency, the managing director of the Stocksbridge Engineering Steel Works announced that 600 of the work people would be made redundant. This was an appalling blow, as I shall demonstrate. This works has been famous throughout the world for a century or more. It has a work force of approximately 2,400 people and hence the redundancies are 25 per cent. of the people who work there.

This move was unexpected. I had written to the managing director the week before. In his letter back to me, he showed not the slightest sign of doing this, and said that he could not give me a definitive statement about redundancies. I had seen the shop stewards committee, and it did not know anything about it.

When one takes into account the fact that the works is situated in a small town of 10,000 people, about 10 miles from the city of Sheffield, and only came into the Sheffield, Hillsborough constituency on the reorganisation of the boundaries in the last general election, one realises that, in a town of 10,000, to have 2,400 people out of work is a sad blow. I see that my hon. Friend the Member for Barnsley, West and Penistone (Mr. McKay) is sitting here. He knows what this means to his constituency as well as to mine. It is even more appalling because the town, which is rather tenuously stretched out some miles away from Sheffield, has suffered drastically and the east end of Sheffield lies there still and silent as a result of the depredations of the Government.

The steel workers are now in the gravest difficulty. That great works is the life blood of that small town. It has slimmed down, done everything that the Government wanted and got itself moving as well as it could. It would be remiss if, as the parliamentary representative of the area and now closely connected with the area of the factory, I did not do everything in my power to draw the House's attention to what will be a tragedy for the working people of Stocksbridge Engineering, their families and the general area of Sheffield.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member asks leave to move the Adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a specific and important matter that he believes should have urgent consideration, namely,

> "The announcement yesterday by the management of the Stocksbridge steel works that 600 workers are to be made redundant."

I have no doubt that the hon. Gentleman was right to raise this matter under Standing Order No. 20, but I regret that I do not consider that it meets the requirements of the Standing Order and I cannot, therefore, submit his application to the House.

## Points of Order (Procedure)

5.11 pm

**Mr. Robin Maxwell-Hyslop** (Tiverton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. It would be widely agreed in the House, now that the measure taken by a previous Speaker in departing from the rule for many decades that a point of order is either raised at the moment when the matter occurs with which it is concerned or not at all, that the departure by which points of order allegedly on matters arising in Question Time were postponed until after Question Time but ahead of the normal time for raising points of order with the Chair has not been a successful experiment, for this reason.

It is, in practice, very difficult for Mr. Speaker to say, as Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys did during the bloody assizes,

> "I can smell a lie before it is uttered."

It is very difficult for Mr. Speaker to say that a point of order is an abuse, that it is not a point of order at all or, alternatively, that it should not claim priority of time by claiming to be concerned with matters directly arising at Question Time when that claim is wholly spurious, before he has heard the point of order concerned. That is the difficulty and, moreover, it places the Chair in a position that is overtly humiliating and ridiculous. That is good neither for the Chair nor for the House.

I think that the House has tried that change in the rule for long enough and that the time has now come to do one of two things: either to revert to the normal rule, the doctrine of the first occasion in which a point of order allegedly to do with an answer at Question Time is raised immediately when the event to which it is alleged to refer occurs, or it has to take its turn in the queue of any points of order for which notice may have been given in the appropriate time after any ministerial statement.

I am not asking you to respond immediately to this suggestion, but to give it serious thought and then make a statement to the House. I believe that the present abuse has become widely regarded as an intolerable abuse that cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely without redress.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the hon. Gentleman for raising that matter. In the light of the exchanges today on the points of order, I shall certainly reflect on what he has said and I shall come back to the House and make a statement in due time.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop:** I am most grateful.

# Orders of the Day

## Social Fund (Maternity and Funeral Expenses) Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.*

5.14 pm

**The Minister for Social Security (Mr. John Major):** I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

**Mr. Speaker:** I must tell the House that I have not selected the amendment in the name of the right hon. Member for Plymouth, Devonport (Dr. Owen).

**Mr. Major:** The hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) will no doubt endeavour to raise some of the matters in the amendment notwithstanding the fact that you have not selected it, Mr. Speaker.

The purpose of this Bill is simply stated. It is to correct a technical defect which recent legal advice has identified in the Social Security Act 1986.

The essence of the advice that we received is that the Act does not give the power we believed existed for the Secretary of State to prescribe in regulations the amount to be paid in maternity and funeral payments. The other prescriptive powers necessary for this policy—notably to determine the circumstances of entitlement to payment—seem clear and undoubted. This deficiency came to light following scrutiny of regulations under the Act by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.

As the House knows, the 1986 Act encompassed the most substantial set of reforms to the social security system for 40 years. Today's Bill, by contrast, fits on to one sheet of paper. That, at least, should commend it to the House. Nevertheless, despite its brevity, the Bill is essential if we are to direct effective help with maternity and funeral costs where it is most needed.

I am in no doubt that the present arrangements for help with maternity and funeral costs are inefficient and in need of reform. It might be helpful if I set out why that is so together with our proposals for the future.

On maternity payments, the social security system has long recognised the self-evident truth that a baby leads to extra expense. But the current system is clearly unsatisfactory. On the one hand, there is the universal maternity grant of £25. That is expensive in global terms because it is available to everyone, irrespective of their income. But equally it is inadequate because it does not give sufficient help to people on very low incomes. Successive Governments have given the grant such low priority that it has not been increased in value for nearly 20 years. The result of that is that it is now worth a fraction of its original value and it is also disproportionately expensive to administer a very large number of small grants. On the other hand, there are supplementary benefit single payments—based on the practice of totting up the need for each item down to nappies and a plastic bottle. Those payments can be considerably higher but they are restricted to people on supplementary benefit. Those in work on low incomes cannot get any such help at all and rarely have been able to do so in the past, although the Supplementary Benefit, Commission in the 1970s may occasionally have made available discretionary payments.

For funeral expenses the picture is similar. Here, too, there is a universal grant — the death grant — paid irrespective of income. But that grant is only £30, and has been frozen at its present rate even longer than the maternity grant. That speaks volumes for its relevance today. When the death grant was originally introduced it was intended to pay for a simple funeral, but clearly £30 is quite inadequate for that today. The vast majority of people pay for funerals largely on their own, and for them the death grant is an ineffective irrelevance. Despite its individual irrelevance, it is in global terms an expensive irrelevance simply because it is paid to so many people. As with the maternity grants, it is disproportionately expensive to administer in relation to the benefit actually paid out to individuals. It also gives far too little help to those who genuinely have difficulty paying for a funeral and whom we wish to assist more generously. The only people who can get help with the full cost of a funeral are, again, those on supplementary benefit. People on low incomes in full-time work, or pensioners just above supplementary benefit levels, are excluded. The death grant has in its present form, therefore, almost every imaginable disadvantage.

I think that there is almost general agreement — I never expect full agreement — that the arrangements I have just outlined are satisfactory. We recognised that in the Green Paper on reform of social security in mid-1985 and decided to replace those arrangements with a more rational system. The solution that we proposed was to concentrate help with maternity and funeral costs on people with low incomes, whether in or out of work, and to pitch that help at a reasonable level.

The detail of our proposals for maternity and funeral payments was developed as we moved on from the Green Paper to the White Paper and then to the very extensive debates on the passage of the Social Security Bill both in Committee and on the Floor of the House last year. But throughout that the essence of our proposals has been well known from the outset.

In respect of maternity assistance, we are proposing a flat rate amount which will make a reasonable contribution to the cost of providing for a baby. Shortly before Christmas I announced that the amount would be £80, being slightly more than three times as much as the current maternity grant. The criteria for payment of that will be straightforward. Those on supplementary benefit or family income supplement will be eligible, subject to the usual rules on capital. From April 1988, recipients of income support or family credit will be eligible in the same way, thus enabling us to avoid the need for a separate income test, and I think that will be generally welcomed. We intend that the payments will be publicised and applications can be handled simply by post where that is desired.

We have aimed specifically at relatively simple arrangements, picking out the best of supplementary benefit or maternity grant rules, as the case may be. It might be useful to illustrate that point. For example, people will be able to get maternity payments from 11 weeks before the expected birth to three months afterwards — like the maternity grant but rather more generous than the supplementary benefit limits. On the other hand, people will get maternity benefits for adopted babies — unlike maternity grants but like supplementary

*[Mr. Major]*

benefit. I hope that, whatever other differences may emerge this afternoon, the House will acknowledge the logic and fairness of that approach.

There are two further points I would wish to stress about these maternity payments. First, they will be grants and not loans. Secondly, the payments will not be constrained by the budget of the social fund. If someone meets the criteria, she will get help. I stress these points because, despite the fact that we have made them very clear over the last year or so, there seemed to be some misunderstanding in the mind of the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) when I announced a few days ago that we would be introducing this Bill. The hon. Gentleman on that occasion still referred to

> "Loans for maternity and funeral expenses"

and to "cash limiting".

I say to the hon. Gentleman that that is wholly wrong in terms of our proposals and I am surprised that he should have made that comment after the extensive debates we had on the subject last year. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will explain that lapse when he speaks.

**Mr. Frank Field** (Birkenhead): I am grateful to the Minister because I think it is now clear that maternity and funeral expenses will be grants but it appears that other payments from the social fund will be loans. I hope the Minister will be able to answer this question before he concludes his speech. We know the fund will be cash limited. Let us say the sum is X million pounds a year cash limit. Will that be paid into the fund each year? If it is, given that most of the payments from the fund will be loans, is it right to assume that the fund will grow considerably in size each year?

**Mr. Major:** We shall be making announcements about the size and operation of the fund when we finish further consultation work that is still continuing. Insofar as earlier points about grants are concerned, the maternity and funeral payments will be paid in the fashion I have set out. In terms of much of the rest of the social fund, it will be loans, although there is also the community care aspect within the social fund which will be grants and not loans. One can foresee circumstances where people such as those we shall be concerned with this afternoon may find themselves qualifying for grants under that aspect of the social fund as well. We have a great deal to debate, no doubt at a fairly early stage, on matters of that kind.

**Mr. Charles Kennedy** (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): I am grateful to the Minister. I appreciate that there is further discussion to go on and we wish him well with the Treasury in that discussion. Following on the point of principle raised by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), what about the practical impact on people on supplementary benefit or other forms of state benefit under the social fund? If they are given loans, how will they pay them back? It is a practical question that has never been adequately answered.

**Mr. Major:** We had extensive debates on the social fund during the Committee period in which it was made clear that the loans would be recoverable from future benefits paid to those who take the loans. That is not a novel proposition but was set out in great detail during the passage of the Bill upstairs. That principle is well understood in the House. We still have to debate, no doubt at a further stage, the detailed operations of the social fund when the size of the budgets and related matters are determined.

I concede that that was the point underlying the observations made by the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), but the basic principles of what is determined and how it will be repaid has been known for some time. Of course, to an extent it will depend on the underlying weekly income benefit rates, which will be set in the autumn of this year, to take effect from April 1988. The hon. Gentleman is well aware that until we reach the normal uprating period no one can be entirely certain what the income support and the other relevant rates will be. I acknowledge the point raised by the hon. Gentleman. The levels of those rates will be important and on that point I need no instruction from anyone. In any event, I again stress that we are talking of grants, not loans, because I know that even now — *[Interruption.]* The hon. Gentleman has just indicated it again — there may be some misunderstanding on those points and I wish to see those misunderstandings removed.

I am grateful to both hon. Gentlemen for letting me reiterate the precise circumstances in which the maternity and funeral payments will be made, the nature of those payments, and in particular the non-repayable nature of those particular payments.

It might be useful to turn to our proposals for help on funeral costs. These proposals will allow everyone on low incomes to pay for a funeral if they do not have the resources to do so, which is something that the present arrangements patently fail to do. We are proposing to pay the full cost of a reasonable funeral. The arrangements will be not unlike those which now operate for some people on supplementary benefit. The big difference is that we are extending such arrangements to other low income groups — that is to say, specifically, to people arranging funerals who are on family income supplement or housing benefit as well as those on supplementary benefit. From April 1988, similar arrangements will apply to those receiving income support or family credit. I hope it will be generally recognised that that is a very significant increase in the amount of effective help which will be made available. I hope that the House in general and the Opposition Front Bench in particular will be inclined to acknowledge that, although I appreciate that they will have other points of difference with us this afternoon.

**Mr. George Park** (Coventry, North-East): Would the Minister care to comment on a constituency case brought to me concerning a widow on supplementary benefit who had borrowed £375 from her son and needed repayment of it, but because the funeral bill had been paid she was refused a funeral grant?

**Mr. Major:** Under the arrangements that we propose, the lady in those circumstances would be able to have assistance from the fund and would not have been required to borrow that money in the first instance. That illustrates one of the improvements in this system and I think that will be generally helpful. The problem raised by the hon. Gentleman may have other ramifications. Insofar as they affect supplementary benefit matters, if the hon. Gentleman cares to give me their details I will have them examined for him as speedily as possible.

This proposal means that the number of people who will have cover — I emphasise the word cover — for the cost of a reasonable funeral, assuming they have no other resources to meet the cost, will be increased from about 4½ million to about 8 million. That is why I felt that the hon. Member for Oldham, West, who is engaging in a seminar with the hon. Member for Birkenhead, was mistaken when he spoke the other day about me

"insisting on taking powers to cut funeral payments to pensioners and others"

and

"forcing more and more of them to build up savings for their funerals."—[*Official Report*, 22 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 1043.]

In fact, we are doing precisely the opposite and our proposals will greatly help many people on low incomes. Once again, because of the misunderstanding in the House and beyond—*[Interruption.]*

**Mr. Frank Field**: The seminar my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead was giving me was on this very point. Surely it would make a difference to poor old people being scared about dying only if the grant is paid to other people outside the range of categories that the Minister has spoken about, people who are not on benefit. As I understand the arrangment, people will qualify only if the person who is being buried is poor, not if they are in the other categories. Am I wrong on that?

**Mr. Major**: Yes, the hon. Gentleman is wrong. It is the benefit position of the person responsible for arranging the funeral that is relevant.

**Mr. Field**: If the widow referred to by my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Park) was not on housing or supplementary benefit, she would still be stuck with the bill.

**Mr. Major**: I would wish to look at the precise details of the difficulties faced by the constituent of the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Park). We are extending the availability of substantial practical assistance with the funeral costs of someone for which a person has responsibility from a cover of 4·5 million people to a potential cover of 8 million people. No doubt the hon. Gentleman will seek to develop his argument on Monday, but that is the practical underlying effect of the Bill.

**Mr. Field**: With regard to the figure of 4 million, most of those who will lose the entitlement are old people, most of whom will die fairly soon and will therefore be eligible for the grant. The figure of 8 million is based on those on specific benefits, many of whom are not old and are unlikely to die in the near future. So it is misleading to give those two figures.

**Mr. Major**: I think not. The only people who will find themselves at a practical disadvantage are those who do not fall into the qualifying groups, who will lose the £30 flat rate grant.

**Mr. Field**: Widows.

**Mr. Major**: That may or may not be. If widows are in poor circumstances we wish to help them. Our proposition will offer them more substantial help than before. The £1,000 widow's payment which comes into effect in 1988 is entirely disregarded for capital purposes. The principal loss for a person will simply be the £30 flat rate grant. The gain will be for those on low incomes, who will find that the full cost of a funeral will be met. These days, in any part of the country, that would rarely be less than £350 and would probably average £550. To the many people who worry deeply about meeting that cost, the practical effect of what we are doing will offer considerable comfort. I think that the hon. Gentleman will welcome that.

**Mr. Field**: I accept that.

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** (Surrey, South-West): Will my hon. Friend confirm that after April the £1,000 to which any widow would be entitled will be disregarded? Will he further confirm that, with regard to the constituent of the hon. Member for Coventry, North-East (Mr. Park), any house that the widow may have been left by her deceased spouse will also be disregarded when assessing funeral costs?

**Mr. Major**: Yes, I can offer that reassurance to my hon. Friend.

**Mr. Sydney Bidwell** (Ealing, Southall): The Minister is kind to give way so often. The move away from insurance may give rise to many anomalies. How will the Department know what insurance moneys are available, either as a result of the death or from insuring other people?

**Mr. Major**: It may be that the estate of the deceased, when it is realised, will have the resources to pay for the funeral. As at present, the cost of the funeral will be a first charge on the estate and will be recovered. But it will not, under any circumstances whatever, be recovered from the person who had the loan to carry out the responsibility of arranging and paying for the funeral. Under no circumstances would it be recovered from the person who paid for the funeral upon receiving a loan, but it could be recovered from the estate at a much later date when the estate is proved, if it had the resources in it. I emphasise that the person borrowing the money may be sure that he or she will not be required to repay the money. I think that that was the underlying anxiety in the hon. Gentleman's mind.

Once again, I must point out that we are not seeking to cash-limit the funeral payments. They, too, will be made to those who meet the criteria without regard to any budget. The payments will not be loans to be recovered from the applicant's own resources. In order to direct effective help where it is most needed we shall, first, take account of sums to be put towards the cost of the funeral and the capital disregard limit. That is in line with current traditional arrangements. We have also made it clear that the lump sum payment of £1,000 proposed for widows will be disgregarded in full. I hope that that is beyond doubt.

Secondly, we have said that if the estate of the deceased —the point referred to by the hon. Member for Ealing, South (Mr. Bidwell)—when it is settled, turns out to have money in it to pay for the funeral, the payment will be recovered from that. That is, of course, a long-standing principle that funeral costs are the first call upon the estate of a deceased. However, that is a substantial improvement on the present supplementary benefit arrangements whereby help is not given in the first place if there is sufficient money in the estate. I suspect that that is the point that prompted the hon. Gentleman's question. We have eased that and are giving people without sufficient resources of their own the confidence that a payment for funeral costs will be made when needed, with recoveries from the estate, if appropriate, taking place later. I emphasise again that the recoveries will be only from the

*[Mr. Major]*

estate. There is no question whatever of the funeral payments being loans to be recovered from the present or future income of the applicant.

**Mr. Lewis Stevens** (Nuneaton): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way again. If someone is eligible for supplementary benefit and housing benefit but does not receive them, perhaps because he has not applied, would he still be eligible for funeral expenses?

**Mr. Major:** The logic of our proposals is that such a person would be eligible, but I shall check that important point and write to my hon. Friend if what I have said is not accurate.

The new arrangements for help with funerals will be handled as sensitively as possible and with the minimum of detailed questioning. By using income-related benefits as "passports" we shall avoid a separate income test. That will be generally welcome and helpful. Moreover, we are also cutting some of the detailed rules now existing in the supplementary benefit arrangements which concern the relationship of the person arranging the funeral to the deceased and which "deem" contributions to the cost from other family members. Such unnecessary difficulties will go and I for one will be glad to see the back of them. In future, people will be able to apply for help by post or in person as they wish.

Those then are our proposals and they represent a substantial improvement on the present situation. However, as I set out in my statement last week, it is clear that a few vital words necessary to implement the policy were omitted from the 1986 Act and that is why we have introduced the Bill.

The Bill has only two clauses. The first seeks to amend the 1986 Act to remedy the defect I have described. It simply enables regulations to be made, not only to prescribe who should get help with maternity and funeral costs, but how much that help should be—whether in relation to particular times of expenditure or otherwise.

The second clause contains the short title—the Social Fund (Maternity and Funeral Expenses) Act 1987. It also contains a wholly standard provision—similar to that in the 1986 Act—relating to Northern Ireland. This would enable an Order in Council to be made, subject to the negative resolution procedure, for purposes corresponding to this Act.

That is it, as far as the Bill is concerned. It is as brief and as straightforward as that. We shall also—as I told the House the other day—revoke the regulations which were queried by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments on grounds of vires. Subject to Parliament's agreement, we intend to lay a fresh set of regulations along similar lines in due course under the powers which this Bill is designed to provide.

The purpose of the Bill is to enable the much-needed reform of help with maternity and funeral costs to go ahead as intended from April this year. I do not believe that it would be right to abandon that reform simply because of a technical error, unfortunate though that error may be. The right answer to a problem like this is to find a straightforward solution. That is what we have done with this Bill.

To sum up, there is no doubt that reform is urgently needed. There is no doubt that the proposals I have outlined again today mean that we shall direct effective help to those who really need it. Those most in need will get most help. That must be the right policy and this Bill will enable us to achieve it. I commend it to the House.

5.39 pm

**Mr. Michael Meacher** (Oldham, West): This is a little Bill, almost incomprehensible in its drafting. However, it raises two fundamental issues. One is the abolition of the contributory principle which, before this Government came to office, was always a foundation of the welfare state. The other issue is the operation of the social fund, which remains the most objectionable element of that thoroughly objectionable piece of legislation passed last year, the Social Security Act.

For the last 40 years, the contributory principle has been central to the social security system. It was the cornerstone of the Beveridge plan in 1942 when he wrote:

> "It is, first and foremost, a plan of insurance—of giving in return for contributions benefits up to subsistence level, as of right and without a means test, so that individuals may build freely upon it."

It is this which the abolition of the death grant and the maternity grant under this Bill will destroy. This point was made rather forcefully to me a few weeks ago by a former constituent. He wrote to me an entirely unsolicited and aggrieved and angry letter from which I shall quote:

> "Before I retired I was manager of Oldham DHSS and in that capacity I often corresponded with you. You may, therefore, be concerned at the moral and legal implications of the proposed abolition of the contributory death grant. I paid for death grant from 1948 until I retired and then had no more liability for such contributions. The fund, however, still had a liability to pay out on my death. In commercial terms I had a paid-up policy and had it been with a friendly society, the money would be safe. It is this policy that the Government unilaterally intends to abolish.
>
> Any private company doing this would be taken to court and convicted of fraud. Previously when a benefit has been abolished it has still been paid to those already qualified. What will happen to my money and that of millions of other pensioners? It is now in the fund awaiting payment. If you cannot obtain a satisfactory answer for me, I am eager to appeal to the Parliamentary Commissioner."

I shall certainly raise that case with the Minister in an effort to get a reply which satisfies my constituent. I shall pursue the matter if the Minister does not wish to give an answer now.

That correspondent raises a serious point which the Minister did not begin to answer. How can the Government justify unilaterally terminating a right to benefit for which contributions have been made in good faith throughout an entire working life of more than 40 years? The rejection of any such notion and support for the principle of a right to benefit based on contribution irrespective of other circumstances has hitherto been agreed in almost all parts of the House.

I shall quote one right hon. Member who in Committee moved an amendment to the National Insurance Bill to provide all widows aged 32 or over with a minimum pension of 30 shillings a week. That dates it a bit. The right hon. Member was taxed about widows with large unearned incomes from an inherited estate. The right hon. Member replied:

> "I am dealing with anomalies within the National Insurance Scheme, because under the scheme one gets certain benefits in return for certain contributions. I do not think anyone would say, in dealing with an insurance scheme which gives certain benefits in return for certain contributions—there could be no justification for saying—'You shall not get the benefits because you can afford to look after yourself.' If one has a fire insurance and pays certain premiums and

> then one suffers a fire, the insurance company does not turn round and say, 'You are not going to get benefit because you can afford to do the repairs yourself.' This is an insurance scheme". — *[Official Report*, 3 December 1964; Vol. 703, c.810.]

It is not often that I quote that right hon. Member in support. The right hon. Member who said that is the right hon. Member for Finchley (Mrs. Thatcher), the Prime Minister.

In case any hon. Member thinks that the right hon. Lady's views have changed over the last 23 years, I shall give one more quotation—her reply as Prime Minister to her hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North (Mr. Howell). *[Interruption.]* Perhaps those Government Members who are chanting might like to listen to what their right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said a short time ago. She said:

> "As my hon. Friend knows, the national insurance scheme is not a mere transfer of income. It is an insurance scheme and one's right to benefits from it depends on the contributions made throughout life. It is important to maintain that link."

The proposal in this Bill and in the Social Security Act 1986 to abolish death and maternity grants is not compatible with insurance logic and proper commercial practice. It is totally inconsistent with what the Prime Minister said 23 years' ago and with what she still says today.

If Ministers are felons for depriving people of monetary benefits that they have earned, at least they are consistent felons because this is not the first time that they have done that. They have been at it for years. No fewer than six national insurance benefits for which people have contributed have been abolished in the last four years, without so much as an apology. The earnings-related supplement to unemployment, sickness and maternity benefit was abolished in January 1982. Industrial injury benefit was abolished and sickness benefit was replaced in April 1983. Child dependency additions to the short-term benefits were abolished in November 1984. The reduced rate unemployment sickness and maternity benefit and industrial disablement benefit below 14 per cent. were abolished in October 1986.

It would not be quite so bad if, having cut the benefits, the Government also cut the premiums, but they have increased national insurance contributions by half as much again—from 6 per cent. to 9 per cent. Any private insurance agency would scarcely stay in business if it offered a deal like that. If that is not bad enough, the Government are now proposing unilaterally to abandon nine more national insurance benefits in the next year or so. Two of them, the death grant and the maternity grant, are the subject of this Bill, but there is a host of others. Children's special allowance is to be abolished and maternity allowance is to be replaced in April 1987. Industrial widows' benefit is to be abolished, widows' allowance is to be replaced, age-related widows' pension is to be abolished, the widows' fund is to be ended, and personal extension of the widowed mothers' allowance is to be abolished, all in April 1988.

**Mr. Major:** Since the hon. Gentleman is so concerned about the insurance principle and has just listed a number of benefits that he claims will be reduced, would he care to speculate on how much national insurance contributions would have to rise in order to meet all the commitments that he believes should be met and in recent weeks has promised will be met?

**Mr. Meacher:** If the Government had not allowed unemployment to increase by between two and three times, the main reason for the overwhelming inflation in social security costs, it would have been perfectly possible to maintain all those benefits and to have had a lot over.

The Government's attitude to the welfare state is rather like those demolition contractors who are said to make a speciality of legally dismantling buildings on which there are preservation orders. They start by knocking down a fairly innocuous-looking bit but do it in a way that makes another rather more vital bit dangerous. They then call in the district surveyor, who sticks a dangerous structure notice on it and orders them to demolish it forthwith. In doing so, another bit becomes dangerous, so that must be demolished, and so it goes on. Not long afterwards, of course, the whole lot is a heap of rubble. That is what the Government dream of doing to the welfare state. It is not a frontal attack but a constant erosion, nibbling away, bit by bit, until one day the nation will wake up to find that there is little left of any substance.

Originally, the welfare state was envisaged as a redistributive mechanism between the classes. It was intended also to offer high-quality benefits and services, universally available almost as a badge of citizenship. These principles have been allowed to wither as a result of successive actions by the Government. Under the Government, the redistributive principle has been cut right back by constant reductions in the Treasury supplement, financed by all citizens out of general taxation, from 18 per cent. to as little as 7 per cent. That has thrown more and more of the funding of the welfare state on to working-class people because of the ceiling on national insurance contributions of one and a half times national average earnings, which minimises contributions from the higher paid groups within the middle class.

The principle of high-quality universal benefits is constantly undermined by the Government, partly by the regular elimination of universal benefits, as in the Bill, and, as I have described, partly by the Government's constant practice of making the beneficiaries of the welfare state pay more and more in contributions for a smaller and smaller range of benefits.

The Bill is a classic case in point. The death grant is to be replaced by means-tested help with funeral costs. It callously ignores the intense emotions that the issue generates in pensioners. The Dignity in Death Alliance has put the matter exactly as that age group feels about it. It states:

> "members take the view that an insurance principle is at stake. People have paid for this benefit throughout their lives and, as with any other, they are entitled to claim it."

It goes on:

> "there is a total rejection of any form of means testing at the time of death. This is both personally cruel and grossly expensive. The cost of administering a small financial benefit may be higher than its worth."

The same principle applies to the maternity grant, which is also being abolished. It is somewhat ironic that — I presume that the Minister knows this — it was a Tory Minister who, in 1980, introduced the principle of a universal benefit on the ground that, otherwise, many young mothers would have inadequate contributions to qualify. In addition, a few months later in 1980, the Government published a consultative document called "A Fresh Look at Maternity Benefits" in which all three options that were canvassed involved the retention of a universal maternity grant. If it was right then, why is it not right now?

*[Mr. Meacher]*

To pose a similar question in a slightly different form, if universal death or maternity grants have always been supported, as they have, by public opinion and indeed by the same Government in an earlier, slightly more liberal reincarnation, why do the Government gratuitously insist on bringing the two benefits within the purview of the odious social fund when there is absolutely no necessity for them to do so?

The other fundamental issue raised by the Bill concerns the operation of the social fund. There are four major objections to the proposal that still are unresolved. The first is the right to independent appeal, to which the Minister, in one of those classic displays of weasel words for which he is becoming famous, referred in his statement in the House a fortnight ago in explaining why the Bill was necessary. On 22 January—he repeated much the same today—he said:

"the error arose as a result of an attempt to reflect quickly the will of the other place."—[*Official Report*, 22 January 1987; Vol. 108, c. 1045.]

The Minister referred to the right of independent appeal. As he probably knows, gratitude in the other place is rather less than gushing, and it is clear why that is so. As was said at the time, it is now proposed that an appeal should lie from the regional DHSS civil servant nominated by the Secretary of State to a senior civil servant, who will not be nominated by the Secretary of State, and that the civil servant should instead be appointed by a commissioner. The question that arises is: who appoints the commissioner? The answer is: the Secretary of State. The commissioner thus appointed by the DHSS will have power to appoint social fund inspectors. Who are they? They are none other than those made available to the commissioner by the Secretary of State. To call that an independent appeals mechanism is to stretch credulity beyond endurance. It is rather like Humpty Dumpty in the Alice-in-Wonderland world of the Minister — "Words mean what I say they mean." That is not convincing for a drafter of laws.

**Mr. Major:** The direct analogy in the social security system is the chief adjudication officer and the adjudication officers, who over many years have determined all sorts of matters and have regularly been recognised to be independent, both during the time that the hon. Gentleman was a distinguished luminary of the Labour Government and today. It is rather unwise of him to cast doubt on the proposition in this fashion.

**Mr. Meacher:** The Minister has not answered the point that I made. He should re-examine my words. He will find that it is all wheels within wheels. There is absolutely no independence in the appeals mechanism.

It is still left open as to whether an appellant has a right to an oral hearing and representation. Apparently, that matter is to be left to the Secretary of State's directions or the social fund commissioners' guidelines, without parliamentary accountability. In our view, such a basic right as that should be decided by Parliament through regulations.

Another major unresolved issue concerns entitlement as opposed to discretion. Our view is clear. A discretionary system is undesirable because it leads to variations, it increases the stigma of claiming, especially among the elderly, it is highly complex and it is not even necessarily more flexible. In particular, there are certain benefits for which there should be a clear entitlement to a grant and not a loan. One example relates to exceptionally severe weather payments—if the Minister does not wince at the idea. It is bad enough at present, when payments are made as a grant, that, in the first week of the freeze when the country shivered, they were paid to only a handful of people in one of the 64 weather station areas, and in the third week, when the weather became much milder, the Goverment panicked and paid them to everybody indiscriminately. What would happen if it were a loan? Would pensioners be forced to pay back the money?

The third unresolved issue concerns the social fund itself, which is the final safety net in the social security system that Ministers notoriously have insisted must be cash-limited. But they have also said — if it is not a paradox — that the fund will not run out. It is still not clear what will happen if the normal day-to-day requests for aid from the fund exceed the budget allocated. Will applicants, however manifest their need, simply be refused assistance or be told that they will get less assistance as the year passes and as the budget dwindles?

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): Will my hon. Friend try to interpret whether the decision of the Minister in respect of funeral and maternity grants means that such grants will have first call on the social fund? — *[Interruption.]* I fail to see what is so funny about this matter. If they have first call on the social fund, in effect it will mean that all other payments from the social fund could be reduced proportionately because of payments of funeral and maternity benefit that are decided in advance.

**Mr. Meacher:** My hon. Friend has raised an interesting matter. It is for the Minister to reply to it, and I hope that he will do so. I agree with my hon. Friend. It appears that scarce funds could be pre-empted, which means that everyone else will go without.

The last matter concerns the vexed issue of loans as against grants. It seems that current DHSS thinking—the Minister referred to this but did not answer the point that I am about to make—is that only community care needs will be met by grants; all other needs will be met by loans. If that is so, the question that must be answered is, what exactly is meant by community care? It is a vague phrase and it may mean different things to different people.

In a recent speech the Minister said — for the first time, I believe — that loans would not be available to claimants until they had been in receipt of income support for six months. That opens up a new and ominous prospect. During the first six months on benefit, claimants are often adjusting to a much lower standard of living, although they are still carrying unalterable expenditure commitments. Already, home owners are suffering the loss of a quarter to a half of their income because of the iniquitous regulation that cuts mortgage interest payments for those on the dole. The latest proposal is a harsh extension of what is becoming the all too frequent practice of this Government of gratuitously kicking a family when it is down.

As for the level of these two proposed means-tested benefits, the current £30 level, to which the Minister referred, for the death grant has been repeatedly dismissed by Tory Members of Parliament and by the Minister today as so insignificant as to justify its transfer into a limited means-tested category. We repudiate those values and attitudes. If a universal grant in such a sensitive area is too low, we believe that the right approach is not to abolish it but to raise it to a reasonable level. That is why we have pledged to increase it from £30 to £200.

As for maternity grant replacement, the Government propose that the sum of £80 should be paid out of the social fund.

**Mr. Frank Field:** Given that if the Bill is passed there will be machinery to claw back money from the estates of those with adequate funds, would it not be right for the Opposition to increase the sum that is to be paid out but to claw it back from estates with adequate funds?

**Mr. Meacher:** I understand my hon. Friend's point, but it is contradicted by the eloquent testimony of the Prime Minister, for which I have a great deal of sympathy: that if people pay for something on an insurance basis, they are entitled to it, irrespective of their total resources. However, I think that we should look at that point again.

As for the maternity grant, in 1983 the average single payment for maternity items was £60, in addition to the £25 grant. A grant now of £80, therefore, represents a cut in assistance for the average mother on supplementary benefit, even at 1983 prices, let alone at 1987 prices. I hope that the Government will reconsider this sum so that at least there will be no loss. I hope that they will also reconsider their very regrettable decision that mothers who are under 16 years of age should no longer be entitled to assistance with maternity expenses in their own right.

We reject the Bill. Unilaterally, it abolishes benefits to which people have a right, having earned their entitlement by contributions that they have made throughout their working lives. We reject it, too, because it is designed to consolidate a cash-limited social fund which, coming from this Government, is an insult on top of the injury of having allowed poverty to double in the first place.

This may be a minor measure but it has an ugly parentage in the Fowler Social Security Act of last year. For the sake of the people of this country, I pledge that we shall sweep away both this and its parent as soon as we come to power.

6.4 pm

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** (Surrey, South-West): I am at something of a loss to know how to respond. The hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) talks about a kick in the teeth for families in crisis, but I have always felt, ever since I took my first job working for the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), that the families who are constantly kicked in the teeth are those working on low incomes. It is precisely those who are not receiving supplementary benefit or income support who stand to benefit most from many of the changes in the Social Security Act 1986 and from the modifications that are being made to the death and maternity grants. It is to precisely those people that I want to refer.

The hon. Member for Oldham, West referred to the contributory principle. I was not sure whether he would develop this argument and say that in order to protect the contributory principle and to ensure that all those with maternity or funeral needs should be properly provided for he would extend maternity and death grants — at the rate of £80 for maternity grants and several hundred pounds for funeral grants — to all those who had contributed, in which case the £28 billion spending programme appears likely to cause older people much more anxiety than their present very real concern of some of them that they may be unable to meet their funeral costs.

The hon. Gentleman also referred to the Government's attitude to the welfare state in terms of knocking down an edifice. The welfare state has developed in recent years in such a way that now it is rather like a chaotic, higgledy-piggledy housing estate through which it is quite impossible to find one's way, with muggers around every corner. Coherent, clear planning, so that people know what benefits are available and how they can be obtained, is long overdue. In my view, that is precisely what the Social Security Act has sought to achieve.

The hon. Gentleman also read out a list of benefits that he suggested the Government are modifying. I should be interested to know whether he can recite the precise details, thresholds and amounts of each and every one of those series of benefits. I could not do so. I doubt whether even the respected hon. Member for Birkenhead could go through precisely all those benefits and describe how they work.

The complexity of the present system leads inevitably to unfairnesses and to the need for an army of welfare rights advisers to help people to discover how the single payments system works. It has led to enormous inequalities in different parts of the country, dependent on whether one is clever enough to work out these vast complexities by going through paragraphs of regulations and matching one's predicament to all those regulations.

The social fund is both a much more flexible and a much more simple response. Above all, it will be understood much more clearly by ordinary claimants, as opposed to welfare specialists. That is a laudable goal. At the same time, more help will be given to that long overlooked group of people, those who are on low incomes.

The new help that is to be provided for funeral expenses will be much more realistic. The £30 grant hardly covers the cost of two bouquets of flowers. Many people suffer great anxiety about how to finance a funeral under the existing arrangements. Ludicrous restrictions are placed on those payments concerning the relationship of the claimant to the deceased. Furthermore, if there is deemed to be money in the estate, even though it is inaccessible, claimants are not entitled to help. The death of a relative causes an emotional crisis for many people. It can also create a financial crisis until the financial position of the deceased finally emerges. These arrangements will ensure that more people will benefit and that those involved will be provided with a sensible and realistic benefit.

I was pleased that my hon. Friend the Minister referred to widows, on the basis of the case that was mentioned earlier. The fact that the widow's £1,000 will be entirely disregarded, let alone the value of any property that may have been left by the spouse, will make a substantial difference.

**Mr. Frank Field:** That was an important statement, but the truth is that most widows will not be helped because their pension will take them just above the level of entitlement. Their husbands would probably also have been above that level and therefore not eligible for help.

*[Mr. Frank Field]*

The awful fact is that, although we can say that the £1,000 will be disregarded, that sum will have to be used to pay the funeral bills.

**Mrs. Bottomley**: The hon. Gentleman is also making the better point that, because many widows may just be above the supplementary benefit level and the rigid cut off, they have not stood to gain at all in the past. Now, however, because of the ability to help more people including those who are entitled to housing benefit or family credit, there will be a gain from a much fairer and a much more appropriate mechanism.

**Mr. Frank Field** *indicated assent.*

**Mrs. Bottomley**: The hon. Member for Oldham, West referred to the Dignity in Death Alliance and its concerns. The hon. Gentleman belongs to a party that thinks it can buy off every interest group with a promise to meet all their needs, and solve every problem with an open cheque book, so long as it is not the Labour party's. I can appreciate his view. However, the elderly are most fearful of inflation running at 25 per cent. again, because they will be unable to predict what will happen.

The hon. Gentleman dared to raise the question of exceptional weather payments. I wondered what benefit the elderly had had from exceptional weather payments when the Labour party was in government. Exceptional weather payments have been introduced on a statutory basis only since this Government came to power.

The £25 maternity benefit has become irrelevant in terms of the total costs involved. It has been suggested that a pregnant woman on social security can claim a single payment. A paper has been circulated suggesting that the average single payment claim amounts to £60. To that is added the £25 maternity grant, which would mean that pregnant women will be worse off with the new grant of £80. That is entirely fallacious, because only a fraction of pregnant women on social security know, understand or claim the single payment. I ask the hon. Gentleman whether he will be able to give an estimate in his closing remarks. I understand that fewer than a quarter of pregnant women on social security claim the single payment. Again one sees a gross inequality in the distribution of the benefit.

**Ms. Jo Richardson** (Barking): If the hon. Lady is right in saying that only a fraction of women claim that amount, would it not be better if the Government advertised a take-up campaign? The point is that that amount is available for claiming.

**Mrs. Bottomley**: I endorse efforts by anybody to promote awareness of benefits, but the hon. Lady will have seen the lists of single payments. It is difficult even for someone with two degrees to understand the system. How will somebody who has difficulty making ends meet and managing their family cope? The Government must ensure that realistic, reliable and proper payments can be claimed. When these benefits extend to those on income support or family credit and to other low income groups, they will ensure that greater help is given to the average mother in these categories.

**Ms. Richardson**: Why not increase the benefit?

**Mrs. Bottomley**: I am sure that the hon. Lady will explain in the way that her party always does how, were her party ever to come to power, every benefit would be doubled or trebled. I have already suggested that her party believes that all problems can be solved with a cheque book: whatever anybody offers, offer more. I do not share that political philosophy. A responsible Government must look at the people who are genuinely in need, and target realistic and understandable help at those groups.

Much concern has been expressed about mothers under the age of 16. There were 1,390 such mothers in 1985. They are a worrying group who have a higher infant mortality rate and suffer greater health risks than other groups. It is not true that these mothers would receive no help under the present arrangements — they would simply be deemed to be their parents' children. If a 15-year-old mother of prosperous parents had a child, she would not be entitled to the £80, but if her parents were on family credit or income support she would be so entitled.

There are those who would seriously question whether a 15-year-old—or even a 16 or 17-year-old—should be deemed to be an autonomous individual in terms of social security regulations. That is not the situation in many other European countries, or in America.

**Mr. Corbyn**: Would the hon. Lady return to reality for a moment? Is she aware that, when a woman under 16 becomes pregnant and gives birth, it occasionally results in enormous family tension, and sometimes she is thrown out of the house? Under the Government's proposals, that woman and her baby would go without any assistance whatsoever, unless they could find a friend, relative or neighbour who was prepared to help them. Is that what the hon. Lady wants?

**Mrs. Bottomley**: The hon. Gentleman seems unfamiliar with what happens in social services departments. Having been a social worker for many years, and a magistrate in a juvenile court, I can tell the hon. Gentleman that until the age of 17 years a child is the responsibility, if the parents are not responsible for her, of the social services department. Any pregnant 15-year-old who did not have the support of her parents would be a high priority for any social services department. If the hon. Gentleman has so little confidence in the social service department in his constituency, I am sorry for him. The Surrey social services department would make a high priority of any such case, and the 15-year-old would be given the fullest consideration. To regard her as an independent unit financially is misleading, because that might imply that she was an independent adult, which may not be in the long-term interests of her or her child.

Much was made of the social fund and appeals for the social fund. The Labour party seems to have lost all perspective of how social security payments are conducted. The social security budget has increased by 35 per cent. since 1979; half of that is attributed to the real increase in rates of benefits. The basic mechanism of our social security system is the benefit rate, not the single payment or special allowance. The Opposition want a system of endless single payments and special arrangements. That would lead to a greater sense of injustice and unfairness. The point of the social fund is to not let this ludicrous tail wag the dog.

In view of the way that single payments have escalated —more worryingly, the regional and patch variations in single payments claims—one cannot consider it a fair or just system. We should have a full and independent tribunal system for the basic benefit, which would remain untouched.

I welcome the fact that the Government felt able to show their ever-flexible approach by responding to concern about the social fund, thus enhancing the whole appeals mechanism. The question of appeals must be kept in perspective. In 1984 there were 3 million single payments. Some may think, looking at the total number of benefit claims, that that is a remarkable situation, given the time, human error and delay involved in each claim. Out of the 3 million single claimants there were 37,000 appeals. Of those 37,000 appeals, 8,000 cases were found in favour of the appellant. In other words, in only one quarter of one per cent. of cases was the single payment altered. In view of the time, expense and waste involved, one must look for some element of proportionality, and look to the main need of the social security system, which is reliable and secure with easily available benefits— benefits which are available not only for those on income support, but for those on family credit.

I appreciate the Government putting right this technical deficiency. I welcome the fact that the Government have remedied this fault in the social security system, within its complex, disorganised and inaccessible benefits. They corrected the defect in terms of allowing benefit to be available for those on low incomes, whether they are in or out of it. Above all, they had the courage to put right what has been wrong with maternity and death payments over many years.

6.19 pm

**Mr. Charles Kennedy** (Ross, Cromarty and Skye): I shall follow some of the points made by the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley). In the earlier part of her speech, she gave an excellent analysis of the complexities and anomalies that seem to be inherent in the present social security system. As my right hon. and hon. Friends have said, the aim is to end the artificial distinction between national insurance and tax and to integrate tax and benefits further into a basic benefits system. That will go a long way towards redressing some of the injustices that occur, lessening complexities and increasing take-up of benefit. Sadly, despite the social security reviews, that is not the line that the Government have adopted.

This Social Fund (Maternity and Funeral Expenses) Bill might more fairly and accurately be subtitled the Tip of the Iceberg Bill. I suspect that over the next 18 months —and perhaps beyond, if the Conservative Government exist longer—there will be a stream of orders, legislation and correcting instruments as the injustices, complexities and anomalies of their system become apparent. The Minister stressed that the Bill deals with technical defects but that does not let the Government off the hook for the general shortcomings in the legislation. The very fact that the Government have had to introduce this measure underlines many of the deficiencies which have been pointed out by hon. Members on both sides of the House in different ways and at different times. The SDP/Liberal alliance has outlined in its reasoned amendment its objections to the Bill and why alliance Members will vote against it.

It is important to consider the effects of the Government's proposals in the context of previous benefit levels. Mothers who are in receipt of family income supplement or supplementary benefits are to receive grant of £80, which is low. At the moment at least mothers in the low income category can apply to the DHSS for single payments to help with some of the special costs associated with their children.

It is worth setting in context how much slippage has occurred. In 1983, the average single payment made by the DHSS was £60, making with the £25 maternity grant a total grant of £85. In cash and real terms the Government's proposals in the Bill will give mothers on supplementary benefit substantially less than they were receiving both in cash terms and real terms in 1983. That is wholly unjustified. *[Interruption.]* The Minister shakes his head. I hope that he will deal with that point.

The hon. Member for Surrey, South-West and, I believe, the Minister have pointed out that girls under 16 will not receive any help unless their parents are in receipt of supplementary benefit or family income supplement. Those girls are a particular at-risk group. The Minister has said, either in the House or elsewhere, that he would again look at that category. I hope that he will tell us more about his thinking along these lines.

The Government propose to cover the costs of "reasonable" funeral expenses. The Minister acknowledged that "reasonable" expenses will not be much less than £350 and in many areas could easily be £550. The hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) correctly said in an intervention during the speech of the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) that it might be better to give a higher level of flat rate grant which could be claimed back out of the deceased person's estate. There are good reasons for doing that. First, it would target more help on those most in need and, secondly, in human terms, it would overcome much of the distress caused by bureaucratic and administrative machinery at a time of bereavement and, therefore, a time of pressure for family, relatives and loved ones. The Government are wrong in imposing an essentially means-tested benefit, with all its bad connotations, on those in an especially vulnerable position who are suffering from a particular and peculiar distress.

Many issues on the social fund remain outstanding. Some benefits are given at ministerial discretion. In some cases—for example, cold weather payments—one might want a discretionary entitlement. Whatever flat rate uniform system is adopted by any Government, it will never be able adequately to take account of the vagaries of the weather and people's different needs. There is a strong argument to be made in favour of providing for an element of local discretion in granting severe weather payments. If such discretion had been applied this year, it would have overcome many difficulties.

It is nonsense to cash-limit at social fund level and local level many of the entitlements that people will claim. Logically, cash-limiting flies in the face of what should be the open-ended discretion of a local officer. The Minister did not clarify to the satisfaction of the House exactly how cash-limiting and the mechanisms of the social fund will operate. He said that much will depend on continuing discussions on the level of benefits to be set. That is saying the obvious. Clearly, if benefits are generous, some of the difficulties which have been foreseen may not materialise. One can only go by the Government's record. Their record on maternity benefit, which has fallen in real terms since 1983, does not fill one with confidence about the position of claimants when the levels of various forms of benefit which are crucial to the future operation of the revised

*[Mr. Charles Kennedy]*

social security system are set. As the Minister has made clear, maternity and funeral expenses will remain as grants, and he has commented on the confusion that there has been about that. I accept that on other occasions I have been wrong about some of the details of the legislation. The hon. Member for Birkenhead said that he was wrong on one item, when he questioned the Minister. As the hon. Member for Birkenhead has made clear, in bringing forward the Bill, the Minister is admitting that he, too, has been wrong in the past, as have some of the civil servants who spend their careers working on the social security system. The commonsense implication of that is that if people who are paid to work on the social security system make mistakes, where on earth does that leave the claimant when the new social fund is introduced and the new method of calculating benefit levels is implemented? How on earth are the staff at local level and the claimants to understand it when those involved in the passage of this legislation—including some of us who gave evidence to the social security review—have difficulty with it? What hope has the claimant?

**Mr. Frank Field:** The hon. Gentleman has been very kind to the Government. If they had accepted amendments in Committee to put in the sum of the benefits, we should not have had to consider the Bill today.

**Mr. Kennedy:** I am grateful to the hon. Gentleman and entirely endorse what he has said.

We have watched the writhings of successive social security Ministers as they have fought their way through the legislation, and are beginning to see reality at the end of the tunnel in terms of the implications of this legislation. However, perhaps a wee bit more humility would have been a good thing. I have already described this as tip of the iceberg legislation, and we shall see this performance being repeated at the Dispatch Box for several months, and possibly years ahead.

A further implication of the social fund is that its allocation will be divided into two parts, covering grants and loans. Will the loans be topped up each year or will the Government expect it to be largely self-renewing as claimants repay the loans that they received in the past? The Government's position on that matter is not at all clear. We could reach the stage where a substanital proportion of claimants do not have the means to pay back the money. Given that the social security system is supposed to provide a safety net and that, therefore, somebody in the qualifying category is already at safety net level, how on earth can that person be expected to repay to some other source, in this case the Department of Health and Social Security, moneys which would then leave them below that safety net level? If that is the implication of the system, it reflects very badly on the Government's entire approach.

In conclusion—I shall be brief because of the time constraints—some of the issues that the hon. Member for Oldham, West pointed out were highlighted by the social security commission: for example, the generally unsatisfactory nature of so much that remains outstanding. In his opening speech the Minister discussed the much-needed reform of maternity benefit. It is worth bearing in mind that on 6 April the Maternity Alliance is holding an emergency rally in Westminster Hall. The Maternity Alliance points out:

> "In 1975 it seemed that we had the foundations of a realistic structure of benefits and rights which would give all mothers financial security around childbirth and the opportunity to continue to work without disadvantage. Now the very foundations are being undermined."

The Bill is simply a further confirmation of that rather sad conclusion, and we shall certainly vote against it.

6.34 pm

**Mr. Simon Coombs** (Swindon): I wish to intervene briefly in the debate to speak on behalf of a group of people who, it is proposed, will receive no benefit or help under the new regulations.

About two weeks ago a young couple from Westlea in Swindon came to my constituency surgery and told me of the death of their only child, at the age of 18 months. The cost of the funeral was £180 and they received £9 from the state, which is the benefit that is available to people in respect of the death of a child. Both of those people are working and, therefore, they would not come within the scope of the proposed system. However, the cost of the funeral will hit them extremely hard, at a time of very great tragedy. There can be no greater tragedy than the death of one's only and very young child.

Therefore, I should like to ask the Minister whether, since we are led to believe that the social fund will not be budgetarily restricted in respect of those grants, there is any possibility that such grants or loans could be advanced to those people for whom the need is clear, but the criteria are not met.

I should also like to comment on the "reasonableness" of funeral expenses. The regulations of 1986 that will govern the whole procedure are littered with the word "reasonable" in relation to funeral expenses. However, there is a risk of monopoly pricing coming into this matter, in relation to firms of undertakers, especially in small country towns. After all, it is unlikely that the bereaved will shop around for a competitive tender for a funeral. Therefore, it is reasonable to ask the Government to define what they mean by the word "reasonable" in terms of the pricing and the various aspects of a funeral for which an undertaker is responsible. At the same time, the Government should bear in mind that the maximum will easily become the minimum, as far as charging and pricing are concerned. I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister will have a moment to refer to those two points.

In conclusion, the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher), who is unfortunately no longer in the Chamber, does not accept the maxim that resources should be directed to where they are most needed. When listening to him, one clearly understands that he is in some kind of crazy auction, in which the price or charge that is mentioned will be doubled and trebled to try to win the auction, which is electoral practice. The hon. Gentleman prefers to spend without regard to what the nation can afford and those who have heard him tonight talk about £200 for the death grant can reasonably expect it to be £400 before the next election, and, no doubt, £600 before the one after that, and to go on increasing, not in line with inflation, but with his own despairing hopes of being elected as the Minister responsible for those matters.

I suspect that the shadow of his right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley) is not far away because there has been no bidding-up this evening, but it will come. The consequence of that will be rapid inflation and rising unemployment which will hit hard at those people we are trying to protect today.

6.38 pm

**Mr. Jeremy Corbyn** (Islington, North): I should like to say briefly that the Bill is perhaps a start of many more Bills of this type. In Committee on the Social Security Act 1986, Labour Members consistently pointed out the dangers and the ineffectiveness of the social fund in meeting social problems, and the fact that, because the fund was cash-limited, at the end of the day somebody would lose. I get the feeling that the Government are making a pre-emptive strike by saying, "Yes, we shall fix the amount of the payments for maternity and funeral grants; they will be the first call on the social fund." We need an undertaking from the Minister that the social fund will not be reduced accordingly and that other benefits will not be paid. If that is to be the case, people who are not in receipt of funeral or maternity benefits, but eligible for other benefits or loans will not be eligible for them. Therefore, the problem will be exacerbated for those groups. We require an answer to that question from the Minister.

My second point relates to the maternity grant. It is simply not good enough in 1987 to discuss taking away the right to the maternity grant from mothers with newborn children and to give it instead, in effect, by means-testing, to a limited number of people. In addition, that benefit will be the lowest anywhere in Europe for newborn babies. The social difference between children born in high rise flats in constituencies such as mine to poor parents who are unemployed and likely to be unemployed for a long time and those born in the leafy suburbs will become greater. We are moving towards the meanest form of welfare state that could ever be dreamt of and the ghettoisation of the poor by denying them opportunities from birth.

Hon. Members have spoken about how mothers under the age of 16 will be dealt with under this legislation. The hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) misunderstood my point lamentably: I have complete confidence in the social services department in my constituency. It does a good job and meets enormous difficulties. I wish that the hon. Lady would not support a Government who insist on cuts being made in the social services available for my constituents. Her remarks would make more sense if she were prepared to be honest about that.

The Government should consider direct payment to mothers under the age of 16. The problem will not be solved merely by wishing away or by forcing a young woman into social services care. I do not see why young mothers cannot receive that help instead of being persuaded—that is what social services departments will do—to rely on their parents for support. That is an unsatisfactory way of dealing with a small but serious problem for the 1,390 people who were affected by this last year.

When the funeral grant was introduced in 1948 it was a reasonable proportion of the cost of a funeral at that time. It has not been increased anything like in line with inflation or, indeed, with the exorbitant costs that undertakers charge for funerals. There are ways of getting round that problem, such as through municipal funeral undertakers which I would recommend and support strongly. But we must understand the genuine anxiety of elderly people that they cannot be buried with decency. That is a serious problem and prays on the minds of many elderly people.

The Minister tells us that the number of people who will be covered by these arrangements will increase from 4·5 million to 8 million. Are those 8 million predominantly pensioners or people in receipt of housing benefit? Is housing benefit the bench mark for that decision? If they are in receipt of housing benefit, they are more likely to be young people who, fortunately, are not likely to die in the near future. In that case the Minister has grossly exaggerated the number of people who will benefit from his scheme as a whole.

The Social Security Act 1986 was one of the most aggressive pieces of legislation in the past seven years. It has helped to destroy the foundations of the welfare state, which was envisaged to provide decency and security through birth, life and death for all people, irrespective of their ability to pay. Now we see means testing writ large throughout the welfare state.

The Bill is just the start of a series of measures which will be introduced to placate the genuine, united opposition to the Social Security Act, but that will continue during and after the general election, when I hope that we will remove that particularly odious legislation.

6.43 pm

**Mr. Nicholas Soames** (Crawley): I am grateful for this brief moment to speak in the debate. I am lamentably ignorant about this subject and I take part because I wish to raise an important matter of constituency interest on behalf of a constituent.

I do not understand how the Labour party can treat the legislation with such seeming contempt when it is absolutely right that we should aim to target these benefits on those who need them most. It is critical that we should give to those in need and help the helpless. We should give them real assistance rather than adopt the scatter-gun approach and give many people a little.

I wish to deal with the maternity grant in particular. It is an important part of our family legislation. I agree with Opposition Members that it has been at a lamentable level for some time. I greatly welcome its increase to £80. The family is an institution which is absolutely critical and essential to our social and moral well-being. The Government, to give them their due, have tried to promote the interests of the family, but a baby involves considerable extra expense. It is proposed that the maternity grant should be raised from £25 to £80 and should be for those on supplementary benefit or on family income supplement. That is an excellent aim, as it will help people on low incomes who have exceptional expenses in a more flexible way. It is about those exceptional expenses that I should like to speak.

I understand that no extra money is payable to handicapped and disabled children until they reach the age of two. As my hon. Friend the Minister knows from our correspondence, I have in my constituency a lady called Mrs. Manning who has a seriously handicapped child of six months. Every Monday she must take the child to a hospital outside our local health authority to receive specialised treatment. The round journey covers 42 miles. Five times a day the child must have specialised therapy from Mrs. Manning. It takes over an hour on each occasion to feed the child because it is unable to suck properly. No attendance allowance is available until the child reaches the age of two, and Mrs. Manning cannot rely indefinitely on the goodwill of her neighbours to look after her other child while she takes the baby to hospital.

*[Mr. Nicholas Soames]*

I understand that the Department must make a medical judgment on these matters and I completely accept what my hon. Friend said in his letter to me that the child's needs must be substantially in excess of those normally required by a child of the same age and sex. Given any normal criteria, there must be no shadow of doubt that this child is grievously handicapped and at a serious disadvantage, and that the mother is in considerable distress and finds it difficult to provide for her child.

Would it not be possible, given the flexibility that these measures undoubtedly accord in terms of payment, to consider a special type of payment — I know that my hon. Friend is trying to get away from that in some areas — which could cover children who are defined as seriously handicapped, just as they are now defined as not being sufficiently handicapped to warrant additional help?

6.48 pm

**Ms. Jo Richardson** (Barking): I have considerable sympathy with the case of Mrs. Manning that the hon. Member for Crawley (Mr. Soames) has just raised. Some years ago I had a parallel case and I remember how heart wrenching it was to see the family struggling to care for their child and to cope with the expense. The hon. Gentleman's opening remarks were a little odd, because he said the opposite of what I intend to say. He congratulated the Government on being the party of the family; I say that, if the Government think that they are the party of the family, that is the biggest con that I have ever heard.

Families are essentially about mothers and children who are the most vulnerable people. For mothers pregnancy and preparing to have a child is an expensive business. At some stage it means giving up one's job, rejigging one's life and looking ahead to the needs of the unborn child. Many Conservative Members are fierce defenders of the rights of the unborn child in another context when they oppose the legitimate right of a woman to terminate a pregnancy. However, they are less than supportive of the needs of the unborn child, the pregnant woman, the new baby and its mother when it comes to handing out cash support to ensure that that child has a decent start in life.

We have heard much tonight on both sides of the House, but especially from the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley), about the plight of the under-16-year-olds. We must remember and emphasise that the Social Security Act 1986 has virtually written off under-16-year-olds altogether. It is all very well to say that the Social Security Act regards under-16-year-olds as the property or responsibility of their parents. I take issue with the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West, who implied that under-16-year-olds, whom I would call young women, are not people to whom an independent allowance could be given should they become pregnant.

I am an absolutely devoted fan of EastEnders. Whatever happens, I will not miss an episode. Michelle is the under-16-year-old girl in the series who became pregnant and who has now had the baby and is working to pay off the debts which her unemployed father accumulated to try to help her out. That shows that people of that age are responsible and can take responsibility. If they can take responsibility, they are entitled to maternity grant instead of being denied it as they are at present.

Many hon. Members have said that the present proposals for the £80 grant is less than what, on average, a woman can claim now, when there is a £25 universal grant as of right. I agree with that and campaigned even under a Labour Government for the grant to be increased, but together with the £60-worth of other supplementary benefits.

It is no good saying that not everyone receives the £60-worth of benefits. Some receive it and others should, as the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West acknowledged. Why make the benefits worth £80? Why not make them worth £100 or £125? In its last manifesto, the Labour party proposed £125. That would at least mean that people would not receive less benefits. However, we are also transferring the payment of maternity allowance to employers and restricting payment to women who are in work and who are paying national insurance contributions up to the point at which they can claim. Even more seriously, we are abolishing the right of pregnant women and their babies to free milk and vitamins. That is absolutely terrible. At least poor families used to have the right to free milk and free vitamins. Now, we have virtually said that that right should go.

In recent years there have been two well publicised estimates of the cost of a new-born baby. One was in the *Daily Mirror* in 1984 which stated that the cost of caring for a new baby was about £447. The other was in the magazine *Parents* in 1985 which estimated that £702 was the cost of baby clothes and equipment.

We lag badly behind some other European countries. We hear from Conservative Members how generous the Government are being, but in Belgium the grant for the first child is £395, for the second it is £272 and for the third it is £146. In Denmark, the allowance runs to a maximum of £155 a week. Imagine it! The allowance is financed out of general taxation. In France, the allowance is £70·22 a month. Those benefits are all much more generous than those given in Britain.

I am wearing a badge which was given to me by the Maternity Alliance which, as the hon. Member for Ross, Cromarty and Skye (Mr. Kennedy) said, will be holding a rally in Central Hall on 6 April. The badge says:

> "It is better to have a baby in Finland."

Why Finland? The answer is that in Finland every pregnant woman, as of right, gets a baby basket with all the clothes that she and the new-born baby will need. The baby basket converts into a carry-cot. That is a present given by the Government of Finland to pregnant women. All that happens in Britain — I am informed by my secretary who has just had a baby—is that a pregnant woman is given one disposable nappy the first time that she goes to the hospital. How mean can we get? We should deal much more generously with pregnant women and babies because they are so important to us.

The maternity emergency campaign will attract an awful lot of support from pregnant women and women who have been pregnant or who may become pregnant. I am told by the Greenwich branch of the maternity emergency campaign that there are now more than 71,000 women in that borough under 50 years old, some of whom will be affected by this Bill. Some 4,800 of them are unemployed and of childbearing age.

This is a miserable little Bill. We shall oppose it with all the might that we can muster, and we shall do our best.

when the remaining stages are taken, to amend it. In the meantime, I ask my right hon. and hon. Friends to oppose it.

6.56 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Security (Mr. Nicholas Lyell):** This debate has rightly concentrated not on the technical error in the regulation-making powers but on the policy which was known and clearly stated as long ago as the publication of the White Paper and widely debated during the passage of the main Bill. We have concentrated on particular aspects of that policy and I shall answer the points that have been raised.

The hon. Member for Barking (Ms. Richardson) commended Finland because it hands out a basket with baby clothes. Most people would wish to choose and buy their own baby clothes. However, comparison with Europe is misleading. Five European countries make no maternity grant whatsoever. Furthermore, it is misleading to add the £25 of the present grant to the £60 which a small minority of those on supplementary benefit receive from single payments as only between one quarter and one fifth of new mothers receive that £60. Therefore, it is not a fair comparison.

I have a few minutes to answer the points made in the debate. I am surprised that the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) should be so conservative as to hark back to, and thoroughly misunderstand, the national insurance contributions principle. The principle, as he should appreciate, is not the same as a private insurance system. It is a pay-as-you-go system and it raises £21·5 billion worth of contributions to pay £24 billion worth of benefits. He told the House yet again that if Labour came to power there would be more taxes and more national insurance contributions for less well-targeted benefits.

My answer to the point made by the hon. Member for Islington, North (Mr. Corbyn) on whether the social fund budget would run out is that it will not. Funeral and maternity payments will not be constrained by the budgets. They are entitlements to those who are within the passported groups that we have been discussing. The money to be given to them will not eat into the funds. I do not have time to explain that more fully, but I wish to make it clear that there will be a standing balance.

If the family in the tragic circumstances that my hon. Friend the Member for Swindon (Mr. Coombs) outlined is a low-income family in work, it is capable of falling within the passported groups for the first time. We are widening eligibility from people on supplementary benefit to include people on family income supplement, family credit—I do not know whether the family that my hon. Friend mentioned falls into that category—and housing benefit.

It must be recognised that maternity and funeral payments are, in the present system, long out of date. That problem is being tackled and money is being targeted on people in real need. I commend the Bill to the House.

*Question put* That the Bill be read a Second time:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 265, Noes 169.

**Division No. 82** **7 pm**

AYES

Adley, Robert
Alexander, Richard
Amess, David
Ancram, Michael
Arnold, Tom
Aspinwall, Jack
Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Baldry, Tony
Banks, Robert *(Harrogate)*
Batiste, Spencer
Bendall, Vivian
Benyon, William
Bevan, David Gilroy
Biggs-Davison, Sir John
Blackburn, John
Blaker, Rt Hon Sir Peter
Body, Sir Richard
Bonsor, Sir Nicholas
Boscawen, Hon Robert
Bottomley, Mrs Virginia
Bowden, A. *(Brighton K'to'n)*
Bowden, Gerald *(Dulwich)*
Boyson, Dr Rhodes
Bright, Graham
Brinton, Tim
Brittan, Rt Hon Leon
Brooke, Hon Peter
Brown, M. *(Brigg & Cl'thpes)*
Browne, John
Bruinvels, Peter
Bryan, Sir Paul
Buck, Sir Antony
Budgen, Nick
Bulmer, Esmond
Butterfill, John
Carlisle, Kenneth *(Lincoln)*
Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)*
Carttiss, Michael
Cash, William
Chalker, Mrs Lynda
Channon, Rt Hon Paul
Chapman, Sydney
Chope, Christopher
Churchill, W. S.
Clark, Hon A. *(Plym'th S'n)*
Clark, Dr Michael *(Rochford)*
Clark, Sir W. *(Croydon S)*
Clarke, Rt Hon K. *(Rushcliffe)*
Clegg, Sir Walter
Cockeram, Eric
Coombs, Simon
Cope, John
Corrie, John
Couchman, James
Cranborne, Viscount
Crouch, David
Currie, Mrs Edwina
Dickens, Geoffrey
Dicks, Terry
Dover, Den
du Cann, Rt Hon Sir Edward
Dykes, Hugh
Edwards, Rt Hon N. *(P'broke)*
Evennett, David
Eyre, Sir Reginald
Fairbairn, Nicholas
Farr, Sir John
Favell, Anthony
Fenner, Dame Peggy
Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey
Fletcher, Sir Alexander
Fookes, Miss Janet
Forman, Nigel
Forsyth, Michael *(Stirling)*
Fowler, Rt Hon Norman
Fraser, Peter *(Angus East)*
Gale, Roger
Garel-Jones, Tristan
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Glyn, Dr Alan
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Grant, Sir Anthony
Greenway, Harry
Griffiths, Sir Eldon
Grylls, Michael
Hamilton, Hon A. *(Epsom)*
Hamilton, Neil *(Tatton)*
Hanley, Jeremy
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Henderson, Barry
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Hill, James
Hogg, Hon Douglas *(Gr'th'm)*
Holland, Sir Philip *(Gedling)*
Howarth, Gerald *(Cannock)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Jessel, Toby
Johnson Smith, Sir Geoffrey
Kershaw, Sir Anthony
Key, Robert
King, Rt Hon Tom
Knowles, Michael
Lamont, Rt Hon Norman
Lang, Ian
Latham, Michael
Lawler, Geoffrey
Lawrence, Ivan
Lee, John *(Pendle)*
Lester, Jim
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Lightbown, David
Lilley, Peter
Lloyd, Sir Ian *(Havant)*
Lloyd, Peter *(Fareham)*
Lord, Michael
Luce, Rt Hon Richard
Lyell, Nicholas
McCurley, Mrs Anna
Macfarlane, Neil
MacGregor, Rt Hon John
MacKay, Andrew *(Berkshire)*
MacKay, John *(Argyll & Bute)*
Maclean, David John
McLoughlin, Patrick
McNair-Wilson, M. *(N'bury)*
McNair-Wilson, P. *(New F'st)*
McQuarrie, Albert
Madel, David
Major, John
Malins, Humfrey
Malone, Gerald
Maples, John
Marland, Paul
Marlow, Antony
Marshall, Michael *(Arundel)*
Mates, Michael
Mather, Sir Carol
Mawhinney, Dr Brian
Maxwell-Hyslop, Robin
Mellor, David
Merchant, Piers
Meyer, Sir Anthony
Miller, Hal *(B'grove)*
Mills, Sir Peter *(West Devon)*
Miscampbell, Norman
Mitchell, David *(Hants NW)*
Montgomery, Sir Fergus
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Morrison, Hon P. *(Chester)*
Mudd, David
Murphy, Christopher
Neale, Gerrard
Nelson, Anthony
Neubert, Michael
Newton, Tony
Nicholls, Patrick
Norris, Steven
Onslow, Cranley
Oppenheim, Phillip
Oppenheim, Rt Hon Mrs S.
Osborn, Sir John
Ottaway, Richard

Page, Sir John *(Harrow W)*
Page, Richard *(Herts SW)*
Patten, J. *(Oxf W & Abgdn)*
Pawsey, James
Peacock, Mrs Elizabeth
Percival, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Pollock, Alexander
Portillo, Michael
Powell, William *(Corby)*
Powley, John
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Proctor, K. Harvey
Raffan, Keith
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Ridley, Rt Hon Nicholas
Ridsdale, Sir Julian
Rifkind, Rt Hon Malcolm
Roberts, Wyn *(Conwy)*
Robinson, Mark *(N'port W)*
Roe, Mrs Marion
Rossi, Sir Hugh
Rowe, Andrew
Rumbold, Mrs Angela
Ryder, Richard
Sackville, Hon Thomas
Sainsbury, Hon Timothy
Sayeed, Jonathan
Scott, Nicholas
Shaw, Giles *(Pudsey)*
Shaw, Sir Michael *(Scarb')*
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shersby, Michael
Silvester, Fred
Sims, Roger
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Smith, Tim *(Beaconsfield)*
Soames, Hon Nicholas
Speed, Keith
Speller, Tony
Spencer, Derek
Spicer, Jim *(Dorset W)*
Spicer, Michael *(S Worcs)*
Squire, Robin
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stanley, Rt Hon John
Steen, Anthony
Stern, Michael

Stevens, Lewis *(Nuneaton)*
Stewart, Andrew *(Sherwood)*
Stewart, Ian *(Hertf'dshire N)*
Stokes, John
Stradling Thomas, Sir John
Sumberg, David
Tapsell, Sir Peter
Taylor, John *(Solihull)*
Taylor, Teddy *(S'end E)*
Temple-Morris, Peter
Terlezki, Stefan
Thomas, Rt Hon Peter
Thompson, Donald *(Calder V)*
Thompson, Patrick *(N'ich N)*
Thornton, Malcolm
Thurnham, Peter
Townend, John *(Bridlington)*
Tracey, Richard
Trippier, David
Trotter, Neville
Twinn, Dr Ian
van Straubenzee, Sir W.
Vaughan, Sir Gerard
Viggers, Peter
Waddington, Rt Hon David
Walden, George
Walker, Bill *(T'side N)*
Wall, Sir Patrick
Waller, Gary
Walters, Dennis
Ward, John
Wardle, C. *(Bexhill)*
Warren, Kenneth
Watson, John
Watts, John
Wells, Sir John *(Maidstone)*
Wheeler, John
Wiggin, Jerry
Wilkinson, John
Winterton, Mrs Ann
Winterton, Nicholas
Wolfson, Mark
Woodcock, Michael
Yeo, Tim
Young, Sir George *(Acton)*
Younger, Rt Hon George

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Tony Durant and
Mr. Francis Maude.

## NOES

Abse, Leo
Adams, Allen *(Paisley N)*
Alton, David
Anderson, Donald
Archer, Rt Hon Peter
Ashley, Rt Hon Jack
Ashton, Joe
Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Bagier, Gordon A. T.
Banks, Tony *(Newham NW)*
Bell, Stuart
Benn, Rt Hon Tony
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Bermingham, Gerald
Bidwell, Sydney
Blair, Anthony
Boothroyd, Miss Betty
Boyes, Roland
Bray, Dr Jeremy
Brown, N. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne E)*
Brown, R. *(N'c'tle-u-Tyne N)*

Brown, Ron *(E'burgh, Leith)*
Bruce, Malcolm
Buchan, Norman
Caborn, Richard
Callaghan, Rt Hon J.
Callaghan, Jim *(Heyw'd & M)*
Campbell, Ian
Canavan, Dennis
Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)*
Clark, Dr David *(S Shields)*
Clarke, Thomas
Clay, Robert
Clelland, David Gordon
Clwyd, Mrs Ann
Cocks, Rt Hon M. *(Bristol S)*
Cohen, Harry
Coleman, Donald
Conlan, Bernard
Cook, Frank *(Stockton North)*
Corbett, Robin
Corbyn, Jeremy

Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)*
Craigen, J. M.
Crowther, Stan
Cunliffe, Lawrence
Dalyell, Tam
Davies, Rt Hon Denzil *(L'lli)*
Davies, Ronald *(Caerphilly)*
Davis, Terry *(B'ham, H'ge H'l)*
Deakins, Eric
Dixon, Donald
Dormand, Jack
Douglas, Dick
Dubs, Alfred
Duffy, A. E. P.
Eastham, Ken
Evans, John *(St. Helens N)*
Fatchett, Derek
Field, Frank *(Birkenhead)*
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Fisher, Mark
Flannery, Martin
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Forrester, John
Foster, Derek
Fraser, J. *(Norwood)*
Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald
George, Bruce
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Godman, Dr Norman
Golding, Mrs Llin
Hamilton, W. W. *(Fife Central)*
Hardy, Peter
Harrison, Rt Hon Walter
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Healey, Rt Hon Denis
Heffer, Eric S.
Hogg, N. *(C'nauld & Kilsyth)*
Holland, Stuart *(Vauxhall)*
Home Robertson, John
Howarth, George *(Knowsley, N)*
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(S'heath)*
Howells, Geraint
Hoyle, Douglas
Hughes, Robert *(Aberdeen N)*
Hughes, Roy *(Newport East)*
Hughes, Sean *(Knowsley S)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
John, Brynmor
Kennedy, Charles
Kirkwood, Archy
Lamond, James
Leadbitter, Ted
Leighton, Ronald
Litherland, Robert
Lloyd, Tony *(Stretford)*
Lofthouse, Geoffrey
Loyden, Edward
McCartney, Hugh
McDonald, Dr Oonagh
McKay, Allen *(Penistone)*
MacKenzie, Rt Hon Gregor
Maclennan, Robert
McNamara, Kevin
McTaggart, Robert

Marek, Dr John
Marshall, David *(Shettleston)*
Martin, Michael
Mason, Rt Hon Roy
Maxton, John
Maynard, Miss Joan
Meacher, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Michie, William
Millan, Rt Hon Bruce
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, Rt Hon A. *(W'shawe)*
Morris, Rt Hon J. *(Aberavon)*
Nellist, David
Oakes, Rt Hon Gordon
O'Brien, William
O'Neill, Martin
Orme, Rt Hon Stanley
Park, George
Parry, Robert
Patchett, Terry
Pavitt, Laurie
Pendry, Tom
Pike, Peter
Powell, Raymond *(Ogmore)*
Prescott, John
Radice, Giles
Randall, Stuart
Raynsford, Nick
Redmond, Martin
Rees, Rt Hon M. *(Leeds S)*
Richardson, Ms Jo
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Robinson, G. *(Coventry NW)*
Rooker, J. W.
Ross, Ernest *(Dundee W)*
Ross, Stephen *(Isle of Wight)*
Sheldon, Rt Hon R.
Shore, Rt Hon Peter
Short, Ms Clare *(Ladywood)*
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silkin, Rt Hon J.
Skinner, Dennis
Smith, C.*(Isl'ton S & F'bury)*
Soley, Clive
Spearing, Nigel
Steel, Rt Hon David
Stott, Roger
Straw, Jack
Thomas, Dafydd *(Merioneth)*
Thompson, J. *(Wansbeck)*
Tinn, James
Wallace, James
Wardell, Gareth *(Gower)*
Wareing, Robert
Weetch, Ken
Welsh, Michael
White, James
Wigley, Dafydd
Williams, Rt Hon A.
Winnick, David

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Frank Haynes and
Mr. John McWilliam.

*Question accordingly agreed to.*

*Bill read a Second time.*

Bill committed to a Committee of the whole House.—*[Mr. Ryder.]*

*Committee tomorrow.*

## British Railways (Stansted) Bill *(By Order)*

*Order for Third Reading read.*

7.12 pm

**Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson** (New Forest): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read the Third time.

The Bill has now completed most of its stages in the House of Commons and it has had a very long and interrupted career. The purposes of the Bill are very simple. It is intended to anticipate the opening of the new airport at Stansted and to provide passengers with a rail link that will meet their requirements.

Much of the discussion about the Bill during its stages on the Floor of the House has revolved around the relationship between what is happening at Stansted and what is happening at Manchester.

**Mr. Alfred Morris** (Manchester, Wythenshawe): I hesitate to interrupt a persuasive speech. As the hon. Member for New Forest (Mr. McNair-Wilson) appreciates, hon. Members must take the opportunities available to them to argue the interests of their communities. The hon. Gentleman knows why I and my hon. Friends are here in this debate. I hope he will agree that our concern for equality of treatment is wholly legitimate and that he will put that point to the Minister. I hope equally that the Minister will take the point when he replies.

**Mr. McNair-Wilson:** I am sure that my hon. Friend the Minister heard the right hon. Gentleman's comments. I assure the right hon. Gentleman that all his representations will be heard, as always, with great care. I also remind the right hon. Gentleman that, in 1984, I moved the Second Reading of the Bill to provide precisely the same powers for Manchester as are being sought now for Stansted. Hon. Members will know that these Bills do not make clear any intention to build anything. In such Bills, the promoter seeks to have powers available should such a building be required. I am afraid that I cannot satisfy the right hon. Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) of my competence to answer on behalf of the British Railways Board or the Government. Perhaps my hon. Friend the Minister will have something to say about that later. Manchester has these powers and has had them for more than two years.

Another of the problems that surrounds the Bill is the fact that, while Stansted is still in the planning stage, some people are concerned about its effect on other commuter rail links. I want to remind the House about the powers that we are seeking in the Bill.

Clause 5 deals with Work No. 1. That is the construction of a new railway of about 6,000m in length which will constitute a spur from the London-Cambridge railway. Work No. 2 is a railway of some 770 m in length which will comprise a connection bwtween Work No. 1 and the London-Cambridge line. The other work set out in clause 5 is completely dependent upon those two major works.

I hope that I can assure hon. Members that when the building is completed and the spur line is added to the main line to the airport, far from making services worse, the work should substantially improve them.

I want to consider the point raised by the right hon. Member for Wythenshawe. On Second Reading, I said that while it was proper for hon. Members to raise constituency concerns in any debate in connection with British Rail Bills—and you have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, always allowed these debates to run very wide because all British Rail matters may be discussed—it would be a matter of counting apples with pears if we were to delay the Stansted rail link simply because final decisions had not been taken about Manchester. It will not be in anyone's interests to block the British Railways (Stansted) Bill and to prevent its passage. That would only mean that British Rail will be unable to meet its obligations when the airport is finally approved. Indeed, that may endanger the jobs of those involved in the construction.

I hope that the House will grant the Bill a Third Reading, recognising, as I said at the beginning, that it has been thoroughly scrutinised. There are obviously further stages in which it will be further considered, but I hope tonight that the House will feel that the Bill can move to its next stage and that it will be granted a Third Reading.

7.18 pm

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** (Stretford): I will be brief. The hon. Member for New Forest (Mr. McNair-Wilson) has made the point about Stansted. The Opposition have always been anxious that the Stansted project should come to fruition because the project will create jobs during the construction of the link as well as on the railways once the link is completed.

The House will understand why my hon. Friends and I have believed that it was worthwhile and necessary to delay the progress of this Bill in view of the connection that we drew between the Stansted rail link and the Manchester rail link. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Wythenshawe (Mr. Morris) has said, we feel that there has not always been comparable treatment between those two rail links. That debate has gone on for some time and is well understood.

If the Minister can assure the House that within the Department of Transport the progress of the proposals put forward by the authorities in Manchester for the Manchester link will be dealt with us as speedily and efficiency as was, and will be the case, for Stansted, my hon. Friends and I will be happy to support the Third Reading of the Bill tonight.

7.19 pm

**Mr. Alan Haselhurst** (Saffron Walden): The Bill should receive its Third Reading so that this matter can progress. I know of no sizeable body of opinion in my constituency that is concerned about the precise mechanics of the proposed new spur line. I imagine that those matters have been dealt with under the scrutiny to which my hon. Friend the Member for New Forest (Mr. McNair-Wilson) referred. There is an overall benefit to be gained by Stansted airport, in its expanded form, being equipped with an efficient rail link, as this will have benefits in helping to alleviate pressure on roads and on possible urbanisation of the area.

However, I have one point to make. There is a fear, which has been underlined by recent experience on the railways, that it is difficult to be confident that the demand on commuter services, plus the demand for airport services, can be accommodated safely and adequately to provide a high standard all round. British Rail has assured me that there will not be a practical problem in that respect. Should pressures build up over the next four years

*[Mr. Alan Haselhurst]*

that would throw doubt on that assumption, I hope that my hon. Friend the Minister would be sympathetic to any request from British Rail for further alleviation of the situation.

My remaining concern is that, in providing a good service to the airport, nothing should happen to undermine the service to my constituents who daily come to the capital, regardless of the airport, and whose quality of service has been questionable over many years. That apart, I welcome the Third Reading.

7.21 pm

**The Minister of State, Department of Transport (Mr. David Mitchell):** It may be helpful if I intervene to give the House the Government's view of the Bill. The Government have considered the contents of the Bill and have no objection in principle to the powers sought by the British Railways Board. My Department has no outstanding points on the Bill.

As I have said before, the White Paper on airports made it clear that we would be pleased to approve a rail link to Stansted airport if there was a commercial case for it. British Rail has proved that there is, and we have given approval. British Rail now needs powers to build the link. Work will need to begin by the end of the year, so that it will be ready by 1991, when the new terminal at Stansted is due to come into operation.

The Government's position on Manchester is clear. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I are anxious to meet the other interested parties as soon as they have worked out proposals for our consideration. Before that, there is little point in a meeting. Naturally, I cannot give a prior commitment to the link until we have had an opportunity to study the case supported by a grant application.

The hon. Member for Stretford (Mr. Lloyd), on behalf not only of himself but of other hon. Members with like interests in the Manchester area, asked me whether the proposals, when received by the Department, would be dealt with expeditiously. I can give him that assurance, and it is backed up by the fact that I am told that I have the record for the fastest yet handling of British Rail investment applications through the Department. While I cannot undertake exactly how long this will take, I can give him the assurance that the matter will be dealt with as expeditiously as I reasonably and possibly can.

My hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden (Mr. Haselhurst) asked about services to his constituents. I have been to Essex today to look at the Chelmsford station and some of the connecting stations. We all have much sympathy both with the commuters held up by the problems with the fall of overhead cables, which British Rail is handling today, and with British Rail staff who are doing their best, working much of the night to deal with the problem.

I assure my hon. Friend that, should British Rail find that there are capacity problems and come to us with alternative proposals, we shall consider them carefully. British Rail has already assessed that there may be the possibility of switching the London terminus for Stansted to a London station other than Liverpool street, should the build up of traffic be such as to bring about the problem that my hon. Friend fears. I hope that on that basis he may feel some reassurance.

It is clear that, if the Bill did not proceed, that would have a substantial effect on the rate of traffic in my hon. Friend's constituency, which he would not find attractive. I hope that all I have been able to say has reassured both my hon. Friend the Member for Saffron Walden and those hon. Members representing Manchester and that they will feel able to take the Government's view and not object to the proceeding of the Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read the Third time, and passed.*

## Education (Northern Ireland)

7.25 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Dr. Brian Mawhinney):** I beg to move,

That the draft Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 14th January, be approved.

The main purpose of the draft order is to implement the Government's decision to transfer responsibility for the education of mentally handicapped children in Northern Ireland from the Department of Health and Social Services to the Department of Education. A consultative document was widely distributed to statutory and voluntary bodies in both the health and personal social services and education sectors, to trade unions, political parties, parents' groups and individuals who had shown an interest in the subject. The document was also referred to the Northern Ireland Assembly for consideration.

Having given careful consideration to the responses, the Government agreed with the substantial body of opinion, including that of the Assembly, that mentally handicapped children should be given the statutory right to education. The Government concluded that the most appropriate way of meeting the needs of these children was to bring them into the statutory education system. It is intended that the transfer of the responsibility will take effect from 1 April this year.

The most immediate and significant change will be that from that date mentally handicapped children will no longer be determined to be unsuitable for education in schools. Instead, they will be treated as pupils with special educational needs and will be entitled to receive full-time education. This order will bring the law on special education in Northern Ireland into line with the rest of the United Kingdom. The provision of health and social services for the mentally handicapped will remain the responsibility of the DHSS and the health and social services boards.

I shall now deal with the provision of the draft order concerning the transfer of responsibility. Article 3 provides for the repeal of those parts of the Education and Library (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, the principal order, which requires the education and library boards to determine mentally handicapped children as unsuitable for education at school, and for the repeal of the remaining parts of the Mental Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1961, under which care and supervision is presently provided for such children. It also makes consequential amendments to article 133(2) of the 1980 order, which excludes mentally handicapped children from the powers and duties imposed by that order.

Schedule 1 contains transitional provisions relating to the children and the transfer of staff and property. Paragraph 2 provides that children who hitherto have been determined as unsuitable for education at school will be regarded as having special educational needs which require education and library boards to determine the special educational provisions that should be made for them. It was originally proposed that boards should be allowed a period of 12 months from the date of the transfer to prepare the formal record of special educational provisions to be made to meet the needs of each of these children. However, during the consultation period on the draft order, representations were received that this would not allow sufficient time for boards to carry out this task for all the children concerned. The Government accept that the transfer of responsibility will mean an increased workload for the special education departments of boards, so I have decided to respond to the representations by increasing the period from 12 months to two years.

Paragraph 3 of the schedule provides for the transfer of staff from the employment of health and social services boards to the employment of education and library boards. The staff involved are those employed wholly or mainly with mentally handicapped children and includes teachers, child care and ancillary staff. It is the Government's intention that they shall be transferred on terms and conditions of employment not less favourable than those enjoyed prior to the transfer and, in the unlikely event that someone should be worse off after the transfer, that compensation shall be paid. I am sure that right hon. and hon. Members will agree that where Government impose such a change on staff they should be adequately protected.

The transfer of property, including school buildings and equipment, to the ownership of education and library boards is provided for in paragraph 4. Not all of the school buildings will be transferring permanently because some are on hospital sites and others are not considered suitable for long-term use as schools. In those cases, the premises will continue to be used as a school until alternative accommodation is provided by education and library boards.

Paragraph 5 of the schedule will enable the existing special care schools to be recognised as controlled special schools with effect from 1 April, without education and library boards having to follow all the procedures required for school development proposals by article 14 of the principal order.

The Government have always recognised that the education service would require additional finance to take on that responsibility. I have already made some £1·7 million available to the education and library boards in the current financial year. That has enabled them to place an order for 50 new purpose-built buses, to provide temporary classrooms, to do other minor works immediately at some schools to facilitate the separation of children and adults and to reduce class size and it has enabled them to place orders for additional equipment and teaching resources to enhance the provisions available to the schools.

For 1987-88, provision has been made for additional recurrent funds of almost £3 million. That will enable the schools to employ additional teaching and other staff and for home tuition to be provided for children who are unable to attend school. It has also enabled the education and library boards to employ additional administrative and professional staff and generally to enhance the provisions made for the children.

Provision has also been made for a new capital programme that will allow the education and library boards to make a start on replacing or improving the existing buildings. A total of £2 million has been provided for 1987-88.

The remaining provisions of the order make a number of miscellaneous changes to the 1986 order which do not arise from the transfer of responsibility for mentally handicapped children but which are also important. Article 4 is concerned with proposals for the establishment, amalgamation or closure of schools and places a

*[Dr. Brian Mawhinney]*

duty on the education and library boards or other body making the proposals to implement it if it has been approved by my Department. The approved proposal can be modified subsequently by my Department in response to a request by the board or other body.

Article 5 gives my Department specific power to make regulations regarding the operation of schools and sets out the provisions that may be included in such regulations.

Article 6 gives my Department powers to prescribe in regulations requirements which call for certain arrangements regarding the pupils for whom provision is to be made in special schools to be subject to my Department's approval. There is similar provision in the Education Act 1981.

The purpose of article 7 is to require that school registers should contain information about all the pupils in a school, not just those of compulsory school age as at present.

Article 8 enables my Department to make regulations concerning the eligibility of persons to be employed as teachers. It also re-enacts the existing provision relating to the making of regulations about the terms and conditions of the employment of teachers.

Article 9 gives my Department similar powers in regard to making regulations about the employment of non-teaching staff.

Article 10 removes the existing requirement that education and library boards should give caretakers and groundsmen six month's notice to recover possession of their residences on termination of their employment.

Article 11 enables an education and library board to permit other persons to use the board's spare computer capacity on agreed terms. That provision follows similar provision to district councils in Northern Ireland under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

Article 12 removes the requirement on my Department to produce an annual report. My Department will, of course, continue to produce occasional reports on issues of particular interest and to publish its regular statistical bulletins.

The purpose of Article 13 is to remove the requirement that my Department should make regulations governing its powers to pay grants to certain voluntary schools in respect of the provision of milk, meals and other refreshments. The grants will continue to be paid using the existing powers relating to the payment of grant to voluntary schools rather than the present regulations.

Article 14 replaces

"managers of a grant-aided school"

with, "Boards of Governors" in the provision in the principal order relating to the production of documents in evidence in legal proceedings.

Article 15 will enable an education and library board to seek a direction from the Department where the naming of a school selected by a parent in a school attendance order would be in conflict with the board's policy.

Article 16 and schedule 2 repeal provisions that are spent or have become unnecessary with the passage of time or because of other provisons in the order.

Articles 4 to 9 and 12 are in line with corresponding education law in Britain.

If hon. Members wish to raise any points, I shall do my best to reply at the end of the debate, subject to the leave of the House.

The order is concerned with a major step forward in the provision of education for a small but very important group of our children, and I commend it to the House.

7.36 pm

**Mr. J. Enoch Powell** (South Down): I intervene in the debate principally for one reason, namely, the acute anxiety that is evidently still felt in Northern Ireland among members of the staff who will be transferred under these arrangements to the employment of the education and library boards. In that light, no doubt like other hon. Members, I have studied carefully the provisions of schedule 1 and I hope that it will be possible before the end of the debate for the Minister to give a form of assurance that will go far to removing the anxieties currently felt by those affected.

The provisions for the transfer of staff in paragraph 3 of the schedule are of two sorts. First, there is the scheme governing the transfer and then there are the regulations governing the compensation, where compensation falls to be paid. Over the regulations there will be some, although limited, future control because, of course, the reference in paragraph 9 to "negative resolution", as the aficionados of this type of legislation are well aware, does not mean what it says. Nevertheless, there is a convention whereby the Government, upon the request of the Opposition, provide time for the consideration of regulations that would otherwise be subject to what we call a prayer. Therefore, we are not entirely saying goodbye to the provisions that will be made for compensation. However, unless I am mistaken, there is no such future look that we are going to get at the provisions governed by the making of a scheme. That is why it is appropriate that the Minister should be able, on this occasion, before we take leave of the order, to give some assurances.

Paragraph 3 (3) states:

> "as long as a transferred officer is engaged in duties reasonably comparable to those in which he was engaged immediately before 1st April 1987, the scale of his . . . remuneration; and the other terms and conditions of his employment"

must be

> "taken as a whole not less favourable".

That seems to be all right so far as it goes. However, many of those employed under the health boards in the education — it is education — of the mentally handicapped have been looking forward to a career in that service and they have been trained to a standard fully equal to that of their colleagues in the ordinary education service though for a specialised purpose. It is far from clear from what has been said by the Minister so far or from a study of the terms of the schedule that those persons may not find themselves at a disadvantage in future competitive appointments compared with those who have come up through the odinary channels of the education service.

The Minister ought to be prepared to give to the House this evening some reassurance that the career prospects — I apologise if I am not making the proposition in precisely and exactly the correct terms, but that is a general term and I hope it is well understood — of those who will be transferred will not be less favourable than they had reason to expect under their former conditions of employment. That is a request which I hope the Minister will be able to discharge because I have satisfied myself that the anxiety which is felt is widespread and very real and is something with which we ought to deal.

That having been said, I will not pass up the opportunity of expressing my anxiety about the act of policy which, through this order, is being transferred or imitated or duplicated in Northern Ireland from Great Britain.

It was an attractive, indeed a noble, proposition that the education of the mentally handicapped was education and a real part of education and should be so regarded, and that those who suffered from mental handicap should be educated within the same educational service as their more fortunate contemporaries. That was a very natural and attractive proposition, and legislation has been framed now on both sides of the Irish sea to give effect to it. As so often, it is our experience in Northern Ireland, since we come late to ditto-ing legislation on the mainland, that when people are already beginning to have doubts as to the soundness of what has happened on the mainland, we in Northern Ireland are still in the full flush of enthusiasm. The classic example of that was that we caught up with the bright new idea of new towns just when new towns were going out of fashion in Great Britain, with disastrous consequences in a place called Craigavon; but I will not enter into that.

**Mr. John Hume** (Foyle): We told them so in advance.

**Mr. Powell:** Yes, they were told so. Very often these mistakes are made by Governments which have been told so; but the power of fashion in its heyday is almost irresistible. There is an element of fashion in play in what we are doing here. We must not be surprised if in years to come those parents and others who have welcomed the prospect of mentally handicapped children having their special educational needs dealt with within the education service experience a degree of disappointment.

There are two problems. The first is that those with special educational needs—and I noted carefully what the Minister said about the need for additional resources —are going to be competing for attention with their more fortunate contemporaries. This is in the nature of things, even in large centres of population, and will be especially so in the rural areas where, of necessity, educational establishments are fairly small. We are placing those with special educational needs in a setting in which they will be competing for attention and for resources with those who do not have special educational needs. It is far from certain that in that competition they will come off best or gain the valuation of their special needs that they might have looked forward to under the old regime.

The second problem is that mental handicap brings with it very special requirements on the part of those who teach and train and calls for special endowments on the part of the persons who are selected—it is usually self-selected—for that task. I remember from 25 years ago as Minister of Health, when the Ministry of Health was responsible here in England and Wales, how immensely struck I was by the capabilities, hopefulness and—the word is unavoidable—dedication of those in the Health Service who were dealing with the mentally handicapped.

One fears that with the merging of the provision for those special needs into the general education service something of that special enthusiasm and dedication will inevitably be lost. This is not a moment perhaps for these forebodings to cloud our minds but I could not leave the opportunity without expressing them. I know that I am not alone in entertaining them, amongst those who have dedicated themselves especially to interest in the mentally handicapped. In saying that I have in mind especially my right hon. Friend the Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Molyneaux) who, as is generally known in Northern Ireland, long before he became a politician and a Member of Parliament was closely involved in the care of the mentally handicapped in his own area.

There are two parts to this order which have no necessary connection with one another. I have been dealing with that part which concerns the mentally handicapped; but the greater part of the order, in terms of volume if not necessarily of importance, is concerned with certain amendments to the principal legislation, the order of 1986. Over these the Minister glided with a well-tuned brief, indicating the contents of each of the paragraphs and articles as he touched upon them. One or two of them deserve to be looked at more carefully.

In doing so one is constantly reminded — and I apologise if I return to a theme which is perhaps not entirely unfamiliar to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since you seem to be the one unchanging feature in the scene of Northern Ireland legislation by Order in Council—that if these amendments were being made by a Bill, as they would be in Great Britain, we would be attending to what is happening in a very different way and very much more specifically and jealously than we are able to do in the ambit of this debate on the order.

I was struck by article 5, the regulations which can be made "As to carrying on of grant-aided schools". My eye fell upon paragraph 17A(2)*(d)* dealing with regulations

> "with respect to the curriculum and time-table to be followed in such schools";

and

> "enabling the Department to prohibit the use in such schools of any book or other teaching material of which the Department does not approve"

It may be that coming events are casting their shadow before, but there are those of us who are disturbed at what we hear as to the intention in England and Wales that the Secretary of State for Education and a Government Department shall lay down in precise detail the contents of the curriculum and the timetable of the schools— what has commonly, though not necessarily accurately, come to be regarded as the French method.

If that is what lies behind these two subparagraphs of 17A(2), then I have to say that I fear the worst from this new development in education policy. I really do fear the consequences of an education department taking upon itself by regulation the laying down of the curriculum and the timetable for all the schools under its control. While I can see the grounds on which a Department might want to prohibit the use in schools of a particular book— indeed I have seen books of which one could wish to see the use prohibited — I am far from sure that a prohibition issuing from a central Department is the right way to achieve that desirable end. I note with dismay— and perhaps some of these words will reach the Province to which this order applies — that provision is being made under this article for regulations which will enable the Department to lay down curriculum and timetable and to prohibit books or teaching material in the grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland. I hope the Minister will be able to say something about that.

*[Mr. Powell]*

I pass over article 8

> "Regulations as to employment of teachers"

with one observation only because I think that there is either an error or a misprint. It appears in new article 70(2)*(e)*

> "prohibiting or restricting the employment or further employment of teachers on medical grounds, in cases of misconduct and on educational grounds."

My submission—perhaps it is not too late for a verbal correction, if that is all that is necessary—is that the word "and" in the last phrase should be "or". Otherwise it will only be possible to prohibit or restrict the employment of teachers if medical grounds, misconduct and educational grounds are all available in the same case. No doubt the Minister will have that looked at.

I come to something rather more disturbing in article 10. There has not yet been an opportunity for a representative of Her Majesty's Opposition to intervene in the debate, but I cannot think that they will have acquiesced with equanimity in the removal of the safeguard of a six months' notice-to-quit from caretakers, groundsmen and so on, while retaining that protection for teachers—an instance of class discrimination which I should not have thought would attract the support of the occupants of the Opposition Front Bench. There are no Opposition occupants of any other Benches at the moment.

It may be awkward to have a caretaker or a groundsman working out the six months' notice if one wants to get hold of the premises in which he is residing, but I cannot see that the same difficulty does not largely apply to a teacher who is occupying a similar residence. Nor does it seem to me that it will be easier for a groundsman or a caretaker to find other accommodation than it would be for a teacher to find other accommodation. Is the introduction of that discrimination really justified? And is it worth withdrawing this protection from caretakers, groundsmen and so on for the convenience of securing a summary eviction?

I say that with the more warmth because I am at the moment concerned with the fate of a lady who was the warden of a youth hostel in my constituency who, for health reasons, had to relinquish that post and has still not been satisfactorily rehoused after a lapse of many months. We are talking about real personal problems as we slide over the amending articles of the order. So to that article, too, I hope that the Minister will give attention when he replies.

7.52 pm

**Mr. John Hume** (Foyle): I welcome the order because it is, in the words of the Minister, a major step forward, even though it is long overdue. When I first entered public life in Northern Ireland in the old Stormont Parliament in 1969 one of the first issues that I raised was the resentment felt that the mentally handicapped were being educated not within the education system but within the Health Service, which placed upon them a sort of official stigma that they were uneducable. I am glad that, 18 years later, it has finally been accepted that they should be entitled to be educated in exactly the same system as all other children and therefore be subject to the same advantages, such as books and transport, which they have been denied up to now.

In addition, I rise to echo what the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) said about the anxiety that exists among the staff of the special care service in Northern Ireland that some of them may lose out because of the change. I have spoken privately to the Minister about this and I hope that he will clarify the order to ensure that no members of the special care service should lose from the changeover. I am referring specifically to those who were trained in Muckamore. It has been suggested that those who were would in some way lose recognition of years of service because of the changeover. That would be a complete injustice. If that is so, it must be an oversight, not deliberate, and I hope that the Minister will be able to clarify that.

That is all that I have to say on the subject, other than to reiterate my welcome for the order, which I believe will receive a widespread welcome within Northern Ireland.

7.54 pm

**Mr. David Alton** (Liverpool, Mossley Hill): I want to echo some of the remarks that have already been made tonight. Not long after the hon. Member for Foyle (Mr. Hume) was fighting his battle in Stormont, I found myself as a member of the Liverpool city council's education committee serving on the sub-committee which dealt with children with special needs. During the years that I served on that sub-committee I saw the need to integrate the education service with the special provision for those with handicaps and special needs. Indeed, when I went on to teach for six years, I worked with children with handicaps and maladjustments.

The analogy made by the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) between the abominations of new towns and overspill areas and the imposition of what were purely fashionable ideas was a fair point to make, but I suspect that rather more thought has gone into this. The Education Act 1981 has proved to be successful in Great Britain, and some of the misgivings which he has suggested tonight are probably without foundation. However, I support what he said about the concern that the order gives about transitional arrangements. It would be strange if there were not such concerns at a time when change is taking place.

I also strongly support what the right hon. Gentleman said about the imposition of a curriculum by any centralised authority, whether it be by Government or by local education authorities. There is much to be said for schools having a fair amount of control over what goes on in their establishments. That is why it is important that the governing bodies of schools and parents should be better involved and the 1985 legislation went some way to ensuring that in Great Britain.

Will the Minister answer some specific questions? To what extent is the order merely a book transition, moving responsibility from the health authorities to the education authorities? How many more children will be integrated into normal state schools rather than being educated in separate institutions? Will the Minister give the House some figures tonight for the number of children currently in special education in Northern Ireland? Does he think that the £3 million which is being made available will be enough, and will the time between now and 1 April be sufficient for the order to be implemented successfully?

Article 5 has already been referred to. According to the noble Lord Lyell, who spoke for the Government in the other place, those prohibition powers have never been invoked in the past 10 years. If that is the case, should not the Government be considering whether they might be removed altogether?

Finally, I want simply to make an observation. Integration is a word which comes up when talking about children with special needs. It is significant that handicapped and maladjusted children, Catholic and Protestant, are usually educated together. Surely we can learn something from that. If special education can be integrated, surely there is much to be said for moving away from the old sectarian system of education in Northern Ireland. If normal schools can learn from the education of people with special needs, perhaps the sectarian barriers can be broken down.

7.59 pm

**Mr. Stuart Bell** (Middlesbrough): I welcome to our debates on Northern Ireland the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton). I think that it is the first time that he has addressed the House as the spokesman for the alliance on Northern Ireland matters. He will find that we have graceful debates at a high level, and that those who participate in them, even though their numbers might be few, have a great deal of experience. I congratulate the Minister on the felicitous way in which he presented the order.

We welcome the order. As the Minister said, it removes the duty of an education and library board to determine whether children are unsuitable for education at school. The second thrust of the order will remove the powers of a health and social services board to provide supervision and training for children requiring special care. The upshot of this is that the responsibility for the education of mentally handicapped children in Northern Ireland is removed from the Department of Health and Social Security to the Department of Education. That means that mentally handicapped children will no longer be considered unsuitable for school and that the law on special education in Northern Ireland will be brought into line with that in the rest of the United Kingdom.

The hon. Member for Mossley Hill spoke about integration. We wholeheartedly support the principles of integration. I noted with interest the points made by the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell). He said that there were now doubts on the mainland about the fact that in the past there had been imitation and duplication of legislation that affected Northern Ireland after it had affected the mainland. It has taken a long time to establish the principles of integration in education on the mainland. Up to now the resources and the political will to put the principles effectively into practice have not existed. I may come back to that point later.

All the evidence available to my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice) in his capacity as shadow Secretary of State for Education suggests that the aims of education for children and young people with disabilities and with significant difficulties are the same as those for all children and young people. In a recent speech to the annual conference of the National Bureau for Handicapped Students my hon. Friend said:

> "It follows that handicapped and non handicapped pupils ought to be educated in a common setting as far as is possible. The integration of the whole community is, I believe, not only in the best interests of the handicapped. It is also in the best interests of all."

It has taken us a long time properly to establish the principles of integration. I can well understand the difficulties in attitudes, in the complexities of bureaucracy and of events not keeping pace with the times. On the mainland at least local education authorities have been rate-capped, penalised and, some might say, victimised and have not been able to relate the special needs of handicapped and disabled children to the ability of the education authorities to meet them. I hope that that point is not too semantic or lost on the House, but it is true nevertheless.

In the case of Northern Ireland, I am grateful to the Minister for telling us that an additional £3 million in resources will be made available over a three-year period and that there is to be a capital programme to enable education and library boards to make a start on replacing or improving existing buildings. The hon. Member for Mossley Hill spoke about the £3 million and put a question to the Minister about it.

The question is often asked, "How long is a piece of string?" The questions that we ask are: "Is the £3 million of additional resources, however welcome, enough? On what criteria has the figure been reached? Has it been reached on the basis of need and the requirement of mentally handicapped children? Will the capital programme be sufficient?" Perhaps only people with specialist knowledge of the subject will be able to answer those questions, but if the Minister has the answers no doubt he will wish to share them with the House. We all welcome capital programmes in Northern Ireland, and none is more welcome than a programme which deals with the needs of mentally handicapped children who require patience, time, skill and attention to make up for their disabilities—if anything can make up for them.

Integration into normal schools does not arise from the order. Initially, mentally handicapped children covered by the order will continue to be educated in separate schools. As I understand it, the principle of integration applies to children with special education needs being educated in ordinary schools for which resources have always been available. Integration in Northern Ireland to the tune of about 40 per cent. was achieved even before the principle was written into law. Some distinction appears to be drawn between children with special educational needs and those who are mentally handicapped, although in practice they may amount to the same thing. The Warnock report represented a substantial shift in attitudes towards special education on the mainland. Perhaps the committee's most important conclusion was that up to one in five children would require some form of special education. As my hon. Friend the Member for Durham, North said, the observation that handicap was not confined to a small minority but was a much wider phenomenon gave an additional and decisive impetus to the movement towards integration.

The Minister told the House that the order corresponds to the provisions on the mainland. The Education Act 1981 was the legislative expression of that movement towards integration. Article 6 of the order is a direct take from section 12 of the Education Act 1981 which deals with regulations about special schools. The order brings the legislation about the education of mentally handicapped children into line with that on the mainland.

My next point will be familiar to the House and to those who follow our debates — including the participants. Some Opposition Members believe in an Ireland united by consent and democracy and by peaceful means. We often make the point that, until that happens, it is as well for

*[Mr. Stuart Bell]*

Northern Ireland to have, as far as possible and within the context of its own regional distinctiveness, legislation equivalent to that on the mainland. For that reason we welcome the order.

A wide spectrum of statutory and voluntary bodies in health and personal social services and education as well as trade unions, political parties, parents groups and individuals were consulted about the terms of the order. The order might be negatived, but it cannot be altered. However, as a result of representations, a change has been made in schedule 1, paragraph 2(3). The House will welcome even that slight change.

We regret that, whilst the order was at one time referred to the Northern Ireland Assembly, that Assembly no longer exists. That is not the fault of the Government, still less the fault of the Opposition, but it is a matter for regret that in Northern Ireland there is no elected body able to make its own contribution to local democracy. The Opposition are committed to looking at all structures of local government, and when we return to office we will take account of the views of all those who wish to make submissions. We will look at devolution, administrative or otherwise, so that in one constitutional form or another the people of Northern Ireland might have restored to them a measure of local democracy and a sense of self government of which they are now deprived.

We are committed to altering the procedures of the House so that orders of the sort that we are now debating would become Bills or would certainly be subjected to study in Committee and altered, and the views of elected representatives taken into account.

I thank the right hon. Member for South Down for his reference to article 10 which deals with recovery of possession of residences provided for caretakers and groundsmen. The National Union of Public Employees will welcome his reference to that and to the fact that six months' notice could be given to the occupants. That is a matter of some concern to us. I surmise that there may be differences in the role of a caretaker as opposed to that of a teacher. Nevertheless, we look upon this matter with some anxiety. We shall look to the Minister for some reassurance on that point and on the security of tenure of caretakers, groundsmen and so on.

I trust that the House has held its breath sufficiently long to listen to my short speech on the order. We commend it to the House. With the serried ranks behind me, I assure the Minister that we shall not oppose it.

8.9 pm

**Dr. Mawhinney:** I thank the hon. Members for Middlesbrough (Mr. Bell), for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton) and for Foyle (Mr. Hume) for the welcome that they have given to the order. Although the right hon. Member for South Down (Mr. Powell) expressed some reservations about it, I was encouraged that he did not voice any opposition to it. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will accept that, although I have no responsibility for Craigavon — I make no comment about it — I am proud to represent a successful new town in Peterborough. The Government's legislation in that regard has not been negative.

The right hon. Gentleman raised the legitimate and important question whether the commitment that I have given the House in respect of the terms of transfer for individual people—that there should be no disadvantage to them — could be extended to apply to career prospects. Although he did not define those words, we understand what he meant. I assure the right hon. Gentleman, as far as it is possible for me to do so, that the career prospects of transferred staff will not be adversely affected. — *[Interruption.]* They will not be financially disadvantaged at all. That is my commitment. If, for any reason, they should find themselves disadvantaged, compensation will be paid. As I said, it is right that, if the Government require a change, they should see that people are adequately protected.

The right hon. Member for South Down referred to the delay in introducing this order with respect to what has happened in Britain. I remind him that this is the third occasion when a consultation procedure has been embarked upon. It was first raised in the Province in 1971. The majority of those who responded at the time decided that the balance of advantage lay in the service remaining within the health sector. It was raised again and considered in 1976 as part of a consultative exercise on services for the mentally handicapped. At that time, also a minority of respondents took the view that special care schools should be transferred to the education sector, and the Government accepted the view of the majority that the status quo should be maintained.

Although the right hon. Member for South Down was right to say that there has been a delay, it has not been because of any dilatory approach by the Government to this matter in the Province, but it has reflected the majority view of those who not only are involved but have expertise in these matters within the Province. That is the case with the order. I remind the House that there was a large measure of agreement in the consultation process with respect to the order that the time was appropriate for a change to be made from the health sector to the education sector.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to the competition for resources within the education budget. As far as possible, the Government are committed to seeing that the resources necessary to maintain, protect and develop this service in the education sector will be provided and will continue to be provided. It is fair to point out that in the health sector there was competition for resources — by definition almost, that is the case — but there is no attempt in this change to weaken the claim on resources for this important sector.

I join in the right hon. Gentleman's tribute to the dedication of the staff in this area. I assure him and the House that nothing in this move is intended in any way to make life more difficult for the dedicated professionals involved.

The right hon. Gentleman moved on to three other specific matters. He addressed article 5. Article 5 does not change the existing position in which responsibility for the curricular of schools rests with school managers and, particularly, principals. He was right to say that the article provides an enabling power for regulations which, if necessary, may lay down broad curricular principles within which schools might operate. I do not have any plans at present to make such changes. In any event, if the Government were to contemplate any such change, I assure him and the House that there would be wide consultation before any such changes were introduced.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to article 8. Frankly, the advice that I have received is that we shall have to take legal advice on whether it should be "and" or "or", but the intention is as he defined it.

The right hon. Gentleman referred to article 10 and caretakers. Teachers occupy education and library board residences as tenants of the board, and so are entitled to receive notice to quit. Caretakers are given possession of residences by virtue of their employment and are not entitled to receive notices to quit on termination of such employment. An important part of a resident caretaker's responsibility is that he should be resident. He should be available on site, day and night, to secure school premises. When his employment ends, the education and library boards require possession of the residence for his successor and should not have to wait six months to recover it. I am advised that the legal status of caretakers is the same in England and in Northern Ireland, but in England it derives from the common law.

The hon. Member for Foyle referred to those who, some time ago, transferred to the education system. I mentioned the fact that it was some time ago because it is not relevant to the order. Anybody affected by the order will have the protections that I have already spelt out to the House.

The hon. Member for Mossley Hill asked three questions, one of which was asked again in a slightly different form by the hon. Member for Middlesbrough. I am advised that about 1,400 children are involved.

**Mr. Hume:** If a member of the special care service who was trained in Muckamore and is at present in a scale 2 post is transferred to another post, will he retain his grade 2 level? From representations made to me, I understand that, if such people are transferred within the system at present, they are eligible only for scale 1 posts, and suffer as a result.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** My understanding is that, some time ago, some teachers chose to move from the health service into the education service. They understood the arrangements. This order does not apply to them. Anyone who is required to move under the order will not find himself at a disadvantage as a consequence.

I understand that about 1,400 children are involved in this move.

As to the provisions and prohibitions in article 5, it is a considerable time since the existing power was last used. It has certainly not been exercised in the last 10 years. That is not to say that that power should not be available to the Department. However, I hope that the hon. Member for Foyle is pleased to hear that this power is not frequently resorted to by the Department.

**Mr. J. Enoch Powell:** If these powers are already in existence, will the Minister explain why they have to be written into the principal order by this order?

**Dr. Mawhinney:** Because it is felt that it is appropriate that these matters should be brought together to clarify the Department's responsibility for these matters.

The third question that the hon. Member for Foyle asked me was echoed by the hon. Member for Middlesbrough. He asked whether there will be sufficient money. I stress that the Government are making available additional resources. The hon. Member for Middlesbrough will be pleased to note that the £3 million to which I referred is not for three years; it is for the first year. That expenditure will continue, which should encourage the hon. Member for Mossley Hill.

As for the £2 million of captial expenditure, a great deal of planning will be required before we know exactly what will be needed for the capital programme. The £2 million will enable the boards to make a start, but it is not suggested that it will be sufficient to meet the capital provision that will be required as a consequence of this order.

I think that I have answered all the questions that have been asked. I am grateful for the welcome that this important order has received. It covers a small but very significant and important group of children in the Province, and I commend it to the House.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved,*

That the draft Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1987, which was laid before this House on 14th January, be approved.

## STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS, &c.

*Motion made, and Question put forthwith pursuant to Standing Order No. 101 (Standing Committees on Statutory Instruments, &c.).*

### AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

*Ordered,*

That the draft Amendments of the Potato Marketing Scheme 1955, as amended, which were laid before this House on 17th December, be approved.—[*Mr. Garel-Jones.*]

*Question agreed to.*

## Tailoring (Planning Regulations)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Garel-Jones.]*

8.12 pm

**Mr. John Wheeler** (Westminster, North): At this unusually early hour, I am delighted to speak on the Adjournment of the House and to have the opportunity to raise the work of the Savile Row tailors, as represented by the Federation of Merchant Tailors. I am delighted to see that my hon. Friend the Member for the City of London and Westminster, South (Mr. Brooke) is in his place tonight for, as his constituents know, he is a most diligent and hard-working constituency Member of Parliament who takes the greatest possible interest in the well-being of the Savile Row tailors. However, by virtue of the high office that he holds under the Crown he is unable personally to represent their interests in this debate. In effect, I am speaking for him as well as for those of my constituents who are also employed in this trade.

It would not be appropriate for me to go further, Mr. Speaker, without making reference to your special interests in the tailors for, as the whole House knows, you have proud links with this most honourable of trades. It is a particular privilege that you should be present tonight to hear the debate.

I am particularly glad to be speaking tonight about the Savile Row tailors because the centenary of the Master Tailors' Benevolent Association was celebrated last night. I know, Mr. Speaker, that you were one of the guests of honour. The Federation of Merchant Tailors will itself celebrate its centenary in 1988.

What concerns the Savile Row tailors at present and has a direct bearing on a viable future for the trade is the proposal to amend the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order.

To put this issue into context, I shall describe the history of the bespoke tailoring industry in this country, particularly in the city of Westminster. Given the nature of our hostile climate, tailoring has been a feature of our country for some time. We all like to wear clothes. A craft trade was organised to represent the tailors' interests in the middle ages when guilds were formed, as was the custom several centuries ago. Effectively, it was the French Revolution that gave the British tailor the opportunity to lead men's fashion, and it was then that wool was introduced into quality clothing.

Early in the 19th century, bespoke tailors were to be found in the eastern part of Mayfair, which lies in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for the City of London and Westminster, South. By the middle of the 19th century many of them were occupying premises in Savile Row. With the rise of the British empire, English tailoring and its influences were spread throughout the world—perhaps, one might say, with great advantage. One of the most lasting influences of the British empire is perhaps the gift of formal men's wear to cultures that previously were used to a type of clothing that is quite foreign to us.

Throughout this century, the United Kingdom has continued to lead in the development of formal men's wear. We have gradually seen the lounge suit become accepted business attire throughout the world. As a result, many overseas tailors have sought to perfect their craft among the tailors of Savile Row, but perhaps the most pleasing aspect has been the development of markets throughout the world for high-class British tailoring. This has developed in a most encouraging way so that today, of the approximately £27 million that the tailoring craft earns, over £15 million of it relates to exports. That is particularly relevant to this debate.

The Savile Row area became the world's centre for high-class men's tailoring. It is also the centre for design skills of good quality men's wear. That is well understood, not only in the United Kingdom but throughout the world. The Federation of Merchant Tailors has represented its concerns to me, and it is those concerns that I am attempting to present to the House tonight.

However, there is more to say about the tailoring trade before I look at the order. The trade has developed in such a way that it now takes a leading role in training for the industry. It is centred particularly on Savile Row. A member of the federation chairs the training and research committee of the Clothing and Allied Products Industry Training Board, which serves and influences the London Institute and the London College of Fashion. It was the Federation of Merchant Tailors that led the campaign to retain the Clothing and Allied Products Industry training board when its future was in doubt, along with many other industrial training boards. It has saved that board, whose record is unrivalled in placing in full-time employment 95 per cent. of all the young people who have completed their training on the YTS course.

Throughout the years the federation has worked closely with the leading woollen merchants in the United Kingdom, aiding and advising them on the development of ranges of their world wide markets. Indeed, they would be the first to admit that the role of the tailors in this regard has made a major contribution to their own success.

Tonight's debate is essentially about the proposal to abolish the class 3 light industrial category and to combine it with offices in a new business class. This was foreshadowed in the Government document entitled "Lifting the Burden". It is a radical development. The Department of the Environment's proposal to modernise the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972 and to make these changes is significant, inasmuch as it would change the prospect of the rental values for properties in the Mayfair area, particularly in Savile Row. On 26 November the Minister for Environment, Countryside and Planning wrote to my noble Friend Lord Hanson, a successful capitalist who believes in the market of skills and enterprise. The Minister said:

> "However I must emphasise that one of the Federation's chief concerns — the possible increase in rental levels for tailoring premises—is a factor which we cannot take into account. In our view, we must concentrate on the public interest in amenity and the use of land."

Public interest in amenity and the use of land is the kernal of this issue. The position that the tailors occupy in London and their craft provide employment for some 3,000 people who live and work in London and who contribute to the £27 million which the trade produces in the value of its products, but also to that vital £15 million a year which goes to exports.

If the majority of the light industrial and commercial property in Savile Row is to become one business class the tailors believe that it would rapidly turn into offices and hi-tech studios and be used for other activities. If the tailoring profession is to continue to serve the interests of

Britain and contribute to world tailoring—Savile Row tailors are at the centre of that activity—a change in the use classes order will be quite devastating.

In the City of Westminster we have a mosaic of commercial activities which each relate to the other. Thus, people will stay in the hotels, visit the Oxford street retail sector, the fine art galleries, the auction houses, consult a doctor in Harley street or a consultant, consult distinguished lawyers and see a variety of commercial and professional people. The role of the bespoke tailor in Savile Row is integrated into these activities.

If, by changing the use-class order, The Savile Row tailoring community is forced away from the centre of London, that departure will damage the centre of London and the commercial activity of the City of Westminster. The City of Westminster chamber of commerce and industry, which is currently looking at this issue, is deeply concerned about this prospect. We cannot look upon these planning orders purely as matters to do with planning and the environment. We have to take into account the knock-on effect of change, and the effect of that change on the character of the commercial community, and in turn on those who work in it.

When my hon. Friend comes to reply to the debate, I would ask him to consider that particular aspect of the proposal. I am aware that his Department is still considering what should be done about "Lifting the Burden". I would like him to carry from the debate the keen message that many aspects of the change are affecting a large number of people. The tailoring trade has a long and honourable history, which is bound into the heart of London. Any change which affects their future is not necessarily a change for the best interests of the community, nor the best interests of the country. Whether the orders should be changed, and whether there should be a separate category to take account of the special needs of the occupants of premises that are used both as shops and for light industrial purposes, is an issue that I would strongly commend to my hon. Friend and his departmental colleagues as they decide about the future of the proposal.

8.36 pm

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Richard Tracey):** I am sure that all of us here, and you, Mr. Speaker, in particular, will agree that the tailors of Savile Row are fortunate to have had their interests so admirably put by my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler). He has been supported by the presence of my hon. Friend the Member for the City of London and Westminster, South (Mr. Brooke), who because of his high office could not put the case personally. It is good to have him here on the Treasury Bench.

May I first congratulate the Master Tailors Benevolent Association on its centenary and extend my best wishes to the Federation of Merchant Tailors when it reaches this landmark next year. The profession has rightly earned its reputation as being amongst the most highly regarded craft skills. Its image and prestige are justifiably recognised in every continent. The skill represented by the federation has been described as a special blend of art and science.

Before going any further, I think that it would be helpful if I briefly outlined the scope and purpose of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1972. The planning Acts provide that "development"—for which planning permission is normally required—includes the making of any material change in the use of buildings or other land. But it has never been the aim of the planning system to control every small development or change of use. The general development order and use classes order together provide a wide range of freedoms which relieve the planning system of a great deal of minor administrative clutter, and ensure that there is a reasonable flexibility in the way that property is used or adopted. The use classes order does this by removing the need for a planning application if both the existing and proposed uses fall within the same use class. It is, therefore, an instrument of simplification that is as old as the planning Acts themselves. The classes have always been quite broad.

The order has not been substantially changed since 1948, and it now seems distinctly dated. The Department of the Environment therefore asked the property advisory group to look at it. We published the group's recommendations in December 1985 and at that time invited comments. In considering the use of buildings and land for commercial purposes the group took as its starting point the possibility of creating a single "employment" class. However, since that would have allowed the freedom to turn, for example, a corner shop into a shot blasting workshop or a glue factory, without prior approval, the group concluded that general and industrial uses should be excluded. It concluded that shops should be excluded too, because of the special character of the vehicular and pedestrian traffic that they generate, and the importance of maintaining the functional character of shopping streets.

The group regarded the possibility of merging other commercial uses into a single class as posing a more challenging question. The fundamental issue which needs to be examined is the extent to which owners and users of commercial buildings should be free to decide for themselves what activities, or a combination of activities with much the same impact on the environment, could most profitably be carried on in their property from time to time, and to enable quick adaptation to the changing demands of commerce, without prior approval. We must also consider the extent to which local authorities should be able to influence the type of commercial activity carried out in their area.

A related problem is the development of new commercial uses which do not fit neatly into any use class. These are frequently referred to as "high technology" uses and embrace the manufacture of computer hardware and software, research and development connected with computers, and the provision of consultancy and after-sales services, as well as various micro-engineering, bio-technology and pharmaceutical research, development and manufacture. These uses often involve the shifting of balance of activity between office, light industrial and storage use which can cause confusion and difficulty when seen against the present structure of the order. There are many other uses in the same position: laboratories in general, studios, including film, television and sound recording studios, communications centres, some libraries and staff, educational and training establishments.

The property advisory group concluded that in the 1980s there was very little difference between the impact on the environment of most offices and light industry. But it also noted what it regarded as an unnecessary uncertainty for certain commercial firms in the need to

*[Mr. Richard Tracey]*

apply for planning permission depending on whether the primary purpose was manufacture of some kind, or primarily clerical in nature. The group therefore recommended the creation of a new business class, embracing office and light industrial uses. In the light of our consultation, we agreed with the group's conclusion that there would be wide-ranging benefit to commerce and industry if this proposal were implemented. We therefore endorsed the concept of a single business use class in our consultation paper published last June.

We are still considering the final form of the new order and in doing so we are, of course, taking very careful account of the many comments that we received in response to the consultation paper. Copies of the responses to our consultation exercise have now been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has already met a deputation from the Federation of Merchant Tailors. My hon. Friend has lobbied equally persuasively on its behalf tonight. The Federation's main fear appears to be of the increased rents that it believes would result from the changes that we propose. But, in considering changes to planning legislation, we really must concentrate on issues which are relevant to the environment and amenity. It was never the purpose of the planning system to influence economic factors, such as rental levels, or to suppress the market by protecting the interests of one business from the activities of another.

The property advisory group considered the relationship between development control and property values. It took the view that the planning system is not and should not be concerned with fluctuation in the value of individual property. In its report, the group quite rightly stated that planning permission can neither be granted nor withheld on the ground that the decision in question will adversely or beneficially affect the value of any land, whether it is the land which is the subject of the application for permission, or other adjoining land, the value of which will be affected by the decision.

Of course, the way in which planning powers are exercised has sometimes had that effect of influencing economic factors such as rental levels. One example is the effect of the policies contained in the city of Westminster district plan. That plan aims to stem the loss of existing industrial floor space, in particular by maintaining certain specialised trade activities where these have links with central London. The protection of specific uses — by adopting policies which incorporate a presumption against allowing office development displacing specialised trades — has clearly benefited the west end tailoring industry. It has served to divert pressure for other forms of commercial development away from Savile Row and, as a result, rental values have remained relatively low. The federation suggests that rents paid on industrial premises in central London are a quarter of those paid for offices.

As I have said, we concluded that the effects on amenity and environment of a change of use from light industry to offices and vice versa are generally not so significant as to warrant local authority approval in each case. We therefore included in our consultation paper a proposal to amalgamate the light industrial and office classes. Will this lead to the quadrupling of rents which the federation fears? My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I think not. For a start, many of the individual leases held by the tailors limit the use of the premises to manufacturing purposes. It may be anything up to 25 years before the terms of such leases come up for renegotiation. Only then will free market rents mean office rents. Even then, will the premises be of the sort which command the premium office rents that have been quoted? Again we think not. Rental levels for office uses in Savile Row currently range from £12 to £20 a square foot, not very much above workroom and showroom rentals. There is evidence of tailors coming into Savile Row being prepared to pay these prices today.

The tailors have been in Savile Row for much longer than the planning system. I have no doubt that this specialised industry based itself there in response to market forces. Responding to market forces requires flexibility and an ability to move with the times. There is a long tradition of this in Savile Row, or the tailoring industry would not continue to be so well represented in that area.

These are some of the relevant considerations. But I stress that we have not yet reached any final decision on the shape of the revised order. We shall certainly consider extremely carefully the points that my hon. Friend made tonight. But we are not prepared to shy away from our responsibility to keep the overall planning system up to date.

If we decide to press ahead with the proposed new business class, I am confident that the tailoring industry will take this in its stride. The industry may have to review the way its operations are organised. But in our view it has the talent and foresight to be able to continue to provide the levels of excellence in both its products and its service which have so long been synonymous with Savile Row.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at eleven minutes to Nine o'clock.*

# House of Commons

*Friday 6 February 1987*

*The House met at half-past Nine o'clock*

PRAYERS

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

# Orders of the Day

## Human Rights Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.—[Queen's Consent, on behalf of the Crown, signified.]*

9.36 am

**Sir Edward Gardner** (Fylde): I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a Second time.

I am sure you will agree, Mr. Speaker, that the House of Commons is full of surprises. I have had the pleasure and privilege of being a Member of this House for 23 years and, faithfully each year, I put down my name for the ballot in the hope that, ultimately, I would be able to present a private Member's Bill. The years passed and nothing happened. Now, in what appears to be, alas, my last year in the House before I retire at the general election, I find myself in fifth position in the ballot. I have no hesitation at all in the choice of Bill that I would like to see go through the House, the Human Rights Bill.

The theme of the Bill has always attracted me. I could almost say that its theme has been my lifelong political interest. It has a theme of grandeur, of such grandeur that inevitably it gives one a sense of personal humility. However, the greatness of the theme contrasts with the simplicity of the aim of the Bill. That is because its simple aim is to incorporate in British law the European convention on human rights so that all of us who enjoy the rights that are set out in the articles of that convention will be able, if the Bill becomes law, to go to our own courts. In those courts, our own judges will decide whether our rights are being abused or violated, and whether those rights apply to the case that is before the court. That is the single ambition of the Bill. That ambition has attracted the attention and support of a vast number of people outside this House. I can also say with great satisfaction that it has attracted a large measure of all-party support within the House.

Today is an important day for the future of British law. That is because, at the moment, our law contains a gaping gap. Anyone who wants to rely on the convention to protect his human rights cannot come before a British court. That is because the court would say it could not look at the convention and the rights that are contained in it. It would say that the European convention on human rights is a treaty and, therefore, not part of British law, and that it could not take notice of it. If the Bill becomes law, every one of us will have the right to go to any court in the land and, subject to the Bill's stringent provisions, be able to say, "I want to rely on my rights as contained in the convention, which is now part of English law."

The rights that the Bill refers to are the rights in the European convention on human rights. That sounds a grand and, to some perhaps, off-putting title, but they are the rights which belong to each one of us. They are not the rights of an egotistical idealist or rights which give a licence to betray state secrets or to breach security; they are rights which we all recognise are fundamental to our lives. They are rights which shape society and guarantee our freedoms and to which, as Edmund Burke said of religion, nothing is so fatal as indifference. They are the rights to life, liberty, free trial, freedom of expression, privacy, freedom of association and the right to be protected from degrading punishment whether in the school or by the state.

I submit that there are rights, with or without the convention, to which we have looked throughout the centuries. The House should consider a way in which, without impediment, British people can take advantage of those rights.

The European convention on human rights was signed and ratified by the 21 countries of the Council of Europe. The rights were drafted by two English lawyers. One was a skilled parliamentary draftsman and the other was Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, who later became Lord Chancellor Kilmuir. The House should look at the language of the articles in the convention. It is the language mainly of the English common law. It is language which echoes right down the corridors of history. It goes deep into our history and as far back as Magna Carta.

If anybody suggests that these are foreign laws which are foreign to our minds and spirits, I suggest that he has not read the convention's articles. In 1951, with the support of Churchill and Macmillan for the Conservatives, Lord Layton for the Liberals and Ungoed-Thomas for the Labour party, which was in government, Britain ratified the convention. We were the first country to ratify it. In those days, we saw it as I hope we see it today—as a supreme instrument to guarantee our rights. We thought it so important that, in 1953, the Government decided to extend what they believed to be the benefits of the rights in the convention to 97 million people who lived in Commonwealth territories for which we had some responsibility.

I am sure that the House agrees that, in 1951, when the Government ratified the convention, it was assumed—it must have been—that the rights in it were covered by the law in Britain. I am perfectly sure that it was not the intention of the Government or the Opposition to create two conflicting jurisdictions. We still hear—no doubt we shall hear it today—a reflection of the view that there are two conflicting jurisdictions. I hope that I anticipate wrongly, but I anticipate that hon. and possibly right hon. Members will say that we do not need the convention and the rights in it because it is all covered by English law and, if such law does not exist, we can deal with matters bit by bit. They argue that, when a problem comes up, we can introduce legislation piecemeal to deal with it. That view has gone on since the treaty was ratified. Since then, it has been demonstrated time and again in Strasbourg how wrong we are to suppose that our law in its present state covers all the needs demanded by the articles in the convention. It does not at all.

I do not want to weary the House with many cases, but I remind it of one which will be strongly in the memories of right hon. and hon. Members. It involves freedom of expression as illustrated by the Times Newspapers case. It was not allowed to publish an article dealing with the

*[Sir Edward Gardner]*

Thalidomide pledge. The case went to Strasbourg, where the court said that the law of contempt, as applied by the House of Lords, was far too wide and should be altered. It was.

There was another case concerning the right to privacy, which appears to be in people's minds at the moment. Mr. Malone complained that his telephone had been tapped. He said that that was an invasion of his privacy, but the law of privacy in Britain relates to property and not to private people—or it did not.

**Mr. Tony Marlow** (Northampton, North): While my hon. and learned Friend is going through a catalogue of cases, perhaps he could draw our attention to the case of corporal punishment in schools. Does he feel that that is something which should be enshrined in this sort of legislation, or does he feel that it is something on which the House should be able to take its own decision?

**Sir Edward Gardner:** I am grateful to my hon. Friend, because I was about to come to that. I am sure that he will listen carefully to my argument. I was dealing with privacy and telephone tapping and saying that Mr. Malone complained that his telephone had been tapped. He went to the Chancery Division of the High Court, where the vice-chancellor said, "We are very sorry, but the convention is a treaty and not part of English law, so it cannot be applied." Mr. Malone had no remedy. The judge also said that such a case cried out for legislation. In 1985 we got the legislation — the Interception of Communications Act 1985.

**Mr. Nicholas Budgen** (Wolverhampton, South-West): My hon. and learned Friend talks about a judge saying that such a situation cries out for legislation. My hon. and learned Friend's Bill would mean that judges would not merely be offering their personal opinion to citizens as to what the legislation should be; it would mean, once the judges had ruled, that the legislature would be obliged to follow the ruling of judges.

If that situation arose and, for instance, there was a Labour Government and they abolished the right of people to send their children to private education, and the judges overruled that, does my hon. and learned Friend think that it would be possible to keep judges out of the political arena? Does my hon. and learned Friend think, once the Labour Government had been overruled in that way, that there would be a cry for judges to be elected and to be subject to the political process?

**Sir Edward Gardner:** I shall deal in some depth with that point, and I am sure that my hon. Friend will accept it from me, because it is one that will concern the House and opinion outside the House. I shall deal specifically with what I suppose is generally being called a politicising of the judges. It is an important point, and I have an important argument to meet it.

I shall now deal with freedom of association, contained in the convention. This issue was directly relevant to the question of the closed shop. The House will remember the three railwaymen who objected to the closed shop. They did not get a remedy for their complaint in Britain. They had to go to Strasbourg, where it was discovered, and became part of the judgment, that the railwaymen had a right to freedom of association. What happened? Our law was changed.

**Sir Ian Percival** (Southport): Our law was changed before the decision at Strasbourg.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** That is so.

**Sir Ian Percival:** The railwaymen could not have been put by a Conservative Government in the position in which they were placed by a Labour Government, because we changed the law before the decision, to make sure that they could not be so dealt with.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend, but he leaves out the knowledge that the Government had and fear that the Government had, that that case was before Strasbourg. They anticipated the result.

**Sir Ian Percival:** That is quite unreasonable. Right from the start we declared that the measures taken against the railwaymen were totally unfair, and that, at the first opportunity, we would reverse them. It did not depend on fear of the outcome of the hearing at Strasbourg.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** Perhaps fear is putting it too high.

**Sir Ian Percival:** Fear had nothing to do with it.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** My right hon. and learned Friend pulls me up for using the word "fear". Perhaps I should say "influence". I accept everything that my right hon. and learned Friend says on the question of fact, but it does seem not unreasonable to suppose that the Government of the day could be influenced and could, among the influences that were being brought to bear, have taken these influences into account when considering future legislation.

The last case that I invite the House to consider is the question whether our law is sufficient to deal with the rights of a person to be protected from degrading punishment. The House will remember that a case went to Strasbourg — more than one case — on this right, and again it was found that there was a breach, a violation of the law.

I hope that I report faithfully to the House what I heard on the radio last night — that yesterday the court at Strasbourg found in favour of a young man, who is now in his twenties, who as a child had refused to submit to the prospect of corporal punishment and was asked to leave his school. He has been awarded £3,000 and the British Government have been ordered to pay his costs.

People who have to go to Strasbourg, as so many have, inevitably find themselves in difficulties. First, there is a difficulty of getting to the court. They have to go through the Commission of Human Rights, which acts as a sieve, and if the case is held to be admissible it goes before the court. That may take seven years of anybody's life. It took seven years of the life of the man who succeeded yesterday. He was a schoolboy when the action was started, and he is now in his twenties; seven years after the action started, the court came to its conclusion.

If any hon. Members take satisfaction from the difficulties, the delays and costs that stand in the way of people going to Strasbourg and making sure that they get their rights, one can understand their attitude. They are not interested in these rights. They do not want the convention to be part of the safeguard of our liberties and life. They believe that all is fine, that we can all relax and hope that the Government of the day, when the matter comes up, will provide a remedy. All the experience of the years since 1951 has shown the fallacy of that argument.

**Mr. Ivor Stanbrook** (Orpington): Try another peroration.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** I am not perorating. I am dealing with a point that my hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton, South-West (Mr. Budgen) raises, rather like an elegant parrot.

Anyone who goes to Strasbourg has to face the fact that it might cost more than £70,000. Where is the money coming from? It does not come from Europe, because the most that one can obtain from legal aid in Europe is £700. Apart from the difficulties, delays and costs, can we imagine the frustration that must pass through the minds of anyone who is subjected to this kind of diffficulty? It is not surprising—I think that this can be said with some confidence — that support for the Bill, and the incorporation into British law of the convention which it will bring about, is widely supported outside the House as well as inside the House on an all-party basis. Seventy-one per cent. of the people questioned in a recent Gallup poll said that it would increase their confidence in British democracy, and of those questioned, a ratio of 2:1 said that they wanted the convention incorporated into British law.

**Mr. Eric Forth** (Mid-Worcestershire): I do not make this point flippantly. Can my hon. and learned Friend guess how many of the people to whom he has referred with approval have any knowledge of the contents of the convention or have set eyes on it, read it or understood it? My hon. and learned Friend challenged hon. Members on that point. What is his guess?

**Sir Edward Gardner:** My guess is that if everyone who has been asked these questions had read the convention, the figures would be much higher.

**Mr. Marlow:** Will my hon. and learned Friend answer the question whether he feels that it is more appropriate for a court, either here or in Strasbourg, to make a decision about corporal punishment in schools or whether he feels that that decision should be made by an elected House of Commons?

**Sir Edward Gardner:** I promised that I would deal wih that point. I shall come to it after I have gone briefly through the Bill. Time is passing, and many right hon. and hon. Members wish to speak.

The purpose and effect of the Bill are made clear in the long title and the memorandum. That aim is that judicial remedies in the United Kingdom should be available for all who suffer, or who can establish that they have suffered, from violations or breaches of the human rights which are referred to in clause 1 as "fundamental rights and freedoms".

Clause 2 is a key provision. It states:

"the fundamental rights and freedoms shall have the force of law in the United Kingdom."

Those fundamental rights and freedoms are set out in schedule 1. I shall not go through all the provisions in detail, because I think that all right hon. and hon. Members are fully aware of all the rights contained in the convention—or am I mistaken?

Clause 3 prohibits breaches of the convention and makes such breaches actionable in law in the United Kingdom. Clause 4 is a very important clause—[HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear."] I am glad to have my hon. Friends' approval and support. The aim of the clause is to ensure, as nearly as possible and subject to the sovereignty of Parliament, that the observance of human rights is securely based in British law.

Clause 5 is a limitation clause. Clause 6 is a technical provision on judicial notice. Clause 8 refers to the technical application of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947. Clause 9 deals with the power of derogation by Order in Council in a war or other public emergency. As the House well knows, the convention and protocol 1 will become British law if the Bill is passed.

I say without immodesty and without any personal motive that this is a beautifully drafted Bill. I only wish that it were mine and that I could be credited with the drafting. But the drafting was mainly the responsibility of two right hon. and learned Members of another place, Lord Broxbourne and Lord Scarman. Lord Broxbourne introduced a similar Bill in another place, supported by Lord Scarman, and it passed through all its stages. I hope that it will do the same here.

I should like to return to the point that has been agitating my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow) for so long. Who should decide whether someone has to be submitted to corporal punishment in a school or to judicial birching? In relation to the right to be protected from degrading punishment, is it beyond the wit of our High court judges to apply the language of article 3 to a particular case? No one has said that that is too difficult for the 21 judges in Strasbourg. They do it time and again. Why should not our judges do it? Are our judges to be regarded as political and their impartiality to be queried? Are they to be regarded as having their impartiality undermined in any way if they are asked to deal with the convention and its various articles?

I do not want to go through all the articles, but I shall take, for example, education, which was rightly mentioned by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North. I say rather nervously, in view of the intervention of my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival), who has ministerial experience and knowledge which I sadly lack, that because of Strasbourg's influence, our law has been altered so that there will no longer be corporal punishment in our schools and judicial birching. Corporal punishment has gone, whether we like it or not. [HON. MEMBERS: "We do not like it."] My right hon. and hon. Friends do not like it very much, and I am sorry that that should be so. They should read Mr. Justice Barry's report on corporal punishment and they might change their minds. As a result of Strasbourg's decision, we have had this change of law. It is a good change. Furthermore, it does no politicises the judges. If our judges cannot make decisions on such subjects, on what can they decide?

**Mr. Marlow:** The question which I asked and about which, as my hon. and learned Friend rightly said, I continue to agitate—I am not asking whether judges can make these decisions on whether they would do so in a biased or an unbiased way—is whether it is right that decisions of this political magnitude should be made by judges, whether they are in the United Kingdom or in Strasbourg. Is it not right that decisions of this sort. I am not saying this particular decision—and of this political magnitude should be taken by the House of which my hon. and learned Friend has for such a long time been a distinguished Member?

**Sir Edward Gardner:** If I may say so, I take issue with that. Parliament is supreme. Its sovereignty will be unimpaired by the Bill. If Parliament in its wisdom wants to repeal any part of this legislation, it can. Under article 65 of the convention, if the House wished, it could denounce the convention. Is that the logic of my hon. Friend's point?

There are some arguments on which those who oppose the Bill rely. I shall not go into them in detail. One is the sovereignty of Parliament. They say that it is the supreme power of Parliament to make and unmake laws. I say firmly, unequivocally and emphatically that, when the Bill becomes law, it will be as vulnerable as any other part of our legislation to the will of Parliament if at some stage the House wishes to amend or repeal it.

**Mr. Fred Silvester** (Manchester, Withington): Could my hon. and learned Friend comment on the Tyrer case, which abolished judicial corporal punishment in the Isle of Man? My hon. and learned Friend will recall that at no stage has the Manx Parliament altered the law, and that since the passing of that judgment, the courts in the Isle of Man have, on more than one occasion, continued to pass the sentence of judicial corporal punishment. Those punishments have not been carried out, because the Home Office came to a deal with the Executive Council of the Isle of Man that such punishment should not be carried out. In 1981 the Manx Court of Appeal decided that, since the convention was in operation, carrying out that punishment would be in breach of its international obligations.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Sir Paul Dean):** Order. The hon. Gentleman should be brief.

**Mr. Silvester:** I am being as brief as I can. *[Interrupton.]* This is an important point.

The domestic law that was set up in the Isle of Man has been overridden by the convention, despite the fact that the Manx Parliament has taken a different view of the matter.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** I do not disregard in any way what my hon. Friend has said, and no doubt he will make those points in his speech. It is true that no law has been passed about judicial birching in the Isle of Man — my hon. Friend is right about that — but the judiciary there decided rightly or wrongly, that there should be no more judicial birching in the Isle of Man as a result of the Strasbourg case.

The impartiality of judges has been dealt with at some length, but it is my submission that we trust the judges——

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow) *rose*——

**Sir Edward Gardner:** —to look at the obscurities of some of the legislation that is passed by this House, and trust them to come in a way that is perhaps beyond human comprehension——

**Dr. Godman** *rose*——

**Sir Edward Gardner:** May I just finish my sentence? We trust them to come, in a way that perhaps is beyond human comprehension, to the meaning of a particular statute. If one contrasts those difficulties with what might be regarded as the celestial clarity of the convention, one sees that the latter is written in the simplest language. It may be wide, it could be argued that it is imprecise in some of its statements, but it is not impenetrable, nor could it mislead anybody. It is the sort of material upon which our judges have worked for centuries, and upon which they can be relied to work now with that same virtue of impartiality that has made them famous.

**Dr. Godman:** I am grateful to the hon. and learned Gentleman for giving way. It is not only parliamentarians who question, legitimately, a Bill of Rights. In one of his Reith lectures, Lord McCluskey asked whether judges should be allowed to overrule the decisions of democratically elected legislatures. Surely that is a valid criticism.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** It would be a very valid criticism, and I bow with respect towards the learned judge and his stature as a lawyer. However, if he was referring to my Bill —it is not clear whether he was—he was, if I may say so respectfully, mistaken. As I have already tried to satisfy the House, there is no question of undermining the sovereignty of Parliament. The premise upon which Lord McCluskey proceeded was that the supremacy or the sovereignty of Parliament would be impugned.

Three arguments are available in this debate. I shall not discuss them in detail but will merely outline them. One is sensible and logical, the second is logical and the third is neither logical nor sensible. The sensible and logical argument is that, because we have the convention, which gives us certain rights, there should be no impediment to our ability to enjoy those rights. To follow the logic through, one should enable people who want to rely on those rights to come to a court and before judges of their own country.

The second argument is logical: "We do not like the rights that are contained in the convention and we never needed them. British law is equally sufficient and extensive and will satisfy all our needs. Therefore, we do not need the convention and we should denounce it." As I have already said, we shall do so under article 65. If that is the argument, let the people who support it say so.

**Mr. Budgen:** We shall. We are not frightened about that.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** I am not suggesting that hon. Members are frightened of anything. I am suggesting only that they are not being very sensible. I submit to the House, as a matter of well understood fact, that that argument would be in conflict with the mass of public opinion outside the House and with the majority of right hon. and hon. Members within it.

The one argument that is neither sensible nor logical would say: "Yes, we applaud the rights that we have. Let us keep them, but let us make it as difficult as possible for anybody who wants to enjoy them. Let us not make it easy for people to go to a British court, let us send them off to Strasbourg to face seven years of delay and £70,000 worth of costs, with all the discouragement that we can put in their way".

I could not finish better than by quoting the Lord Chancellor, who is on tape — I was going to say, on record — because he took part in a radio discussion on the Reith lectures, with Lord McCluskey and Lord Scarman, and I am delighted that he did so. To my delight, these are some of the words that he used:

> "We have signed the European Convention on Human Rights . . . and what we have done is to put ourselves in the hands of judges at Strasbourg, instead of putting ourselves in the hands of judges in Westminster or Edinburgh."

That was a mistake which my Bill will correct. In so doing, the Bill will fill a gap in our British law that has caused immense frustration, which should be removed as soon as possible, and which will be removed if the Bill becomes law. I commend the Bill to the House.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. It will be evident to the House that many right hon. and hon. Members wish to speak. I hope that those who are called will bear that in mind.

10.18 am

**Mr. David Steel** (Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale): I am sure that I speak on behalf of all right hon. and hon. Members when I warmly congratulate the hon. and learned Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) on his presentation of the Bill to us. It was lucid, charming and witty, and we are grateful to him.

I have a great deal of personal sympathy with the position in which he has found himself in that, in his last year, after 23 years in the House, he has emerged in the lottery that we dignify with the name of ballot for private Members' Bills. I had the opposite experience. I had the misfortune to win a place in the lottery on my very first appearance in the House. Therefore, I wish him well personally and sympathetically.

I was heartened — no doubt the hon. and learned Gentleman was also — by the widespread editorial support for his Bill among the serious press, for example in *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, and the *Financial Times*. What confirmed my belief that we were on the right track in supporting the Bill was the editorial opposition of *The Times*, which appears in its nature and ownership, to have changed from the days of the great thalidomide case, to which the hon. and learned Gentleman referred.

Although it is unusual for party leaders to participate in private Members' legislation—members of my party will have the same free vote as every other hon. Member at the end of the debate — I have chosen to speak because my party and our colleagues in the Social Democratic party support the measure unanimously and have supported it consistently over the years. The hon. and learned Gentleman referred to Lord Broxbourne and Lord Scarman, and I am sure that he would also wish to pay tribute to Lord Wade, a former hon. Member of this House, who twice piloted this measure through all its stages in the other place. It is a salutary lesson to us in this House that the other place has on at least three occasions passed this legislation through all its stages. Therefore, we can debate the measure today knowing that if, as we hope, it is given a Second Reading, it will have an easy ride in the other place, which has been waiting for us to catch up with its advanced ideas on the matter.

The hon. and learned Gentleman referred to the authorship and participation in the writing of the convention of David Maxwell Fyfe and made great play of the language of English common law. With great respect I must point out that David Maxwell Fyfe was the first politician I ever met and he had the additional benefit of a sound Edinburgh education. This legislation will apply equally in Scotland and England.

When I was a student of constitutional law at Edinburgh university I was brought up on the classic doctrines of Dicey and the supremacy of Parliament. In my 20 years in the House I have come to recognise that the need for the Bill arises precisely because many of us feel that Parliament on its own can no longer adequately protect our citizens. The increase in the executive arm of Government and in the number of areas of Government activity, under Governments of all parties, and the increasing complexity and speed of modern life have meant that the individual is in need of greater protection, but is afforded less.

Our courts have had no set of guiding principles on individual liberties which is why so many of us have long campaigned for a Bill of Rights. As a result there has been a steep rise in the number of applications for judicial review from 533 in 1981 to 1,169 in 1985. As hon. Members we find ourselves unable to remedy a large number of wrongs. Despite the advent of the ombudsman, justice for the individual is still often frustrated.

The sheer scope of Government activity and the bureaucracy and technology that support it have increased exponentially over the past century since Dicey was writing his learned works. Inevitably, the individual is at an increasing disadvantage in the massive system of social management and ultimately of control, which is inherent in the world of computer files, satellite surveillance and telephone tapping.

It is a stange anomaly that British citizens must take the road to Strasbourg at great expense to seek redress for the abuse of rights which the Government have a treaty obligation to protect. The fact that more have done so and more have had their cases upheld than people from other signatory countries has been a proper embarrassment to successive Governments.

A good reason for incorporating the convention into law is so that we can start doing our own dirty laundry in Britain rather than send it abroad. Virtually every other signatory to the convention deals with human rights cases in its courts and we shall only be catching up with them if we approve the Bill today.

It is bad for the United Kingdom's reputation, for its citizens, administrators and judges alike that the freedoms guaranteed by the convention cannot be invoked directly before the courts of England and Scotland. Since 1965 when the right of individual petition was introduced in Britain, petitions have flowed to Strasbourg. About 800 provisional files are opened on cases from the United Kingdom every year. No other state sends as many cases as that to Strasbourg. No other state has had so many cases declared admissible by the Commission, or lost so many cases before the court.

The rights that have been upheld by the Commission have always been fundamental and often far-reaching. Few rights in a democracy are more fundamental than the right of a free press, yet, as the hon. and learned Gentleman has said, the European convention had to require English law to lift the muzzle that it had placed on *The Sunday Times* in the thalidomide campaign. It is thanks also to the European convention that prisoners in the United Kingdom are no longer fettered in what they may write to their Member of Parliament. It was the European convention which established an even more fundamental right: a prisoner's right of access to a lawyer in connection with prison discipline. Therefore, inch by painful inch the European Court has often pushed a reluctant British Government to conform to the convention. I side with the hon. and learned Gentleman rather than with the former Solicitor-General in agreeing

*[Mr. David Steel]*

that the existence of cases at Strasbourg has often pushed our Government towards legislation. Another example of that is the dramatic amendments to mental health legislation which are the result of cases before the Strasbourg court.

Twenty years after United Kingdom citizens were first allowed to petition Strasbourg, the European convention continues to extend civil rights in the United Kingdom, but through an uncomfortable, tortuous process. Until the European convention is enshrined in United Kingdom law, it will continue to carry an inferior status in our courts and United Kingdom citizens who need the protection that it provides will continue to have to appeal to Strasbourg which is difficult, expensive and arcane.

**Mr. John Butterfill** (Bournemouth, West): Will the right hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Steel:** I am just finishing and Mr. Deputy Speaker has called for short speeches.

I noticed that Conservative Members who sought to interrupt the hon. and learned Gentleman suggested that the man on the Clapham omnibus was not greatly exercised by whether or not the convention was enshrined in our law and that it was not a topic of everyday conversation. Perhaps it is not, but I am absolutely certain that the Bill seeks to increase the most basic rights of every citizen in the land. For that reason, it is of great importance and I warmly endorse it.

10.27 am

**Sir Ian Percival** (Southport): My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) spoke in moving, noble terms of noble sentiments. I, too, congratulate him most warmly. We have both been here for a long time and we have agreed for almost all of that time, so I am sorry to have to disagree with him to some extent in what may be, for both of us, our last year.

I wish to express some doubt about what we are doing, but no hon. Member will include me in the category to which my hon. and learned Friend referred of those who do not want these rights to be enjoyed by our people. In one way or another I have fought for all of these rights all my life.

The biggest danger to democracy is that the expectations of most of our people are far higher than any Government can ever deliver, with the result that almost everybody is almost always disappointed with the performance of every Government. This is an extremely serious development. The biggest danger of this Bill is that too many people could expect far too much to flow from it.

I am all for ensuring that our people enjoy the rights enshrined in the convention, but we must never forget that the remedy in most cases lies in our own hands. That must not be underestimated. The biggest danger of infringement of these rights, for example, lies in the hands of the House. In my view, the most oppressive development of recent years has been the quantity and the quality of the legislation that has emerged from the House. The remedy for that lies in our own hands, and our hands alone.

We should not underestimate what protection we already enjoy. How fortunate we are — we have been free men and women for centuries, not because of the "one man, one vote" principle or because of the convention, but because we have established the rule of law. Under the rule of law, an independent judiciary has built up a body of law, the philosophy of which is to protect the weak from the strong. The strong can protect themselves. The strongest of all is the state. Our laws protect individuals, particulary the weak, against any kind of wrong. There must be an element of wrong. We tend sometimes to say that we shall give this, that and the other right, but sometimes we must think about the people against whom we are giving a right. The common law has held the balance between different contenders. Let us not forget that.

There has been a development in the past few years of which we should be immensely proud — that is, the development of the scope of judicial review. It perhaps happened without any form of legislation. It happened by consensus. I am proud that my Government — the Government that I support—in no way tried to stand in the way of that development. The effect has been to make Government more and more vulnerable to review by the courts. Let not the House underestimate the value of that development.

On the other side of the coin, we must look a little more closely at what the Bill will add to what we already have. I remind the House that, on the occasion on which this matter was sent to a Select Committee in another place, the Select Committee uttered these words of caution:

> "in any country, whatever its constitution, the existence or absence of legislation in the nature of a Bill of rights can in practice play only a relatively minor part in the protection of human rights."

I am sure that the House will appreciate the significance of these words:

> "What is important above all, is a country's political climate and traditions. This is, the Committee think, common ground among both those who favour and those who oppose a Bill of Rights, and they received no evidence that human rights are in practice better protected in countries which have a code of fundamental rights embodied in their law than they are in the United Kingdom.

Those words remind us that it is our duty to protect those rights. We should not look to anything outside for that protection.

I shall now examine what is added, and I refer to a point upon which there appeared to be a difference of opinion between my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde when he allowed me to intervene. I do not quarrel with the proposition that the existence of a right to go to Strasbourg may influence some Governments. The Labour Government was wholly uninfluenced by public opinion. It adhered to certain laws that were detrimental to the railwaymen despite strong public opinion to the contrary. If they had persisted in resisting the case in Strasbourg and were found to be in the wrong, they may have changed the law. It was clear that they would not do it in advance because they were afraid of Strasbourg.

The point that I wish to make clear—it is right that it should be made clear — is that the matter of what might have happened in Strasbourg played no part in the decision of the Conservative Government to change the law. I say that from first-hand knowledge. We were committed to changing the law years before we held office. We opposed the legislation that placed railwaymen in a shocking position. We were commitied, from the time that the legislation was passed, to repealing it at the first possible opportunity. I am proud to have had a hand in the fulfilment of that promise. That may be a useful effect of the convention. I do not deny that. In some cases the

Government may have been influenced. If the Government are not influenced — it may be that the Labour Government, on an adverse finding by the court, would have been forced to change those provisions — that is an advantage.

I refer now to the suggestion that what we are doing will introduce simplicity. I speak with some feeling because I have had to argue this case. The case concerned article 11. Article 11 paragraph 1 looks perfectly simple and, indeed, is in rather grand terms. It states what any of us would love to hear, the sort of sentiments that are dear to us. When one interprets this as a matter of law, as I have, it is a different matter.

My hon. and learned Friend will know that even judges in the court could not agree what it meant. Some judges came to different decisions and others came to the same position by different rules. If one thinks that this measure introduces simplicity, I say from first-hand personal experience that that is not so. It raises some difficult questions. I urge right hon. and hon. Members to remember that, if we pass the Bill, we shall introduce into our law a wholly new concept of what a judge must decide. In the railwaymen's case, the first matter to be decided was whether there was a breach of article II paragraph 1, which states:

> "Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests."

The first argument was whether the Labour legislation was in breach of that provision. In the end, that was the only matter that the court decided because, on behalf of the Government, I abandoned all defences based on paragraph 2 of article 11. If I had not done so, the Court would have had to decide another matter. Paragraph (2) states:

> "No restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of these rights other than such as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

That was the second issue raised by the Labour Government as defendants in those proceedings. There were piles of paper justifying the allegation by the Labour Government that, even if they were in breach of paragraph 1 of article 11, they were saved by paragraph 2. They said that what they were doing was necessary in a democratic society in the interests of the matters that I have recited. On behalf of the Government, I abandoned that defence. All the way along, we said that it was utterly disgraceful and could not be justified by any means. However, if we pass the Bill, that is the kind of issue that our courts will be called upon to decide. The Bill does not give everybody the right to take proceedings against everybody else who is thought to be in breach of its terms. It gives the right to take proceedings against public authorities, a right that is already covered by judicial review. However, our courts would be called upon to decide issues like that. To say that our judges are the best judges in the world is to state the obvious, but to say that they are qualified to make that kind of decision has no foundation whatsoever.

**Mr. Jeremy Hanley** (Richmond and Barnes): Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

**Sir Ian Percival:** I shall give way in a minute, but not until I have finished developing my argument.

**Mr. Hanley:** It is on that point.

**Sir Ian Percival:** Yes, but perhaps my hon. Friend will allow me to develop this point first.

The House must also remember that although the proceedings would start with our judges, who might make what we would think were sensible decisions, the ultimate authority would be with Strasbourg. Our judges might decide the issue of corporal punishment in a way that we thought was sensible, but the complainant could then go to Strasbourg and say that the English courts had interpreted the law wrongly and that he wanted Strasbourg to make the final decision. That is a possible remedy for great ill feeling and lack of confidence, to put it mildly. I beg the House to bear these matters in mind and not to be carried away by thinking that the advantage is all one way.

**Mr. Hanley:** My right hon. and learned Friend referred to the qualifications of British judges. Will he turn his mind to the qualifications of the judges who sit on the European Court of Human Rights? Does he know their lack of qualifications?

**Sir Ian Percival:** I am not quite sure that I follow that question.

**Mr. Hanley:** They need have no legal qualifications.

**Mr. Budgen:** It is a purely political court.

**Mr. Geoffrey Rippon** (Hexham): Members of Parliament have no qualifications, either.

**Sir Ian Percival:** Let me choose my words carefully. I appeared before the European Court of Human Rights, and that got me into the "Guinness Book of Records." When I first went there, 21 judges were sitting as a court, and I wondered what it would be like. Each country that is a signatory to the convention nominates one judge. On that occasion Luxembourg had nobody that it wished to appoint, so a Canadian judge was appointed. I do not say that to denigrate the European Court of Human Rights; I just point it out as a fact. Everyone ought to bear in mind that there would be the advantage in the first instance that our judges would be called upon to decide, but there would also be the disadvantage that at the end of the line there would still be the European Court of Human Rights, and if it were to disagree with our courts I do not think that the effect would be to lead to the confidence that my hon. and learned Friend believes that his Bill would instill.

**Mr. Richard Ottaway** (Nottingham, North): My right hon. and learned Friend expressed the opinion that judges should not be entitled to pass judgment on the terms of article 11. Is he aware that the Contempt of Court Act 1981 contains the very same words to which he referred?

**Sir Ian Percival:** That does not detract from my proposition. I speak as a practical man. I have seen the document that was before the court, when the issue was whether paragraph 2 had been satisfied in relation to trade union legislation. Anybody else who has had the misfortune to see it will agree with the view that I am putting forward: that I merely express some doubt and a word of caution—albeit, I hope, very firmly. The fact that something may create a difficulty in one sphere is no possible argument for enlarging and multiplying those difficulties.

My hon. and learned Friend said that when we ratified the convention we must have thought that it would

*[Sir Ian Percival]*

implement our own law. I dare say that we did, but things have moved on since then. Anybody who believes that at that time we should have allowed the Strasbourg court to tell us what to do about corporal punishment is mistaken.

**Mr. Budgen:** Is it not right that although we ratified the convention it was many years before we gave the right of individual petition to our citizens? We were recognising the will of Europe, particularly the will of Germany to apply some form of external discipline to its internal political scene. By our ratification of the convention we gave a nod in that direction, but by our failure to allow indvidual citizens to do that did we not say that we did not think that it was necessary here?

**Sir Ian Percival:** My hon. Friend will develop his point later, if he catches your eye, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I shall stick to my own argument.

Whatever anybody thought when we signed the convention, a great deal of it has come true. Things have moved on, and now we have some experience. I ask the House to have regard to that experience and to the difficulties that have emerged.

I do not believe that it adds to the argument to say that 70 per cent. of the public are in favour of the Bill. Probably more people are in favour of all of us having the rights that are set out in the convention, but to say that that means that they are in favour of the Bill is a complete non sequitur. It is simply a statistic. Hon. Members who have much more opportunity than do the public to understand what would be the effect of such a Bill must ensure that we do not attach too many hopes to it.

My hon. and learned Friend referred to my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor. It is true that there is a programme "in the can" which has not yet been transmitted in which the words that my hon. and learned Friend has recited were spoken by my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor, so I had a word with him. I understand that when we hear the programme we shall be told that that was said in the context of what Lord McCluskey said in his Reith lectures, not in the context of this Bill. *[Interruption.]* That is not intended to be amusing. It is a fact. I know that my hon. and learned Friend would not wish the House to attach more significance to it than is necessary. Therefore I am sure he welcomes my saying that.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** Of course I was reading the Lord Chancellor's words. I read them accurately and I have submitted them to the House. I said that they suggested that a mistake had been made and that the Bill would put it right.

**Sir Ian Percival:** I think that my hon. and learned Friend has overstated it, because no reference was made to the Bill putting anything right. That is something that we have to consider ourselves. I was not in any sense being critical of my hon. and learned Friend. I referred to that matter only as a question of fact.

**Mr. Rippon:** When Lord Wade introduced his Bill, to which reference has been made, in the other place, my noble Friend the Lord Chancellor said:

"I shall vote for it on Second Reading." — [*Official Report, House of Lords*, 8 November 1979; Vol. 402, c. 1069.]

**Sir Ian Percival:** Yes, so that another look could be taken at how it would work.

**Mr. Rippon:** Let us do that.

**Sir Ian Percival:** Let us, when we look at something, look at the other side of it as well. My noble Friend said that he would vote for the Bill not because he agreed with everything in it but because he felt another look could be taken at it. We have all had quite a few other looks at it since then. My noble Friend has always made it clear that he regards sovereignty in Parliament as immensely important, and whenever he has supported the principle of Bills such as this, he has made it clear that the provisions of the convention prevail only where they are not expressly or by implication overruled by statute. All I am doing is sounding a note of caution over some of the points that need to be looked at if the House decides to give the Bill a Second Reading.

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): Will my right hon. and learned Friend support the Bill?

**Sir Ian Percival:** We can all have a bit of fun with interventions. However, I want to end my speech so that my hon. Friends can make their own. I query whether clause 4 meets the text that I have been outlining, and right hon and hon. Members can look at it and form their own conclusions. Mine is that I am dubious about it.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to speak so early in the debate because I have another duty of immense importance which I have to perform, and I shall not be able to stay for the whole of the debate. I say that to make my apologies in advance both to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde and to the House. I hope that it will be clear that I have personal experience of trying to see how the provisions are implemented. I have no doubt as to what I want to see as the rights of our people, but I doubt whether the Bill in its present form adds anything to them. My fear is that too many people will place too much importance on it and we shall disappoint them. We should avoid that.

10.52 am

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** (Great Grimsby): I shall not follow the argument made by the right hon. and learned Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival), because I could not. It seemed to be the argument that the best is the enemy of the better and that he did not want the advance or achievement that it is in our power to make because he wanted something better, which is mythical. However I congratulate stongly and sincerely the hon. and learned Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner). The Bill is the triumph of his career. He introduced it in a graceful, witty and powerful speech, and as a sponsor of it I wish it every success in its progress.

We have two purposes in the House and Parliament. The first is to provide for the well-being of our people, to enlarge the nation and to increase their joy, as it is put in Isaiah. The second is to protect and advance their rights and freedoms. For both those purposes we have always used the power of Parliament, which these days means the power of the party majority, and thus the power of the Executive. We should ask, before we rush to reject the Bill as an infringement of the power of Parliament, whether that power has served the people well. We have had the strongest Executive but the slowest rate of economic growth and development. We are now one of the comparatively declining industrial powers, so a strong Executive has not served us well there.

When it comes to the rights and freedom of people, the strong Executive has become one of the most serious restrictions. This very week, as if the Government have carefully stage-managed the events to provide support for the Bill, what has been going on in BBC Scotland has shown that point.

The power of the Executive and of Parliament is a particular problem for us in the Labour party, and I address my remarks to my hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) on the Front Bench. I would not want the Labour party to praise with faint damns. We can leave churlishness to the Government, to whom it comes naturally, and not take their position on this Bill, which is of great importance to the Labour party as well as to the rest of the House. In the Labour party we are traditionally suspicious of a Bill of Rights and of judges and courts—in many cases with good reason. We rely on Parliament as the engine or instrument of Socialism and on the power that the mandate confers to carry through a programme as the lever of Socialism.

We have to ask now how well, in the past decade, those two instruments have served us to advance the cause of improving the lot of the people. They have in fact become engines for reversing so much of what we have achieved over the previous decades. I am clear that rights, properly defined as they are in a European convention—although less adequately defined than I would like them to be—would provide the basis for the resistance to the rearguard action carried out by the Government, undermining the rights and position of the people. They are a base for resisting the reaction that has gone on over the past few years.

We should also consider the role of rights in Socialism. In the past weeks, two books have been published, one by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Sparkbrook (Mr. Hattersley), and a good book on Socialism and freedom by my hon. Friend the Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould). They have both emphasised the undoubted truth that Socialism is about freedom. It must be about freedom, because economic advance gives people the power to fulfil their freedom, and a base from which they can grasp freedom. In the abstract, freedom is no use. The power and the means are needed to fulfil it. The advance of the economic well-being of the people is the advance of their freedom.

**Mr. Forth** *rose*——

**Mr. Mitchell:** I shall not give way.

Freedom implies the opportunity to exercise rights, as well as the concession of them.

Traditionally, we have looked to the state for that means of advance. We have seen it as Socialism by prescription, handed down by Government through the state. We have to ask whether, at the level of advance and well-being that our people have reached, as our pluralistic society develops, even if it is in slow motion here—we are behind the rest of the world, but we are becoming more a diverse and pluralistic society—prescription is any longer the sole and adequate weapon to advance the cause of the people. As people are making conscious and deliberate choices as consumers in a consumer society, we have to ask whether those choices can be compartmentalised and whether we should not enlarge their choices in the political arena, in administration and in justice.

Should we not look to Socialism to advance not only by prescription but by empowering the people, giving them rights and the ability to stand on their own two feet and pursue their causes in the way that they want and to make deliberate choices? That is now a major engine of advance to which we should look, through the concession of rights and the advancement of the people, to provide for the future and rights, to advance their cause, to give them information — information is power — to have Government brought closer to them by the process of decentralisation and to have Government more open to influence by them. In short, we progress by empowering the people because that is what our people want. There is a widespread desire for rights and for the strength that those rights will bring. They will give people the ability to stand on their feet and face the world. That is why it is so important that we get back to full employment. There is no greater power to help somebody face the world than the power that comes from having a job and to be able to tell one's boss to get knotted if one wants to move on to another job and to provide for one's family. We must enlarge that and bring it into the political arena. We need as a party to accept rights—not churlishly to quibble and deny them or find arguments against giving them, but to embrace the act of giving them.

I was born with one supreme advantage; I am not a lawyer. However, the Bill takes a major step on the road for rights. Even though I am not a lawyer, I could write a better convention. Indeed, it is important to note that the New Zealand Labour party is now in the process of introducing a Bill of Rights and drafting its own convention of rights that will update so many of the provisions of the European convention. It will give the people rights of trade union membership, rights in housing and all sorts of areas that are important.

It would be possible to write a better convention, but the advance proposed in the Bill is immediate, practicable, in our grasp and necessary. It is necessary because people are forced into the folly of pursuing cases to Strasbourg with an inordinate delay and expense. It can take up to eight years for a case to get through that procedure and five years is probably the minimum. It can cost about £70,000, for which only a pathetically inadequate sum of legal aid is available. Why should people be forced to that expense when they could pursue those rights through our own courts, with our own judges, and when they can use our legal system rather than having to go all the way to Strasbourg?

It would help the image of Britain if those rights were brought into our law, because fewer cases would be ruled admissible by the court, to the humiliation of this country. We have been ruled against in twice as many cases as any other country in Europe. That is a national humiliation. We would not face that if we could pursue rights in our own courts in our own way. That is a major practical argument.

It is important to say that this measure is popular. The hon. and learned Member for Fylde quoted the opinion polls to show the strength of support. That may well be, but the 2:1 majority who said that the they wanted the Bill, 71 per cent. of whom said that it would give them more faith in our system did not know every dot and comma of the European convention, just as I do not. However, they have a yearning and a desire for rights. We see that in our constituencies. People want to be able to stand on their own feet and pursue their own rights. That is what they

*[Mr. Mitchell]*

were expressing. This Bill satisfies that need. The list of organisations supporting the Bill such as the British Council of Churches, the Civil and Public Services Association, the Consumers Association, Justice, MIND, the National Council for Civil Liberties and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations should give us an indication of the support for the strengthening of rights that it will confer.

It will not be a new dawn of liberty, but it will strengthen the citizen against the Executive. The citizen will be given the right to complain and to pursue his rights and the Executive will have at the very least, to answer and put up a case for what they are doing and not to act on their abstract will and power. That is a major advance.

The Bill advances the cause of liberty in another way. It introduces an element of pluralism into our system which is necessary, given the overseeing power of the Executive in Britain. It is the dominant feature of our system of Government. It is all very well for the right hon. and learned Member for Southport to say that we should rely on the power of Parliament. The power of Parliament is a party majority, not the power of independent judgment by independent-minded Members. It is a steamroller driven by the Executive. The Executive in Britain is all powerful. An element of pluralism is a check on that.

The words of Neal Ascherson in *The Observer* on Sunday sum up so many of my feelings about the Bill. He said that the convention

> "is absolutely alien to the practices and theory of the British State and, if it survived, would begin to subvert, split and topple them one after another. And that is why — on balance—I am for it."

So am I, for the same reason. The Bill will introduce an element of pluralism and choice. It is another opinion by which people have to be influenced. Incorporating the convention into our legislation will educate the judges. That is vital. I can think of no higher purpose than that. It is a tragedy that we cannot advance and strengthen rights in Britain because we do not trust the judges to enforce them. That is one of the problems for the Labour party.

Professor Griffiths in his book on the politics of judiciary sees the judges, rightly, as hopelessly unfit to stand between the citizen and the state. In the view of Professor Griffiths and myself, they are insitinctively Conservative, respect property, have establishment attitudes and are grovellingly servile to the Executive. All that is true. We have to change that. How do we change it? We change it by educating them and by including another element in the system to which they have to pay attention. We have to introduce the rights which the convention will confer on the people. The judges must then listen to that and not follow their own instincts as they often do. They will have to listen to the rulings and prescriptions of the convention. That is an important process of education that we have to accept in our system.

**The Solicitor-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew):** If the hon. Gentleman considers that the judges are grovellingly servile to the Executive of Britain, how does he explain the development by the judges, not by Parliament, of the jurisdiction of the judicial review of the exercise of discretionary power by the Executive?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I am grateful to the right hon. and learned Gentleman for that point. I should say, in passing, that I hope that he will not fulfil his role as the killer of infant Bills on this Bill, as he did on mine to take the power of conveyancing from solicitors. I hope that he will have a more magnanimous spirit towards this Bill and that he will not introduce a quibbling argument about the Bill suggesting that role.

I welcome that system of judicial review. In spite of that, the attitude of the judges is still too sympathetic and, particularly on matters of national security, they look to the wishes and instincts of the Executive. They take far too much account of that. It is interesting that a Government who developed that sort of conditioned reflex of expecting servility from the judges were humiliated in Australia when they expected Australian judges to behave in the same fashion. Therefore, we need to educate them by including this element in the system.

It is necessary to do that, because it is the only way in which we can pursue rights and enlarge the perception of the judges. An example of the affect of this legislation can be seen in the case against the BBC and the dramatic events in Glasgow last week. It was clear in the House that the Government were embarrassed by the mess that they had got themselves into. Government Members do not usually sit as silent as they did then. There was embarrassment and Ministers were half-hearted about defending a position with which they were not happy. Some Back Benchers tried to slur Duncan Campbell as a means of justifying what had happened. If the convention had been in force, those events could not have happened. The Bill confers a right of privacy and the freedom of the press to have and to use information. That can be overruled by national security.

**Mr. Steve Norris** (Oxford, East) *rose*——

**Mr. Mitchell:** I will not give way.

National security can overrule that argument, but the Government would have to prove national security and not just assert it and do what they do all too often, by saying, "Our convenience is national security." They would have to prove it. They could not have argued that national security had any bearing on the confiscation of the five other programmes that were carted away in those three vanloads of confiscated material. That included the tape of the state opening of Parliament, presumably so that the police could see whether Sir Antony Duff appeared on camera at any moment during the state opening. The argument of national security could not have been used. It could have been argued on one programme, but the Government would have had to prove it. That is the important advance that is made in the Bill.

**Mr. Norris:** Will the hon. Gentleman give way?

**Mr. Mitchell:** I am not giving way; I am sorry.

In all those respects—pluralism and education of the judges—the Bill is a great advance. We cannot now rely —if we ever could—on the standards and integrity of good sound chaps in power, in Parliament and in the judiciary. We now have a much more populist political climate. We now have not "sound chaps" but professional politicians who respond to populist instincts in a declining nation in an economy that is in decline. Those instincts can be nasty. Those people are not committed to the defence of standards in the same way as once they might have been

—we cannot trust them any longer. We need the backing of a written convention because, in this new climate, rights can all too easily be trampled upon.

To enforce the Bill, we need a more democratic and more open legal profession, which serves the people, not in its own selfish interests. We now have a legal profession that is a service industry that has ceased to serve anything but its own selfishness. We need a legal National Health Service. The power of the law should be brought to bear so that people's rights, their disputes, their right to work, and their right to get social security are enforced in a way that is open, accessible and available. At present the legal profession is certainly not that. The Bill will advance us in that direction, too. The important point is that it brings rights into the purview of the system, and forces the system to listen to them.

The arguments against the Bill have been purely quixotic—the myth of the sovereignty of Parliament; the myth of the independence of the courts. Today, we advance rights by putting them in writing and by forcing the judges to take cognisance. I hope that my party will not, out of a churlish attachment to myths, oppose the real advance in the Bill, which offers to strengthen our people against the powers of their majority.

11.12 am

**Mr. Geoffrey Rippon** (Hexham): I join in the congratulations to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) on using his good fortune in the ballot to propose the Bill. I especially congratulate him on the way in which he explained its provisions and its purpose with his customary skill and clarity.

In the light of recent events to which the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) referred, there has been a great clamour, especially on Opposition Benches, about human rights and civil liberties. That has not happened suddenly. Right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House—especially in opposition—I emphasise that — have made ringing speeches about individual freedoms in the face of the growing power of the Executive, to which the hon. Gentleman so rightly referred. I hope that all his right hon. and hon. Friends who made those ringing speeches about human rights and civil liberties will be here today to support the Bill instead of being at a coffee morning or a wine and cheese party in their constituencies.

This is a matter of concern particularly to right hon. and hon. Members when in opposition, because I recall my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-East (Sir K. Joseph) saying that it was the actions of the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Mr. Foot) that had made him decide that we had to have a Bill of Rights. He said of the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent that he was a Brutus in opposition but Caesarian in office. Indeed, at that time, one did not hear very much from the right hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent or the right hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Benn) about the importance of freedom of information. I have no doubt that when they were members of the defence and overseas policy committee sometimes they did not even talk about those matters to their colleagues in the Cabinet, much less their party.

The truth is that all Governments, of whatever persuasion, have a tendency to be authoritarian, and future Governments may be even more so. That is why it is important today that right hon. and hon. Members should demonstrate that their fine words and speeches are not merely

"sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

I emphasise to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby that this is not to say that the Bill would be of any help or encouragement to those who seek to act contrary to the interests of national security. It would, however, give everyone the opportunity to pursue his legitimate rights before the European Court, such as the right to respect for his private and family life, his home, his correspondence and his freedom of expression. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival) said that when he went into court, to his horror, he was faced with a large pile of documents. I should have thought that the nature of his long and extensive practice meant that he was continually confronted with a pile of documents. Nobody suggests that it is easy to interpret the law or that a lawyer of his standing could get through a case in a single day. There were many documents at Sizewell, and the issues there are fairly clear. Is one reactor safer than another; is any reactor safe? It may be a simple question, but it can be difficult to answer.

**Sir Ian Percival:** I am much obliged to my right hon. and learned Friend for his nice comments. I should like to make just one point. Anybody who thinks that the Bill introduces simplicity might be wrong.

**Mr. Rippon:** I am sure that none of us would argue for simplicity in matters of law. Of course, difficulties arise. The fact that we face today is that we are already bound by the convention. Under international law, we are bound by it. Our lawyers largely drafted it, we were the first to ratify it and we have consistently recognised the decisions of the court.

The principal effect of the Bill, as my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde explained, is that it gives British citizens the right of immediate recourse to a British court if they believe that their rights under the convention have been infringed. I believe that that would reduce the number of cases in which British citizens would be forced to take the long trail to Strasbourg to get a judicial hearing. The trouble is that, as long as the convention remains only an international obligation and forms no part of our domestic law, it is our citizens alone who have recourse only to that remote, delayed and costly remedy. The citizens of every other country that is a party to the convention have a right of recourse to their own domestic courts. Although that is not in the Bill, it was the intention of article 13 of the convention. It does not need to be in the Bill because, if we pass it, it will have the effect of applying article 13.

Lord Scarman observed in another place:

"the wisdom and experience of our judges and the traditions of English law never become available for consideration by the European Court."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 4 December 1980; Vol. 415, c. 543.]

The Government might have lost fewer cases if the European Court had had the benefit of the views of English judges. The convention already binds us. This point has been made frequently in the debate. In those circumstance, why should we be more afraid of British judges than of European judges? We are told that it would be dangerous for our judges to be politicised, whatever that may mean. Those who are doubtful about the Bill make a great point about the fact that our judges are

*[Mr. Rippon]*

already politicised by the exercise of judicial review, a process which has been readily accepted and welcomed by my right hon. and learned Friend, the Solicitor-General. The very fact that the process of judicial review has developed, emphasises that judges can and should deal with these matters.

Another point which must be emphasised is that the Bill gives no legislative initiative to judges. Nor does it give them a veto on legislation. From time to time, courts may strike down a statute on the grounds, in effect, that it has been badly drafted or perhaps does not have the result that Parliament imagined. The courts may describe an order of regulation made by the Executive as ultra vires. However, the Bill cannot ensure that this House cannot introduce legislation because the judges will strike it down. The Bill can enable a claim that a particular statute is wrong in its drafting or intention and a court may go against the Government in a way that the Government does not expect. It can state that the European convention applies. However, the Bill cannot prevent the House from passing a law which the courts would have to obey; for example, providing that caning may take place at any time, anywhere, under any circumstances if that is what Parliament wishes. I do not know why people claim that judges are not qualified in these matters. I do not know what qualifications some hon. Members have to express views on such matters.

Parliamentary sovereignty would remain inviolate if the Bill becomes law. The Bill would, however, help to ensure that the exercise of parliamentary sovereignty was subject to more careful scrutiny with regard to basic human rights and civil liberties. In effect, the Bill would provide a check — not a total check, but a salutory check — on the exercise of arbitrary power.

The Bill does not provide a new constitution, as a leading article in *The Times* implied yesterday. This is not a Bill of Rights with entrenched provisions. It does not pre-empt, if anyone would so wish, the establishment of some form of constitutional court as the article in *The Times* today suggests. The Bill does not pre-empt or prejudge the still awaited all-party talks on a Bill of Rights which were envisaged in the Conservative party manifesto in 1979.

Today we have the opportunity to recognise that the great victories of the past, including of course the Bill of Rights of 1688, were won by Parliament acting against the Crown, the Executive. Of course, now the Executive and the law-making power are predominantly in the hands of the Government of the day. I remember Harold Macmillan once saying to a group of junior Ministers, "Remember, we are the Queen's men."

The purpose of Government, whether it is Government from the Conservative Benches or from the Labour Benches, is to get their programme through. They have to deal with Parliament. Anyone who believes that in these days a Parliament rises time and time again to exercise its authority against the Lobby fodder or the payroll vote, is living in a world of total illusion and everyone in this House and outside knows that. We can no longer take it for granted that human rights and civil liberties in this country need no more protection than is provided by parliamentary vigilance. The stream of citizens that have headed for Strasbourg to seek remedies over the years testifies to that.

Our trouble today, which was identified by the late Lord Radcliffe in his Reith lectures on "The Problem of Power" in 1951 — and I suggest that he was at least as good an authority on these matters as Lord McCluskey — is that at a time when the Executive and the legislature are combined:

"the Security of what used to be called constitutional rights is a very frail thing."

The Bill, if it does not do everything, will help sustain such rights. A Bill very similar to this has passed through all its stages in another place three times. This Bill should be given a Second Reading in the House so that it can be given the same scrutiny as has been given in another place.

I interrupted my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport, the former Solicitor-General, in the discussion about what the Lord Chancellor was about to say, although that was already on tape——

**Mr. Marlow:** Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

**Mr. Rippon:** In a moment.

When a Bill very similar to this was debated in another place, the Lord Chancellor said:

"I shall vote for it on Second Reading—except that I do not think that a vote will be taken—"

They had no doubt in another place that a Bill of this kind should be given a Second Reading and a vote was taken. The Lord Chancellor added:

"and I shall give it as fair a wind as I can." — [*Official Report, House of Lords*, 8 November 1979; Vol. 402, c. 1069.]

That is what I believe the Government should do today. They should vote for the Bill on Second Reading and give it as fair a wind as they can. They are not precluded, nor is any other hon. Member, from making some of the detailed arguments, raising doubts and expressing various points in Committee.

**Mr. Marlow:** Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford) *rose*——

**Mr. Rippon:** The Bill should receive a Second Reading and I hope that the House will grant that.

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow) *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Do I understand that the right hon. and learned Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) has resumed his seat?

**Mr. Rippon:** No, I want to reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, North (Mr. Marlow).

**Mr. Marlow:** My right hon. and learned Friend has said that it would be perfectly possible for the House, should it so wish, to pass a new law on corporal punishment. Article 3 of the convention states:

"No-one should be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

It may well be that some aggrieved citizen would wish to take this through the judicial process. Can my right hon. and learned Friend take the House through the way in which that process would apply and tell us what the likely outcome would be?

**Mr. Rippon:** British judges in British courts and the European Court could state that something is contrary to the convention on human rights. That would have great force with public opinion and I hope have great force with the Government of the day and the House. However, the ultimate sovereignty of Parliament remains absolute. It can pass what law it likes and British judges would have to enforce that.

11.26 am

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): I found the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) not only eloquent but moving. The speech was moving because it was made by an hon. and learned Member who really cares about the subject on which he was speaking. The hon. and learned Gentleman was overmodest about his own role in relation to that of Lord Scarman and Lord Broxbourne. I shall support him with enthusiasm on the Second Reading. I do not promise necessarily to support him on Third Reading because my right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney (Mr. Shore) may be correct in his suggestion that there is a case for a Select Committee. These matters should be discussed and I share some of the misgivings expressed by the right hon. and learned Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival).

At 11 o'clock last night, Professor Michael Zander said on the radio that proposals in the Bill would have been of great importance in relation to the BBC visitation in Glasgow. If this Bill had been in operation, the BBC could immediately have gone to the kind of institution that the hon. and learned Member for Fylde is proposing. There would not have been arguments over the Official Secrets Act 1911, and the delay. That was Professor Zander's opinion.

I argue from the particular to the general. There has been an un-British event at Queen Margaret drive. On Sunday morning, when I heard the BBC news of the operation, I jumped into my car to go to Glasgow. However, I thought better of that, took advice from friends and decided that I did not want a row about a Member of Parliament interfering with the course of the law.

I am a Scot with a lot of firsthand information, and more since I was in Scotland on Tuesday gathering facts, even at the expense of not being present to vote in the House. The truth is that many Scottish policemen are appalled. Were I to name sources, I would jeopardise careers and I will not be taunted into doing that. Resenting the very idea of rifling through the BBC, with whom they had daily, decent relations, the Scottish police asked the Metropolitan police to convince them that the case for entering Queen Margaret drive was watertight. Except over Northern Ireland questions, the Metropolitan police have no status outside London. They can only ask for help from forces such as Strathclyde. Not only did the Scottish police go to the procurator fiscal and the Crown Office, of which more anon, but they pressed the Metropolitan police as to the origin of the instructions. The Scots police knew that they would get public and media odium, descending on them.

At this point, reference was made to the advice of Mr. Bernard Sheldon, the legal adviser to the security services.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I find it difficult to relate the hon. Gentleman's remarks to the Bill. He must relate them to it.

**Mr. Dalyell:** They relate precisely to the Bill in the way that Professor Zander related them——

**Mr. Forth:** They do no such thing.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Professor Zander is a professor of constitutional law, and this is what he said at 11 o'clock last night. Indeed, my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell), without consulting me, made precisely the same point. One is entitled in this House to argue from the particular to the general. It would be much quicker, because I shall be brief, if I was allowed to continue my speech.

Superintendent Hilton Cole of the special branch was working closely with Mr. Sheldon. A little later, Lord Clyde made his ruling. The Strathclyde police had proverbial kittens. Some of them saw what they were being asked to do as cocking the proverbial five fingers at the Court of Session, and police officers of quality and experience in Scotland do not cock a snook at the High Court.

After Lord Clyde's intervention, the police from Strathclyde asked further questions, and they were told explicitly by the Metropolitan police that not only was there the advice of Bernard Sheldon but the authority of Downing street for entry into Queen Margaret drive and the seizure of material.

I believe my sources—I am something of a receptacle for information and am discriminating about it—who assure me that very precise questions were asked by the Scottish police about ministerial authority for what to them was a mind-boggling and unprecedented act, and that they were given the clear understanding that they had No. 10 Downing street as the authority for their action.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I am still waiting for the hon. Gentleman to relate his remarks to the Bill.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Nothing of this sort would have happened if, in the opinion of Professor Zander and others, the institution which the hon. and learned Member for Fylde is proposing was in operation.

I will be acquitted of being a Scottish nationalist or of having Scottish nationalist tendencies, but I have heartfelt sorrow for the Scottish police and share their seething anger of some decent, good police officers at the way in which this operation was run from London. We should remember that the operation could have been killed stone dead if this Bill had been in operation. Scottish Conservative Members should be warned that Mr. Ingham and Mr. Sheldon are excellent recruiting officers—I mean sergeants—for the Scottish National party——

**Mr. Marlow:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You are always very wise and you are aware of what is happening, but it appears to some of us that the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is getting a great deal of latitude. Would you give the same sort of indulgence to Conservaive Members should they be speaking about something wholly unrelated to the Bill?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) has endeavoured to explain to the House how his remarks relate to the Bill. I am sure that he will continue to do so.

**Mr. Dalyell:** They are precisely related.

Conservative Members of Parliament are padding round the corridors of Westminster, casting blame and aspersions on the Lord Advocate. Let me assure them that those careful and distinguished lawyers in the Crown Office know their history. This Bill is partly about history.

*[Mr. Dalyell]*

It is about 1763 and John Wilkes, about the North Briton and about general warrants. If we are to be concerned about general warrants, thank heaven for the right hon. and learned Member for Fylde.

It is inconceivable that able and conscientious men of the quality of the Advocate Depute, Mr. G. W. Penrose, would be party to encouraging the Lord Advocate, off his own bat, to allow BBC Scotland to be trawled.

Let me say a kind word about the Lord Advocate. It is simply not in Kenny Cameron's nature — decent-minded, able, rather non-political person that he is—to initiate or acquiesce in a massive police visitation on Queen Margaret drive unless he had assured himself that he was required to do so by the highest ministerial authority. It was to the Head of Government's office that they understandably turned. I do not blame them, as the press and public consequences were foreseeable and foreseen, predictable and predicted. I leave it to my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar), in his letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland on 4 February 1987, to clear up the discrepancies arising between the Secretary of State, at column 857 of Volume 109——

**Mr. Forth:** What has this to do with the Bill?

**Mr. Dalyell:** It has everything to do with it. There were discrepancies between the Secretary of State and the Solicitor-General, at column 852, about the role of the Lord Advocate and possible contacts with the Secretary of State for Scotland.

What I was told in Scotland on Tuesday 3 February, confirming information that had come to me earlier from other sources, was that the Crown Office, alarmed by the enormity of what it was being asked to do in authorising a police descent on Queen Margaret drive, made a direct approach to Downing street.

**Mr. Forth:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I repeat that the hon. Gentleman must relate his remarks to the Bill.

**Mr. Dalyell:** They relate to article 10 of the convention.

The Lord Advocate and the Crown Office were told what was expected of them: bluntly, to allow special branch to take anything and everything from BBC Scotland. Lord Cameron of Lochbroom, a good lawyer known for his good works in relation to the heritage of Edinburgh and other worthwhile causes, and brought into the Government for his personal virtues and legal reputation, was confronted with an appalling dilemma—whether to defy his Prime Minister's wishes——

**Mr. Forth:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A moment ago, the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) referred, in defending the relevance of his comments, to article 10 of the convention. Will he explain to you and to the House what relevance that article has to the personal accusations that he is making and the detailed discussion of matters that do not remotely relate to the Bill?

**Mr. Dalyell:** It concerns freedom of expression.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I remind the hon. Gentleman and the House that many hon. Members wish to speak. Those who are fortunate to be called must relate their remarks to the Bill.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Freedom of expression concerns very much the behaviour of the Prime Minister.

On Wednesday 4 February, the Lord Advocate made a statement denying ministerial involvement. We could all rest assured, he said, that he knew what his duty was.

**Mr. Richard Holt** (Langbaurgh): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Will you rule whether freedom of expression means that any hon. Member may speak on any subject at any time irrespective of what we are debating?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It would be better if the House left this matter to the Chair.

**Mr. Dalyell:** We need this Human Rights Bill so that we are protected from Sir Robert Armstrong's definition of the truth. On this, the Lord Advocate may be on terra firma. One of my major complaints is that Ministers were bypassed. This is where the Bill comes in. "Guidance" came from Mr. Bernard Sheldon and Downing street. For the Prime Minister to claim that massive entry to BBC Glasgow was purely a police matter is equivalent to a claim——

**Mr. Holt:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Is it in order for an hon. Member to read his speech? I refer to chapter 19, page 417, of "Erskine May". Is not the hon. Gentleman merely reading what he has written down rather than making a speech?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon. Members are allowed to refer to copious notes, but I remind the hon. Member for Linlithgow to take note of what I said. I have not heard him refer to the Bill for some time.

**Mr. Dalyell:** This matter concerns freedom of expression. It is equivalent to a claim by Henry II that the murder of Saint Thomas a Becket on his own altar at Canterbury was

"purely a matter for the Four Knights."

Just as the source of the decision to do away with Becket was royal tantrum, so the source of the rummaging of the BBC is prime ministerial tantrum. This Bill would defend us from prime ministerial tantrum. "Who will rid me of Duncan Campbell and all his programmes?" Surrounded as she is by thugs of her choice in Downing street, it is scarcely surprising that the wretched Lord Advocate and his officials were left in no doubt about what, to their distaste, they were told was their duty. Prime ministerial vengeance is no basis for a prosecution policy.

Of course, Conservative Members can feign pain. They may genuinely have no inkling of contact between Downing street and the Crown Office. But they can hardly be surprised. This is a rerun of the Solicitor-General's letter on Westland a year ago. I am glad that the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), to whom I am deeply sympathetic, is in his place. In January 1986 the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General threatened resignation on a matter of principle and were dissuaded only when it was put to them that such an action by Law Officers—who are far more important than the Secretaries of State for Defence and for Trade and Industry in this context—might topple the Government. On that occasion, they were abused and bypassed by their Prime Minister. They were given not the slightest indication of the use to which Mr. Bernard Ingham, via Miss Collette Bowe, who has locked away her version of events in a bank vault—a strange thing to do if they coincide with the Government's version of events — would put the Solicitor-General's letter. Again the Law Officers were bypassed by the Prime Minister.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. Gentleman must explain to me and to the House how he relates his remarks to the Bill that we are discussing.

**Mr. Dalyell:** If this Bill had been passed, the whole question of the BBC in Glasgow and what happened previously, given the Prime Minister's style of operation, would have been different.

Was the raid by the police postponed from Friday 30 January because Special Branch knew that the Secretary of State for Scotland was due to go to Queen Margaret drive for a radio interview?

The whole BBC case is about politics and not about national security, and that is where the Bill comes into it. The raid was directed from London and by Superintendent Hilton Cole. One might ask what Mr. Ingham had to do with legal decisions in Scotland. A justified answer would be: about as much as the Prime Minister's press officer had to do with the private letter from the Solicitor-General with regard to Westland and the then Defence Secretary within minutes of it being received in Downing street. We know that it was before 6 January 1986 that the Prime Minister instigated the Solicitor-General's letter and left everything thereafer to her henchman, Bernard Ingham. I hope that this is an anti-Ingham Bill.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I ask the hon. Gentleman to consider whether he is being fair to the House. He has an Adjournment debate today relating to the Official Secrets Act. I hope that he will bear that in mind.

**Mr. Nicholas Baker** (Dorset, North): Further to your remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are hearing a discussion about how the Government take their decisions. That has nothing to do with the right to free expression under the Bill or with the Second Reading of the Bill.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have appealed to the sense of fairness of the hon. Member for Linlithgow. He almost always responds to the Chair on that ground and I ask him again to remember that he has an Adjournment debate today.

**Mr. Dalyell:** We are dealing with protection from the Prime Minister, the most powerful "man" in British politics. When pressed, she blamed misunderstandings between civil servants. When pressed by the Attorney-General with the threat of resignation, she reluctantly set up an inquiry into that which she knew full well she herself had instigated: wasting police time, as the Liberal Leader put it. It was wasting time.

In 24 years as an MP, I have seen many letters of resignation — some curt, some acrimonious, others sad and affectionate, as between old political friends. Never has there been anything like the negotiated correspondence between this Prime Minister and her erstwhile Trade and Industry Secretary. I quote from the *Daily Telegraph:*

> "You have been a steadfast exponent of Government policy and I have admired the dedication and loyalty with which you have carried out your duties. I hope that it will not be long before your return to high office to continue your Ministerial career."

How could she say that, if the whole story was of the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks having deceived his senior Civil Servants, his Cabinet colleagues and his Prime Minister for 14 whole days.

How could the Prime Minister say that if the whole story—

**Mr. Marlow:** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Gentleman maintains that he is relating his remarks to freedom of expression. It seems to us on the Government side that what he is seeking is freedom of innuendo. Is there any way in which you can protect the House from that? Can I also ask whether you would allow any other hon. Member to abuse the rules of procedure in the same way as the hon. Gentleman?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have the impression that the hon. Gentleman is coming to the end of his speech.

**Mr. Dalyell:** The Bill is about freedom from scapegoat politics. I have had no previous discussion with the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks, but, speaking bluntly, I think he has been treated extremely badly. If the story about having deceived his civil servants and his Cabinet colleagues and his Prime Minister for 14 days is true, the Prime Minister could hardly have written him such a letter. We are dealing with the breakdown of trust in the public life of Britain. Many times bitten, twice shy of believing this Prime Minister. After the Ponting trial and what emerged there and after the untruths——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I have already explained on many occasions to the hon. Gentleman that he must relate his remarks to the Bill. I can see no relevance to the Bill in what he is saying. I ask the hon. Gentleman yet again to respect the ruling that I have given. If he does not I shall have to ask him to resume his seat.

**Mr. Dalyell:** The protection of truth and the protection of the position of the Law Officers will be greatly helped by this Bill. Over Peter Wright's prosecution, as over Westland, the Prime Minister has treated her Law Officers, the holders of great offices of state, as the most inconsequential of junior ministers. She bypassed them on matters of central concern and relied instead on shadowy and sinister figures like Mr. Bernard Sheldon. In the case to which my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) spoke, the Scottish Law Officers were treated no better. The Crown Office in Edinburgh is no ivory tower. The civil servants there are of a high quality and are politically sensitive. The Solicitor-General is a parliamentary colleague of whom I and many of my hon. Friends think well in spite of our political differences. The Lord Advocate is a man of many qualities. Just as she treated the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks over Westland, the right hon. Member for Cambridgeshire, South-East (Mr. Pym) over the Falklands, the right hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Howell) over the miners in 1981, she has left her Law Officers carrying the can. This is a Teflon Prime Minister, a Prime Minister who above all makes sure that nothing will stick to her. The BBC raises the Prime Minister's Teflon characteristics.

The Bill will be a great help. The Prime Minister operates through the instigation of improper acts. She makes sure that they are done through Mr. Ingham and others. To suggest that she had no inkling of the police visit to the BBC in Glasgow is make-believe. One needs a

*[Mr. Dalyell]*

long spoon when dealing with Downing street. The Crown Office should realise the need for a long spoon. The Prime Minister and her office behaved with extreme economy towards the truth. They take refuge in philologically clever language. What is meant by "to consult" and "to inform"? The issue is about our protection from the highest officers of government and their misbehaviour. In these cases we see a bypass operation of Parliament, a parliamentary bypass operation. Together with many hon. Members I passionately want to see responsibility and decisions come back to this House. Decisions should not be taken by unelected people operating under Prime Ministerial insinuation and over whom we have no control. That is why the Bill should have a Second Reading.

11.48 am

**Mr. Fred Silvester** (Manchester, Withington): The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) is a sufficiently experienced Member of the House to know that he has stayed just within the bounds of order. He knows that he has seriously abused the way in which this debate was set up. He has sought to put on the record things which no doubt will get a good press. However, they have little to do with this Bill.

My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) deserves congratulations on getting this matter to the Floor of the House with sufficient time for a good debate and a vote. It would be nice for him if, in his last year in the House, he got his Bill through. However, I hope that he does not. I am sure that it will get a Second Reading, given the extensive lobbying and advertising that has gone on. If he does not get 200 votes to four on the final vote, he should be disappointed.

The European convention seems to be the basis on which a number of hon. Members have argued in favour of the Bill. The Bill incorporates the European convention as the Bill of Rights that would apply in the United Kingdom. The justification for that is slim. The convention has never been debated in the House or voted on. In 1950, it was debated on a take-note motion before it was completed, and no vote was taken. The House then went on to discuss the meat content of sausages. Since then, the matter has not come before the House at all.

The Royal prerogative and the Ponsonby rules, which apply to treaties, ensure that there is no need for the matter to be raised in the House. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham (Mr. Rippon) said that we were the first to ratify the convention. Of course we were. In every other country, the parliament had to discuss the matter and vote on it. Here we simply do it on the nod.

We are asked to support the Bill because we are bound by a convention which Parliament has never discussed or accepted. It seems that the options which my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde presented to us were that we could accept the Bill, which would enable us not to go to Strasbourg, or to renege on the convention. There is another way, which I hope in due course a Government will have the courage to pursue. It is to cease to adhere to articles 25 and 46.

Article 25 permits individual petition to Strasbourg and article 46 makes compulsory the jurisdiction of the court. They were added by the then Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, in 1966. Before then, British Governments of all complexions felt that the convention served a useful purpose but that there was no requirement for it to be adopted internally as part of our domestic law or to give citizens a right to appeal to Strasbourg. That seems right. A wrong decision was made in 1966. That decision also has not been referred to the House. Due to the assiduity of my right hon. Friend the Member for Worthing (Mr. Higgins), it was raised on the Floor of the House during Question Time, but, since then, at two, three or five-yearly intervals, the matter has been dealt with by written answer.

This massive change in the British constitution—it is the largest since the war—has been done entirely by Executive order. I feel no moral or legal obligation to support the Bill on the grounds that it stops the journey to Strasbourg. There are other and more soundly based means of doing that.

The 1966 decision submitted Parliament to the jurisdiction of a panel of overseas judges. The Bill proposes that we should submit Parliament to a panel of English judges. That is somewhat more satisfactory, but it is not a sufficient argument. We must judge this matter entirely on the merits of the Bill and put the Strasbourg argument to one side. We have to face the fact that we have permitted the situation to develop without any debate or vote. I still cannot understand how the Commons, which huffs and puffs at the slightest prospect of constitutional change, has allowed this to go through with no voice and no vote. That has done Parliament no honour.

I hope that the Bill's sponsors will retain at least one tradition of the House—that matters of constitutional moment are taken in a Committee of the whole House and not sent upstairs.

As my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Southport (Sir I. Percival) said, the Bill will not release us from the trap. I do not believe that any of the sponsors have recommended that the articles which require us to submit to the Strasbourg court should be repealed. There will, therefore, always lie an appeal against whatever decision is made by English judges to international judges. That does not seem to be in any doubt. We have to be certain about how the appeal will operate.

Much play has been made about *The Sunday Times* case. That case attracted a lot of attention because of the emotional overtones because it dealt with children deformed by the Thalidomide drug. If we take away those overtones, what we were faced with was a decision of this kind. The judges, to whom my hon. and learned Friend's Bill would transfer these rights—in our case, the House of Lords—unanimously made a decision in respect of contempt of court. They did not make that decision in an attempt to put down the citizen. They had to balance two freedoms. There is the right to free expression, but there is also the right of a fair trial and not to have that trial influenced by outside events. Those are two very important principles which can be honourably argued by judges.

The House of Lords argued the Thalidomide case through and made their decision. My right hon. Friend the Member for Hexham said that if we had the Bill the judges in Strasbourg would know what the English judges felt, and therefore we would not be overruled. In the Thalidomide case they knew perfectly well what the English judges felt, but nevertheless they overruled us.

That decision in Strasbourg was eventually decided by 11 votes to nine votes. It was a very narrow vote, and it should be pointed out that two of those 11 judges in the majority were appointees of countries which did not accept the right of individual petition to the European court. We have there, not a great trial of freedom of expression, but a narrow balance of argument taken by judges of standing and legitimately argued. The case is further complicated by the fact that Lord Diplock has changed the law further since we passed the Contempt of Court Act.

The Strasbourg court overruled a unanimous decision of the court to which my hon. and learned Friend's Bill would refer; not on the grounds that it exceeded its powers, not on the grounds that it was unreasonable, not on the grounds that it was not made in good faith, not on the grounds that it was uncertain or arbitrary. But on the grounds that it was "unnecessary".

Lord McCluskey, who has been quoted several times, is right when he said:

> "The case is a telling example of how the interpretation of vaguely worded rights can lead different judges to arrive at novel and different conclusions as to the character and effect of public interest argument."

**Mr. Rippon:** Would my hon. Friend agree that judges often disagree, and in many cases a decision is taken by the House of Lords on a fair majority of one?

**Mr. Silvester:** I do not dispute that. The point at issue is whether — if my hon. and learned Friend's Bill is carried through and we have a decision, unanimous or otherwise in the House of Lords — the right of appeal will still lie to Strasbourg. This case clearly demonstrates that the right of appeal does so lie.

My hon. and learned Friend's Bill, unlike the convention, has been before the House. It has been mentioned a number of times that it has been before another place, but it has been before this House. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), almost exactly nine years ago to the day, was proposing a Bill of Rights in these terms, which was to be introduced into Scotland. It is of minor amusement that five of the sponsors of the present Bill voted against it on that occasion. I will not make any point of that. It was presumably because it applied to Scotland only. However, the fact is that they felt it was unsatisfactory. On that occasion it was defeated by 255 votes to 215 votes.

More importantly, the House of Lords Select Committee, which considered this matter in detail, was almost equally divided on whether we should have such a Bill. I doubt, therefore, whether we shall gain any further benefit by having a Select Committee or any other committee, — which I understand is proposed in some quarters — to consider the matter. At issue are not the finer points of whether this or that right should be included but the essential principle of whether we should go down this road at all. That principle should be decided on Second Reading.

I do not want to consider at length the question of rights in general, but the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) spoke at great length on the importance of supporting rights. The trouble with such phrases is that everyone has to agree with them. They are like motherhood and apple pie — one cannot possibly go wrong. To stand up and say that one is against human rights is like saying that one is against the whole principle for which Western democracy stands. If one says that one is not for the Bill, people conclude that one is against human rights and, therefore, on the side of the devil.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** *rose*——

**Mr. Silvester:** I am not accusing the hon. Gentleman of that, but it is a danger.

The hon. Member for Great Grimsby showed another danger. He said that, if he were drafting the Bill, he would have done it differently. That is interesting. He cited the example of New Zealand. Exactly the same problem was raised in the Council of Europe when the convention was first set up. Where is the limit on rights? Do they include economic and housing rights and the right to work—all those rights that are necessarily matters of argument and debate? It is not easy to determine what we mean by "rights". We may say, "We mean civil rights." But we then say, "That is a difficult concept. We mean the civil right that Maxwell Fyfe and his friends put in the convention in 1949 and 1950." But even that is not as simple as it seems.

I refer hon. Members to the Lithgow case. My right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Hexham has always taken a particular interest in that case. In the early days, it was set out as a case in which the individuals' rights of property were being subverted by the state. Various shareholders claimed that they had received inadequate compensation following nationalisation. They went to Strasbourg, and Strasbourg turned them down. For the court it became a matter of balancing economic and social conditions and economic and social rights with the civil right which was claimed by Lithgow and his friends. I understand that Sir Willaim Lithgow was quoted as saying,"It is now bye-bye to all that privatisation." He may have been right. That is not a legal or civil right matter. It is a policy matter. Even when one considers a limited civil right, one quickly moves into matters of economic and political concern.

**Mr. Rippon:** Does my hon. Friend agree that, whether it was right or wrong on the merits of the case, it would have been much better if a British citizen had had the right of immediate recourse to a British court so that we, too, had had the benefit of the views of a British court? Perhaps the case would have been disposed of there.

**Mr. Silvester:** That follows, of course, from my right hon. and learned Friend's position. But I think—this is purely my view—that the people involved in that case would have done better to pressurise Members of Parliament to raise the subject. Once the shareholders went to Strasbourg, they more or less forced the Government to defend their position at a time when many of us felt in our hearts that it would have been better to have given greater compensation.

We are continually faced with the problem of whether rights are better defended by adopting a Bill of Rights, whether in a convention or in this legislation.

I shall not go on much longer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I should like to make two or three points. Why are we so motivated towards this legislation? I remember that in 1976 the then Lord Chancellor produced a booklet on elective dictatorship. In my view, that phrase did us great harm, because this country is not an elective dictatorship, and will not become one while Parliament is elected. In that pamphlet, the Lord Chancellor encapsulated the fear of several of my hon. Friends. He stated that Parliament had not abused its powers but that it might. However, he could produce no evidence that things were falling down about our ears and that our freedoms were being removed.

The Lord Chancellor was fixed on the question of parliamentary sovereignty and was concerned about the

*[Mr. Silvester]*

way in which this House works. God knows, we all know how ineffective it is in many ways. However, he was fixed on that issue and felt that he should do something about it. I remind the House that his solution was a written constitution, of which a Bill of Rights was only a part.

It is a curious argument to say that we should adopt a radical change in our constitution on the hypothesis that evil may come, but without any evidence that it has. The elective dictatorship could only come about if all the existing institutions that preserve our freedoms suddenly collapsed about us. However, I see no evidence of that. Where is the evidence that the press is to be silenced, that business is to be supine, that Parliament is to become subservient, or that the electorate will be permanently fooled? Why are we suddenly plunged into the position of feeling that in panic we must change our constitution because of an evil that is not yet with us?

I refer back to the case that I raised with my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde, because I wish to consider whether we are exaggerating, when we say that we are faced with a situation in which we are giving judges the power to overrule Parliament. With respect to my hon. and learned Friend, he sidestepped the issue.

In advertising, we use the term "weasel". That refers to something that appears on the face of it to be absolutely 100 per cent. accurate, of which one knows the meaning and which one can justify. However, we all know that its intent and effect are quite different. In this case, the "weasel" is the belief that what Parliament does, it can undo. Therefore, the sovereignty of Parliament remains inviolate, but we know that that is not how constitutions operate. My hon. and learned Friend who introduced the Bill and those hon. Members who support it do so precisely because they believe and intend that the Bill of Rights should because that is the whole purpose of the natural law on which it is based, to be able to override the——

**Sir Edward Gardner:** I have listened with great respect to my hon. Friend, but he must not mislead himself or the House about the aim of my Bill. I have already said, but shall repeat again now for the third or fourth time, that it seeks to incorporate into British law, the convention on human rights. That is its simple aim and purpose.

**Mr. Silvester:** Of course, I accept that. However, I am not misleading myself and am certainly not trying to mislead the House. This simple Bill, if that is how my hon. and learned Friend defines it, is nevertheless a Bill that imposes upon the House, as the convention has already imposed on the House, a judicial control over what the House can do.

**Sir Edward Gardner** *indicated dissent.*

**Mr. Silvester:** My hon. and learned Friend shakes his head. Perhaps I was overlong in my intervention on the Tyrer case, but my hon. and learned Friend did not answer it. That was a clear case in which Parliament took one view, the court took another, and the court's view prevailed. There is no doubt about that. If in time we have a Bill of Rights, precedents, habits and constitutional practices will inevitably develop which will ensure that this House is eventually regarded as subsidiary.

The case is further complicated. The House will remember vividly how it was put in an embarrassing and imposssible position on the question of corporal punishment in schools. First, we had the pantomime of having children who could and could not be caned in the same class and then—I make no complaint about this—some of my hon. Friends decided that they had to vote for the change in corporal punishment, not on the merits of the case, but to bring us in line with the European court's ruling. There is no doubt that that is the object of the exercise. It may take time before it is fulfilled, but that is the end of this process.

Finally, judges and those who speak in favour of this measure should consider what is said about the politicisation—a horrid word—of judges. The facts are there for all to see. The experience of the United States is often cited in this regard. On every occasion when the President has had power to intervene he has used that power to change the political complexion of the court. He has done so, not because he is a wicked man, but because he must. It is not possible to allow the Supreme Court not to approve the New Deal or to continue to preside over racial inequalities, as it has done for decades. Therefore, the politicians change the complexion of the court.

Those who argue in favour of the Bill had better beware that in future Governments will not only be tempted to inspect the political and judicial claim of candidates for office but will have a duty to do so.

12.11 pm

**Mr. Andrew F Bennett** (Denton and Reddish): I, too, congratulate the hon. and learned Member for Fylde (Sir E Gardner) on choosing this Bill. He has done a great service to the country and the House in achieving an effective public debate on the issue. However, I would prefer it if, when the House has finished debating the measure—I hope that that will be in Committee—we do not pass it into legislation at this stage, because we have not fully explored the many problems that a Bill of Rights raises.

I have three major objections. The Bill will encourage the House to abdicate its rights and duties further than it has done in recent years. We have not spent long enough exploring the fact that in many areas rights are not absolute—the convention itself sets out boldly most of the rights, but follows them up with qualifications and in many areas one individual's so-called right imposes a restriction on another individual. Finally if we enforce an Act of Rights, as it will become, through the courts, we must have a major reform of our courts.

Although we claim that everybody has equal access to the courts, in practice that is not the case. The courts are easily available to the rich, the articulate and those who can find their way around society, but for many people they are not easily accessible. So long as the courts enforce such an Act and the present system of legal expenses and so on remains, we shall confer rights only on a certain group, not on the whole of society.

To return to the question of the House relinquishing powers, it is ironic that we are discussing a Bill of Rights when recently the House has had many opportunities to enforce particular rights in detail and in practice. It was unfortunate that, in the last Parliament, the Freedom of Information Bill failed to attract 100 supporters to ensure that the debate could continue. I should have thought that it would have been far better for the House to assert itself and pass that legislation. This Parliament has passed data protection legislation that, in my view, is virtually worthless. It does not enforce individual rights of privacy. Of course, we imposed the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1983, which, again, has considerable shortcomings.

If we were all that concerned about rights, would it not have been better for us to assert ourselves and insist, as a House of Commons, that those rights be enshrined in legislation, rather than leave it almost to the very end of the Parliament to say that we must come along with a blanket measure—a Bill of Rights—that may put right some of the omissions and errors? The House will be tempted to say, "We have an Act of Rights, so we do not need to concern ourselves with particular bits of legislation." It will be only too easy for us to pass Bills that give greater powers to the police or to the Executive. We can always say that the Act of Rights will step in. Hon. Members will be less diligent—they have not been all that good up till now—in asserting rights when they deal with individual pieces of legislation. It would be far better for us to act in the spirit of the European convention, but insist that we put it into our own detailed legislation.

If we give up our powers, we shall hand them to judges. I am amazed at the number of people who have such great confidence in judges, particularly in view of the sentences imposed this week in the rape case. The judges certainly demonstrated that they are not particularly attuned to the population at large. The more we hand over to judges the duty to take political decisions—in many cases it is a matter of balancing one right against another—the more we shall insist that judges become politically accountable. My hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) welcomed such a move because it will educate judges. I do not think that judges will welcome the fact that they will have increasingly to make political judgments. I certainly would not welcome asking them to make political judgments. They are appointees, not people who must face the problem of getting re-elected if they make wrong decisions. I am sure that few people would support an elected judiciary.

**Mr. Alex Carlile** (Montgomery): Will the hon. Gentleman tell the House what is political about having to decide whether someone is subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment? What is political about having to decide whether a person has liberty or security? What is political about deciding whether a person's right to life is protected by law? Indeed, what is political about asking judges to decide these fundamental individuals freedoms?

**Mr. Bennett:** I disagree with the hon. and learned Gentleman. One cannot define these matters as fundamental. The hon. and learned Gentleman picked out only one or two.

**Mr. Carlile:** The hon. Gentleman should read the Bill.

**Mr. Bennett:** I have looked at it. The hon. and learned Gentleman should read it. The right to life is mentioned, but we qualify it by giving the state the right to take it away in certain circumstances. It is an absolute, it is there, yet we qualify it. All the way through, there is continual qualification. Different opinions have been voiced in the cases that have been argued in the House, particularly the principle of the closed shop. In the end, it is a political judgment. It is not an absolute right that we can define.

The more we draw judges into political matters, the more we shall create problems for them in terms of the general public's attitude to and respect for the judiciary. Most judges do not want to be political arbiters. We should examine the cases that have been made for the use of the convention and the fact that it should have been in our law rather than be removed, particularly the Thalidomide case. That case illustrated the fact that this House had abdicated its responsibilities. If hon. Members had asserted themselves at that time, there would have been a much speedier remedy. Instead, the case went through the courts and took a very long time. The same applies to the telephone-tapping incidents, then and now. There is a remedy if the House asserts itself, but its record has to be called into question.

I am delighted that we have abolished corporal punishment, but that is no great triumph for the convention. It was a political judgment that corporal punishment should be abolished. There is no absolute right that people should not be subjected to corporal punishment. The court did not rule that everybody has a fundamental right not to be subjected to corporal punishment. It said that parents could exercise that choice. I believe that it should have gone further and said that children ought to be able to exercise that choice.

The court did not say that corporal punishment should not be administered. It said only that it should not be administered if the individual concerned objected. In the end, the House decided not to introduce a system under which some could choose corporal punishment while others could choose not to have it. We said that corporal punishment ought to be abolished.

The Bill will not help over closed shops. When the industrial relations legislation was discussed in the House, we argued about whether there should be a right to belong to a trade union and whether there should be a right for those who belong to trade unions not to work with certain people. If lawyers were to accept that there is an absolute right not to belong to a closed shop, I should accept it too, but lawyers insist that there must be a closed shop and that only those with legal qualifications should be able to plead in the courts. I understand the logic of that argument—lawyers want to work with those with certain professional standards and training—but I believe that that principle could be extended.

We were not greatly served by the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights, because it made a political judgment. It is not enshrined for ever that a new Bill cannot be introduced to deal with the closed shop. Such a Bill could be introduced. We could say that, notwithstanding the Bill of Rights, certain principles ought to apply. A weaker provision could also be introduced. We could say that, to avoid doubt, a particular provision should take precedence over the Bill of Rights. The closed shop shows that one person's rights may not necessarily be compatible with the rights of somebody else.

I wanted to participate in the debate and the vote. Also, I want to carry out my responsibilities to my constituents this evening at my advice bureau. Normally on Fridays I can fly to Manchester airport with no difficulty and fulfil those two responsibilities. However, there is a strike by firemen at Manchester airport. I believe that they have an absolute right to be able to strike. I cannot legitimately argue that they should not be able to strike, but their rights conflict with mine. That illustrates the problems that can be caused by absolute rights.

The Murdoch newspaper dispute at Wapping illustrates three rights. Unfortunately, however much wisdom judges

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may have, they cannot ensure that all three rights will be enjoyed by everybody. There is the right to publish, the right to picket and to protest and the right of the people who live in the area to go peacefully about their business. On many occasions those rights come into conflict. The size of a demonstration makes it difficult for lorries to leave the plant in a way that causes no problems, or the size of a demonstration prevents the lorries from leaving. At the moment, they come out regularly at speeds considerably in excess of 30 miles an hour and put at risk the life and limb of the people in the area.

Although it has been claimed that the Bill gives absolute rights, it does nothing about the right to work, which is an absolute and fundamental right. Some 50 per cent. of those between the ages of 20 and 30 in the Brinnington ward in my constituency are unemployed, and many of the Bill's so-called liberal rights to help them are not as important as the right to a job.

There is a fundamental right to life, but we all know that many people who need kidney dialysis do not receive it. As a result of economic pressures and democratic decisions made by the Government, some people will be denied the hospital treatment they need. I can give other examples of how, after setting out a right, we deny it.

It would be attractive if the legislation conferred the right to nursery education or the right for mature students to get into higher education or the right for a whole series of other educational opportunities. However, the only possible right in educational terms that the Bill confers is the right to buy privilege in education. It does not confer the right to free state education.

There is then the problem of homelessness. It is a fundamental right that people should have a decent home and a decent roof over their heads, but the legislation does nothing to help.

The legislation confers only a selective set of rights and makes choices between rights, and hands over to the judges the duty to make choices. This brings me to access to the courts. It is distressing that substantial numbers of people find it difficult to get access to the courts, but the promoters of the legislation say that its big advantage is that it is cheaper to get to the British courts than to the European Court. However, the cheapest thing for most people is to be able to read the law in statute without the need of a judgment by a judge to tell them what is right or wrong.

The advantage of the House is that we legislate in detail on, for example, freedom of information, police or criminal evidence. The more we leave it to a general declaration, the more it becomes a matter of the judgment of the courts. Instead of the certainty that will avoid enthusiasm for going to the courts, there is doubt. I understand that lawyers love doubt because it keeps them in business, but it is not in the best interests of the general public. They want detailed legislation that gives them certainty. The House would be better employed in making decisions giving them certainty than in giving broad sweeping statements that will depend upon judges making choices of how they interpret the law.

**Mr. Alex Carlile:** The hon. Gentleman is the distinguished Chairman of the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments. Does he not agree that statutory instruments, produced at least under the jurisdiction of the House, show that we are incapable of producing legislation that people understand? Is he really saying that the statutory instruments that pass through his hands on the subject of, say, social security, have any chance of being understood by the ordinary man in the street? Does he not agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale (Mr. Steel) that the increase in the number of cases going for judicial review is clear evidence of the fact that we need a Bill of Rights?

**Mr. Bennett:** I do not see that a Bill of Rights gives clarity. We can say, "Let us have no legislation and leave it to the judges to make choices." I agree that in some sectors we are not making the law clear, and that we should be spending more time making that law clear, but it is important that we should be doing it rather than leaving it to people to go to court. Large numbers of people do not have the resources to do that. None of those involved in the judgments on social security in the past two or three years have been able to go to the courts to obtain a remedy. They have had to rely almost entirely on particular campaigning groups to finance the challenges they have made. We should be putting much more emphasis on getting certainty into our own legislation, rather than relying on the courts to enforce it.

Although we can all illustrate the many instances where statutory instruments are obscure and difficult to follow, considering the total volume of legislation produced in this country, the number of cases where there has been a judicial review and where the law is not clear and certain are more limited.

I argue strongly that, if one wants to impose a Bill of Rights, one has to guarantee that anyone who wants to bring a case to court using the powers that they would claim in the Bill, must have free legal aid to help them to bring that case. There must not be the legal aid committees which make choices as to who can bring a case. I accept that that may be an expensive process, but I believe firmly that, if one is going to introduce a Bill of Rights, everyone must have equal access to the courts to enforce it.

I find it annoying when I go to a Minister to make representations on behalf of my constituents, only to be told, "There is nothing that I can do about that, because it is up to the courts or a tribunal to provide a remedy." It is annoying when I have a detailed and difficult case involving my constituents and I want to refer it to the ombudsman and he says, "Your constituent has a theoretical remedy by taking it through the courts or to a tribunal. I cannot investigate." There is a danger that the Bill of Rights may well become an excuse for people to say that certain matters should not be resolved in the House but that the individual involved should take it outside and pursue it through the courts.

I believe that the House should be asserting its rights. It should be much more welcoming than it was this morning to my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) when he wanted to pursue matters here. It is the House's duty to resolve injustice and to see that civil rights are enforced. It would be a poor day for Britain if we abdicated our rights because we say that we are not able or prepared to exercise them, and hand them over to judges who are not in the most favourable position to make the sort of judgments that we ought to be making.

12.32 pm

**Mr. Leon Brittan** (Richmond, Yorks): I should like to join the many hon. Members who have congratulated my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) on his success in the ballot, his choice of subject and the admirable way in which he has presented it. We are not here to decide whether we as a country should enjoy the benefit of a Bill of Rights. We are not deciding whether we should enjoy the protection of the European convention. That was decided when we signed the convention. We are not deciding whether the obligation to comply with that convention should just be an obligation in international law, enforceable only by complaint on the part of one Government against another. That was decided when we conferred the right of individual petition, the right for individuals to take cases to the Commission and, if necessary, to the court at Strasbourg.

In the 20 years since that right was confirmed, we have had many cases that have proved uncomfortable for Governments of different political complexions and which have proved awkward and politically embarrassing in a variety of directions, sometimes attracting some people and sometimes attracting others. The concept of joining like-minded European nations in laying down certain fundamental rights and providing machinery for protecting them, has proved so popular and effective in this country that successive Governments have renewed the rights of individual petition, in spite of all the political and administrative difficulties that it has undoubtedly caused.

For half a generation and more we have been ready, if necessary, to change our law or policy if it has been found by the court at Strasbourg to fall short of the requirements of the convention. The fact is that although some hon. Members—I respect their opinion—regret the existence of the right of individual petition, there is not a substantial body of opinion today that calls for the abolition of that right or for abrogation of the convention in its entirety.

It is true that Parliament has not had occasion to debate those matters, but the reason is not some sleight of hand on the part of the Executive or lack of procedural opportunities to do so; it is the fact that the position with the right of individual petition, for all the difficulties that it has caused, is generally acceptable to the country and to Parliament. Of course, in theory it would be open to this or a future Parliament to take either of the two steps that I have mentioned — the abolition of the right of individual petition or the abrogation of the convention — but because of the general acceptability of the jurisprudence of the Commission and the court over the best part of a generation, in practice we have undergone a major constitutional sea change, although it may not have been widely or fully appreciated as such.

We already have a Bill of Rights and an established means of enforcing it. What the present Bill is about is whether we should take the substantial furthr step relating to the means of enforcing the convention, by formally incorporating it into our domestic law. If that is the issue, much of the wider argument about the value and importance of a Bill of Rights that we have seen, particularly in the media in recent days, is not relevant to the Bill. I deplore some of the more extravagant claims that have been made for such legislation, and in that respect I agree with my right hon. and learned Friend for Southport (Sir I. Percival). It would be utterly misleading to give the country, which may not be as well informed about those matters as the House, the impression that the Bill will convey new rights or give new protections against real or imagined acts of oppression on the part of the state.

In particular, the attempt to drag the Bill into the arguments about current political controversies is unwise and mischievous. It is unwise because it will alienate many Conservative Members who otherwise might be sympathetic to the Bill. It is mischievous because it seeks to make party political capital out of an issue on which progress can be made only on non-partisan basis.

However, in my view it is also not right to complain that the Bill should be opposed because it hands over power from Parliament to the judges. We did that when we conferred the right of individual petition. The only difference is that in the Bill we are enabling British judges to play a part in interpreting the convention. Nobody has answered the simple and fundamental question: if judges are to be involved at all as they have been for 20 years, why should we have only Strasbourg judges and not British judges doing so? There is no answer to that question. To maintain the present position is, frankly, a piece of organised hypocrisy. It is saying, "Let us have the benefit of the convention in theory, but let us not have the full and effective means of giving it effect."

It is true that if one did what the Bill does, there would be a continued right of appeal to Strasbourg. British judges would not have the last word. But I happen to believe that the Strasbourg court would show great respect for the British judges, who would have analysed the facts and applied the convention to British situations in a British context. It is far more likely that the convention would ultimately be interpreted in a way consistent with our own concepts if it first went through the rigorous winnowing process of British judicial interpretation. Those who say that the judges are incapable of deciding the wide social issues at which they would have to look if they were interpreting the convention seem to me to have ignored the history and evolution of judicial review.

I was a junior counsel in the case when we challenged the Labour Government's attempt to impose comprehensive education in the Tameside case. The issues could not have been more fundamental or controversial. Nonetheless, the courts of the land did not hesitate to take on these issues and make a firm view upon them. In that history of judicial review, we have had an increasing involvement of the courts in what are, frankly, matters of controversy. It is absurd to claim that the courts can deal with matters of judicial review in that way, but Strasbourg alone can consider the wider questions although we agree to submit to its jurisdiction if the European Court finds against us.

**Mr. Cash:** Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that in this extremely important issue, which is pivotal to the whole question, there is a distinct difference between what is regarded in the Bill and the convention as being necessary in the context of a democratic society and what is reasonable? It is upon that question that many questions of interpretation will be decided. That is an important matter to which I would like my right hon. and learned Friend to address himself.

**Mr. Brittan:** That matter may arise in certain questions. It depends which article is being interpreted. The broad point that I want to make is that the wide issues of policy that the courts in this country have to consider are no more narrowly confined and no more technically legal than the kind of issues that come to Strasbourg in the last analysis.

On the other hand, it is disingenuous to pretend that if we pass this legislation it will make no substantial

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difference to what happens and will only save us the embarrassment of being at the top of the international league table of the number of cases taken to Strasbourg.

It would similarly be disingenuous to claim that the Bill would not fetter Parliament, because we could subsequently pass statutes which were in conflict with the provisions of the European convention. On that point, the position is unchanged from what has applied over the years with regard to the right of petition. The nominal right to pass legislation that is in conflict with the convention will remain ours. In that sense, parliamentary sovereignity will be unimpaired. Within a very short time, however, there will be a clear and well established self-denying ordinance, as part of our law and practice, that we do not pass legislation of that kind such that it would be almost inconceivable that a Government would say to the House, "Please pass this Bill, never mind that it is inconsistent with the European convention."

Candour and honesty require those of us who support the Bill to accept that that will happen. I believe that we should take that point head on and say that if Parliament is inhibited from taking away fundamental human rights by the existence of the convention, so much the better.

We should not ignore or underestimate the practical difference that the change would make to the Government and the very real problems that the Bill, in its present form, would give any Government in this country. Successive Governments have not simply been motivated by sheer bloody mindedness or obscurantism in being reluctant to bring forth legislation of this kind. Until now, if our practices have been found to be in breach of the convention, the finding occurs a long time afterwards and it is for the Government to enter into consultations and to decide, after considerable discussion, the appropriate way to rectify the breach in terms of the individual case and for the future. From practical experience, I can assure the House that there are many alternative ways, in almost every case, of dealing with that problem. That may involve compesation, a change of policy or legislation. None of that can happen overnight.

If a British court adjudicates, the consequences are very different from an adjudication by the European Court. Such an adjudication leaves time for a considered solution to the problem to be found. Normally, a British court has an immediate impact on the law.

I should mention another matter, if only to discount it. There is no doubt that, for Governments, it will be politically more embarrassing to be found in breach of the convention by a British court than by the Strasbourg court. Not only will the decision be made nearer the time when the act complained of occurred, but judges in Britain are figures of high prestige and the decision of the court cannot be dismissed as one made far away by people who are unfamiliar with our circumstances and our mores and, therefore, out of touch. We cannot say that it is an awful bore to have to accept those decisions. The immediacy of British judicial determination will be a political embarrassment. We should face up to that, but it is no reason for not implementing the convention.

**Mr. Forth:** Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that if, as a result of this measure, there is a much greater demand on the English courts to settle such matters, it might lead to long delays in settling those matters here? His immediacy argument might not arise because the delays would be just as long.

**Mr. Brittan:** It is unlikely. There may be more business for the courts, but it is inconceivable that that business would not be dispatched more quickly than by the long process involved in going to Strasbourg.

**Mr. Budgen:** My right hon. and learned Friend talks about political embarrassment when the judges rule that legislation does not conform to the convention. But it is worse than that. It means that the House has a choice. Either it accepts that it is no longer a sovereign legislature under the Crown, or it undermines the authority of the judges by saying, "Thank you very much, but on this issue we disagree with you and we do not believe that you are the supreme authority on this."

**Mr. Brittan:** That is exactly the position of the House when the European court rules. Either we say, "We shall ignore the convention to which we are a party," or we accept that Parliament and the Government are obliged to find means within the law of complying with the convention. We have lived with that for the best part of a generation.

Trying to be candid about the matter and not asking the House to buy a pig in a poke, but to go into it accepting the consequences, I should say that practical and administrative problems will result from a sudden change of policy. We cannot change the administration of the prisons overnight, nor can we introduce overnight legislation on telephone interception that meets the requirements of national security and conforms with the convention. But those problems cannot be dismissed as a pretext for resisting change. The interception legislation which I introduced was necessarily intricate and complex, but it succeeded in achieving the balance of protecting national security while complying with the convention.

Those practical objections cannot be ignored, but they should not be an obstacle to the incorporation of the convention into British law. Perhaps the right course would be not to permit British courts to grant injunctions when the entitlement to an injunction is founded on the convention and, at least in some cases, to require the courts to grant a declaration only in the first instance which would not come into effect until the Government had, within a reasonable and specified time, introduced measures to remedy the breach to the satisfaction of the court. That would overcome the practical difficulties and enable the administrative problems to be resolved.

Those matters will require further consideration, but we should draw them to the attention of the House so that those who do not favour the proposal are not regarded as being mindless of the rights of individuals and are only concerned with good government. All of us should be concerned with good government. Against all of that, the advantages of giving the individual more immediate and effective protection and the logical indefensibility and international embarrassment arising from our present position, leave me in no doubt that the Bill is a major and justified step. I warmly commend it to the House.

12.50 pm

**The Solicitor-General (Sir Patrick Mayhew):** Not for the first time, my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) has rendered the House a signal service. His Bill gives rise to discussion of absorbing interest, one might say it is of perennial interest. He addressed himself to his Bill in a speech which was, if I may cite the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Liberal party, lucid, charming and witty. I respectfully join in the grateful congratulations that have been showered upon him on his speech. My hon. and learned Friend and I are old personal and political friends and we are united in our objective of securing as best we may by law the underpinning of liberty. That can equally be described as the securing of fundamental freedoms and we are not divided in any way on that objective.

I am afraid that the House will not be surprised if I begin my argument with a platitude. The judiciary must be seen to be impartial. More especially, as far as practicable it must be kept free from political controversy. We must take great care not to propel judges into the political arena. However, that is what we would do if we asked them to take policy decisions of a nature that we ought properly to take ourselves and which under our present constitution we do take. We would increase that danger if we required or permitted them to alter or even reverse decisions taken by Parliament. For a long time I have felt that herein lies the key to the general issue that we are debating. Above all, it is the factor that shapes the Government's attitude to the Bill and which leads me to be unable, for reasons that I hope to develop, to commend the Bill to the House. I hope to show why that is my view and perhaps I will be forgiven for taking a little time to do that.

My hon. and learned Friend's speech did not deal with that aspect as thoroughly as I had hoped it would. Of course he did not overlook it. At the heart of the argument is that applying the convention calls for some highly political judgments. That point is often missed, but that is perfectly understandable because we focus, as no doubt do 70 per cent. of our fellow citizens, about whom we have heard, upon the general rights that are declared by the convention on human rights to belong to everyone. These are the right to respect for one's family, one's private life, and one's home and correspondence under article 8, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and so on.

These rights are noble declarations. To adopt the words of my hon. and learned Friend, the theme is one of grandeur. I hope that we shall never lose the ardour for enshrining and ensuring across all national frontiers the enjoyment of human rights that arose so soon after the end of the last war following revulsion from totalitarian regimes.

I strongly agree with my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) that the debate is not about whether we are for or against the European convention on human rights, although people may take a stance on it. The issue does not turn on that. Much less notice is taken of the qualifications and restrictions to these generally expressed and noble rights, but they also are to be found in the convention in articles 8 to 11.

I shall take just one example from article 8 which, by way of qualification, speaks of the interests of national security, the interests of public safety, the interests of the economic well-being of the country, the prevention of disorder or crime, the protection of health or morals and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. The Bill would require our judges to make their own assessments of these matters.

Article 8 says that any one of those matters can justify a public authority interfering with the exercise of the right. It provides that there should be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of the right of a home, or a person's private life

> "except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."

**Mr. Richard Ottaway** (Nottingham, North): Those are the very words which are to be found in section 10 of the Contempt of Court Act 1981. Why is it permissible to allow judges to interpret that section but not article 8?

**The Solicitor-General:** It is very dangerous to invite judges to apply their own assessment on what are essentially political matters. It is not that I do not trust the judges, for I trust them implicitly. It is not that I do not think that judges are able for, as has been said, they are the most able to be found in the world. It is that I fear what would happen to the public reputation for political impartiality of judges if that jurisdiction were extended to them and if that burden were imposed on them on so wide a scale.

**Mr. Robert Maclennan** (Caithness and Sutherland): Will the Solicitor-General please address himself to the question asked by the hon. Member for Nottingham, North (Mr. Ottaway)? Is he not asserting that the Contempt of Court Act 1981 gives judges just the type of political power that we are talking about? If it was acceptable to the Government to do that then, why is the hon. and learned Gentleman baulking now?

**The Solicitor-General:** As I have said, I think it is very dangerous. To have done it once does not diminish the danger of doing it on a wide scale. That is quite a simple question, which I thought I had answered.

**Mr. Robert Jackson** (Wantage): What reason do we have to believe that a Turkish or Icelandic judge sitting in Strasbourg is better qualified to make the type of judgment which the convention requires in a case arising out of the United Kingdom?

**The Solicitor-General:** He is no better qualified: I entirely agree with that extremely interesting remark. The consequences of the court at Strasbourg exercising jurisdiction are very different under present arrangements from the consequences which would follow if the convention were incorporated in our domestic law.

**Mr. Budgen:** Article 2 of the first protocol seems to support the view which was put forward by Sir Harry Fisher before the last general election — that any legislation which abolished the right to private education would be in breach of that article. If the House of Lords held, after a general election, that legislation passed by this House abolishing private education was in breach of article 2, is it possible that that would enable the judiciary to be seen to be outside the political process and to retain its independence?

**The Solicitor-General:** My hon. Friend draws attention to the difficulties of importing into our domestic law a

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convention whose purpose, when it was first ratified, was to act as a marker, and is expressed, correspondingly, in general terms. A stronger point can be made from article 1 of that protocol, which I will come to in a moment.

I ask the House to consider the nature of that catalogue of concepts and objectives, of which I reminded the House a moment ago. Each and every one of those concepts—national security, the protection of morals and the protection of health—is politically controversial.

**Sir Edward Gardner:** I know that my right hon. and learned Friend has had many interventions, but this is a particular, precise and important point—the danger that my right hon. and learned Friend foresees if judges are given the opportunity of interpreting the convention. Would he not agree that, when judges construe Acts of Parliament, they look at the intention of Parliament in passing the legislation, but they also—this is important — have a duty to interpret the principle of the legislation, not the policy. That is all that they would be asked to do.

**The Solicitor-General:** That is a good principle of the construction of legislation by our courts, but what is the court to determine as to the policy of Parliament when it has, through my hon. and learned Friend's Bill, incorporated into domestic law articles that are so widely drawn as these? In the case of article 8, for example—but it is not alone in this respect — the right which it confers is subject to widely drawn and unspecified exceptions.

For example, we do not need reminding that what is necessary in the interests of national security is sometimes rather controversial. There are fierce, frequent and genuine disagreements as to national security and what the interests of national security need. What guidance, I ask my hon. and learned Friend—rhetorically, I hope at this stage — would the courts derive as to how they should answer that question from his Bill, were it enacted? The same point can be made with regard to the requirements of public safety and what is necessary in the economic well-being of the country. I doubt whether any of us would enjoy, as a judge, deciding that. Perhaps we would, but I doubt whether any of us would necessarily, with our judicial training, think ourselves particularly well qualified; certainly not as well qualified as those elected to the House might consider themselves to be.

The same point can be made on every one of those concepts, which serve as qualifications of or restrictions to the rights conferred, not only by article 8, but right the way through the general articles. Every one of them is politically highly charged. The idea that if this Bill were enforced the validity of any action said to be justified in the interest of national security could be instantly determined bears no serious examination at all.

**Mr. Marlow:** My right hon. and learned Friend has clearly said that one of the dangers of having this legislation enacted is that our judges will be seen to be performing a political role. As the system stands at the moment, European judges are performing that same political role. Is that any better or any worse? If it is worse, why do we still permit the right of individual petition?

**The Solicitor-General:** I have already acknowledged that it is no better for a European judge than for an English judge to have this jurisdiction conferred on him. I am strongly in favour—this is a personal opinion—of retaining our adherence to this treaty. But I draw the attention of the House to the difference between our arrangements — whereby if the court finds that our law does not comply with our treaty obligations, we have ample time to consider how to put it right — and the position under the Bill, when there would be, subject to the interesting point raised by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), an instant vacuum. I think that there would still be one.

**Mr. Nicholas Baker:** Will my right hon. and learned Friend give way?

**The Solicitor-General:** If my hon. Friend will allow me, I should like to develop my argument a little more. I know that other right hon. and hon. Members wish to speak, so I must not take too long.

The point of the issue is made best by article 1 of the first protocol:

> "No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest".

I do not think that the House would be satisfied if it were dealing with an ordinary Bill with provisions that gave, on a matter of such importance to liberty, as little guidance to a judge as that. My hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde said that the language was the language of "celestial clarity". I yield to no one in my admiration for the Bill's draftsmen. Celestial clarity there may be, but celestial certainty in its outcome there most certainly is not.

Of course I recognise that, under clause 6,

> "judicial notice shall be taken . . . of all published judgements of the European Court of Human Rights".

Without doubt, in some of these areas, detailed interpretations have already been made. But judgments in that court tend to be closely applied to the facts of an individual case, and in many areas there has been no detailed interpretation at all. But, in any event, I understood it to be an argument for the Bill that there is an advantage in having British rather than Strasbourg decisions. I do not think that we can possibly escape the conclusion that, if we pass the Bill, we shall be thrusting the judges far into the arena of political controversy. Until now, it is generally Parliament that has addressed itself to these issues. That is what we have been elected to do. We may not get it right — or perhaps we do get it right — with the benefit of hindsight, but the law that we make on these very issues is law that has seemed to the majority of us at the time to have been a good idea.

Our constitutional history rather strongly shows that over the centuries the British people have preferred that these matters should be decided by people whom they can elect and sack rather than people immune from either process—wiser, less opportunist or even less venal than such people might well be considered to be. So it is that Parliament has passed Acts such as those of which we have been reminded today — the Interception of Communications Act 1985, the Public Order Act 1986, the Abortion Act 1967 and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Each has represented the balance between conflicting interests that has seemed right to the majority of us in Parliament at the time. We have gone through the process of lobbying by special interest groups and the laboriously contested Standing Committee stages. But at the end of it, with Royal assent, we have said to our fellow citizens, "There you are. You must conform to that." We have said to the judges, "There you are. You have to apply that." The judges have got on with it and applied the legislation judicially. That separation of functions is, I believe, generally thought to be beneficial.

**Mr. Nicholas Baker:** One of the advantages claimed for the Bill is that access, individually or corporately, to judges in Strasbourg would be unnecessary and limited. Following from article 6, if the convention is incorporated and British courts therefore have to interpret it and in every judgment take judicial notice of the judges in Strasbourg, is it not likely that we would be bound to the judges in Strasbourg in a way that we are not at present? Would not access to and the need to go to Strasbourg be just as great in practice as they are now?

**The Solicitor-General:** My hon. Friend has made an absolutely valid point. Of course English judges will be influenced by the judgments of the European Court, because that is the intention of the Bill. However, as has already been said, the Bill does not exclude ultimate recourse to the Strasbourg court. Those who complain about the time that will be taken will see that the time taken to reach Strasbourg will, in fact, be made longer and not shorter.

I do not pretend that it is possible to protect judges from all political criticisms. However, they are preserved from making policy decisions at the moment, and it is largely because of that that their reputation for political impartiality deservedly stands so high.

I am sorry that the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) is no longer in the Chamber, because I should have liked to have another go at him. He said that judges have an attitude of grovelling servility to the Executive. That does not stand up for a moment in the light of the fact that it is the judiciary, rather than Parliament, which has developed the jurisdiction of the judicial review of the exercise of discretionary power by any executive body, including the Government. That has been a very welcome development and also an immensely potent contribution to the rule of law. However, one cannot go on from that to the proposition that has been advanced that, somehow or other, the number of applications for judicial review shows how much we need to incorporate the convention on human rights — *[Interruption.]* That is what I understand to be the case.

It is said that, if judges can be trusted with judicial review, they can be trusted with the application of the convention on human rights. That is quite a separate matter, because judges never review the merits of an administrative decision. They are wise enough to recognise that the merits of such a decision are a matter for a Minister who is responsible to this House. The judges review the method by which that decision has been taken. The criteria that they apply boil down to one word— "fairness". Is the decision unlawful? Has a legitimate expectation been disappointed so that an aggrieved person is deprived of what he reasonably expected would occur, or would be offered, in the way of procedure? Is the procedure improper? Has there been an irrational, whimsical or capricious decision? It all boils down to whether the decision-making process has been fair. That has nothing to do with giving judges jurisdiction over an administrative function, choosing that which is necessary in the interests of national security.

My great fear is that, if we were to pass the Bill, the judges' reputation for political impartiality would seriously decline, with grievously damaging results, not through the fault of the judges, but because of the essentially political tasks with which we would burden them.

Clause 4 lies at the heart of the Bill. It would oblige the judges to apply a presently existing Act of Parliament in such a way that anything that it authorised or required to be done would be authorised or required to be done only in a manner and to the extent that it did not infringe a fundamental right or freedom. A judge might for example, feel obliged either to alter the effect of, or in extreme cases to strike down a provision of, let us say, the Public Order Act 1986, although it had only recently been enacted. His grounds for that might be that the limitation that it placed on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly under article 11 was not justifiable as being necessary for the prevention of disorder.

Equally, the converse case could be put. The judge might reject a complaint made against that Act because he thought that the limitation was necessary. Either way the judge's political views would surely, inevitably, come to be the subject of intense public speculation. Such speculation can be foreseen not only on the occasion of every controversial judgment, but whenever new judges are appointed. It would soon be suspected, however unjustifiably—I believe that it would be unjustifiable— that they were appointed in part for their political philosophies instead of wholly for their judicial qualities.

It is no discourtesy to our American friends and allies to suggest that their system provides a vivid illustration of what I foresee. It was closely examined by Lord McCluskey in his recent lectures. It is no answer to claim, as can be done, that our most senior judges already interpret in the Privy Council the constitutions of some Commonwealth countries. That is a deeply valued privilege and honour. While the advice that the Privy Council tenders to Her Majesty is highly important, for example, in Jamaica, it will hardly make the judges' political views of controversial interest here.

Judges must have the respect of people of all political parties if they are to carry out their tasks, and they must be protected from conflict with Parliament, even if it is transient conflict. Let us not forget that at the head and forefront of the judges' task lies the protection of our freedoms. The point is not that judges could not do the job, but what the job would do to the judges. I entirely see that it may be argued that we cannot have everything and that that admitted disadvantage is outweighed by the advantage of having British judges doing the job.

Shorn of the elegance with which the point has been put, the argument comes to this: we are stuck with the convention, so let us at least have it applied by our judges because then at least some cases will not reach Strasbourg, where they will be considered by Members of the Commission or the court who are unversed in the traditions of our law and unacquainted with the circumstances of our society. I ask the House to examine whether it is as simple as that. We are not being asked to compare like with like.

Consider the difference between the present practice and what the Bill proposes: Strasbourg, seized of a complaint, tests our law against the convention and pronounces whether our law complies with our treaty obligations. If it finds that we are in breach, it does not

*[The Solicitor-General]*

disapply our law. Indeed, it cannot do so. It says, "Go away and get it right." It can only pronounce on whether we are in breach. If we are, it is for Parliament, as it should be, to put the law right or, in other cases, for the Government to alter their administrative practices. If that is the case, that is done as soon as possible. Under successive Governments, this country has never failed to do so within a reasonable period. Meanwhile, the existing law remains in force and there is continuity; for the time being, as things have been, they remain. No vacuum is created by a provision being struck down.

I listened with great interest to the point made by my right hon. and learned Friend the Member for Richmond, Yorks. It had attraction, but in practice there is a difficulty: the court will in effect have found that the law is bad, there will be time to put the matter right and for a declaration, but what will happen meantime? How will we deal with practical cases of would-be immigrants at Heathrow? The law will have been held to be in breach, as defective, and a moratorium will have been declared to allow the Government to introduce new legislation, so what will happen in practice in cases which involve the relationships between individuals? I do not believe that the suggestion is practical, although it is interesting.

**Mr. Brittan:** Is not that exactly the same position as arises now, after the Strasbourg court has found against us and before we produce a remedy? In those circumstances individuals who are faced with the same sort of situation as has caused the case to arise know that the court, which must ultimately be adhered to, has pronounced on their rights. The Government must frequently deal with that, and have been able to do so. My suggestion is that the position that applies now in relation to Strasbourg can be interposed into the position affecting our courts.

**The Solicitor-General:** It may look as though the position is the same, but it is not. Whereas at present there is a declaration limited solely to the fact that our treaty obligations have been broken, in the case that would obtain if the Bill were part of the law and my hon. and learned Friend's suggestion were enacted, our domestic law would be struck down. That is a different matter. Real difficulties are based upon the provision being brought into effect. To say, "If one is content that foreign judges should have this jurisdiction, therefore, there is advantage in British judges having it," is not to compare like with like.

There is weight in the point that it can take a long time to get to Strasbourg. In part, that is due to the necessary filtering of applications carried out by the Commission. A tiny proportion out of thousands of applications are held to be admitted, and a small proportion of those actually reach the court. That point was properly made by my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth). There is no filter in the present Bill, except for frivolous or vexatious proceedings, and that issue would have to be tried by the courts.

None of these issues is all black, all white or clear cut; heaven knows, we would not have discussed them over all these years if they were. There is much greater weight in the need to avoid uncertainty and the need for sufficient time to be available for the most practicable changes in our law out of many options to be identified by the Government, put before Parliament, and enacted.

I recognise—I apologise for taking so long, but in part it is because I have given way—that there are those who are critical of the quality of the Commission and the court at Strasbourg. I hope that they will recall that the Bill still keeps the right of personal access to Strasbourg. A complainant is not prevented from going there and, in the end, after he has exhausted all his possibilities for appeal in a British court—which itself may take four to five years—he will still have his access to Strasbourg. That will prolong prodigiously the period of uncertainty as to what our domestic law on any subject would be.

I have had the pleasure of appearing as an advocate for the British Government before both the commission and the court at Strasbourg. I greatly look forward to doing so again, preferably in office.

Under successive Governments, this country has renewed the right of individual petition to the Commission at Strasbourg and has accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the court. We are not in breach of the convention for not incorporating its provisions into our domestic law. Recent decisions of the court establish that fact. Whether or not the convention is incorporated into our domestic law is no true measure of the degree to which the citizen's freedoms are protected in any European country. Here in the United Kingdom, as my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde said in his most eloquent speech, we have looked to these rights, with or without the convention, over the centuries. We have secured them not by the importation of any constitutional document into our domestic law but by a free Parliament and by the right of access to an independent and impartial judiciary. We in this country are not strangers, as those who live in eastern Europe are, to the notion or to the reality of individual liberty. I do not believe that, when we consider the free world and make comparisons, we have any reason to feel ashamed.

The independent judiciary, not Parliament, has developed the jurisdiction of judicial review to which I have already referred. It has become a most potent force. No judge had more responsibility for the development of judicial review than the late Lord Diplock. He, least of all, could be charged with a lack of sincere concern for the rule of law. A few years before he died, he described the development of judicial review as the greatest achievement of the English courts in his judicial lifetime.

However, in a debate in the other place on a predecessor to this Bill, Lord Diplock said:

> "The administration of justice in our country depends upon the respect which all people of all political views feel for the judges, and in my opinion that respect depends very much upon keeping judges out of politics. To pass this Bill of Rights cannot but have the tendency to bring more and more judges into politics. That seems to me to be a sufficient disadvantage, and so far as I am concerned, when it is put into the balance, it tips it down upon the side of not passing a Bill in the form of that which is proposed."—[*Official Report, House of Lords*, 29 November 1978; Vol. 396, c. 1347.]

In that context, there is no significant difference between that Bill and the present Bill. The House ought to heed Lord Diplock's words.

I have read the view of Lord Scarman, whom I deeply respect. In the other place he expressed the view that the argument against this Bill, based upon too much power to the courts, can be immediately dismissed as one based not on reason but on a certain superficial distrust of the rule of law. We can trust the judges, but we cannot trust what would happen to judges' reputations. In view of Lord Diplock's remarks, I repudiate that charge not only with vigour but with confidence.

Many authorities of very great distinction and eminence, of whom my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde is but one, favour the incorporation into law of the convention. Naturally, their eminence has caused me over the years to look again and again at my own opinion. I, like Omar Khayyam when young,

> "did eagerly frequent
> Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
> About it and about: but evermore
> Came out by the same door wherein I went."

The paradox for those who want the convention to be applied by our judges is that it will grievously damage the standing of the judges, and in the process will encourage conflict, however transient, with the legislature.

In 1978, a Select Committee of the House of Lords was at odds about the advantages and disadvantages of the Bill of Rights. However, it agreed on this. At paragraph 30 of its report it said:

> "in any country, whatever its constitution, the existence or absence of legislation in the nature of a Bill of Rights can in practice play only a relatively minor part in the protection of human rights. What is important, above all, is a country's political climate and traditions."

Because the Government believe that the underpinning of liberty by law is best achieved by a free Parliament and an independent judiciary in the political climate and tradition of this country, I cannot commend the Bill to the House.

1.27 pm

**Mr. Nicholas Brown** (Newcastle upon Tyne, East): Like the Solicitor-General, I am sure that the whole House is grateful to the hon. and learned Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) for introducing this measure. On behalf of the Opposition, I associate myself with the kind remarks that have been made about him. I am sure that, once he got over his surprise at having done so well in the ballot, he decided to introduce a measure to which the House ought to give its undivided attention.

The House does not have many opportunities to debate the administration of justice. Therefore, today's debate is to be welcomed. It provides us with an opportunity to discuss the matters of substance in the Bill. In a debate of this nature it is easy for important but separate matters of principle to be intertwined and confused. In an effort to avoid that danger, I say at the outset that the European convention on human rights has my support as an important and valuable international statement of principles which, as the hon. and learned Member pointed out, are thoroughly British. My doubts arise not from the contents of the convention but from matters that would accompany its incorporation into the main body of United Kingdom law.

The main value of the convention lies in its present standing as an international statement of principle to which nation states, each with its own different legal codes and structures, can adhere. It is its international status that gives to the convention its perspective and authority. I fear that to try to incorporate such broad statements of principle directly into United Kingdom law is in practice almost unworkable and in any event unnecessary. It is for Parliament to legislate and for the courts to interpret that legislation.

**Mr. Lawrence:** Our courts.

**Mr. Brown:** It is for the courts to interpret legislation. To allow the courts to question legislation would be to undermine the separation of powers and place the formulation of legislation in the hands of unelected and politically unaccountable persons. If the judges were to determine the legality of legislation, it would transform the role of judges and bring them further into the political arena.

A recent survey has revealed that British judges, as one would expect, have strong political views. One in 14 has been actively involved in party politics at the parliamentary level. There have been three who have been Conservative Members of Parliament and one Labour Member. A further four have stood as Conservative candidates, six as Liberal and four as Labour candidates for Parliament. I do not say that against them—it is very much to their credit. Alongside that there is a much more telling statistic. Of the 10 Law Lords, nine went to public school and eight went to either Oxford or Cambridge. Of the Court of Appeal judges, 86 per cent. went either to Cambridge or Oxford. In short, our present judiciary is not politically indifferent, and is predominantly drawn from a narrow section of British society.

**Dr. Godman:** My hon. Friend is talking about the English judiciary. The Scots judiciary is slightly more heterogeneous in social and economic background.

**Mr. Brown:** I am willing to accept that that is true, but I am sure that it does not affect the main thrust of my argument, which is that the judiciary is drawn from an atypical cross-section of the British population.

Such judges could find themselves striking down existing legislation and creating law themselves. This is not the best way of making law. It is bound to lead to political controversy and to contentious things being said and perhaps being done. It would undermine support for the judiciary in its independent and impartial role. Rights should not be evolved in the haphazard course of litigation which is, by its nature, a random process.

The present method whereby, if it becomes apparent that there is a serious gap in the law, a body is set up to investigate, comments are invited upon its deliberations and recommendations made, and finally Parliament, with a House of politically accountable representatives considers and decides after debate whether, as a matter of policy, the law should be developed or changed, is better. Judges do not have the training, the experience or the accountability to decide broad issues of policy. Furthermore, in our system they are not used to dealing with broad concepts.

**Mr. Alex Carlile:** How can the hon. Gentleman say that judges are not used to making judgments on broad concepts? Has he never heard of the concept of the man in the Clapham omnibus, which judges have to apply day after day? Has he never heard of the concept of reasonableness, which has to be applied day after day in the Queens Bench division of the High Court? What is he talking about in that childish and absurd proposition?

**Mr. Brown:** The hon and learned Gentleman makes his point in a characteristically unpleasant and pompous way, and I hope that he will not mind if I respond in kind. My arguments are arguments of degree, not absolutes.

**Mr. Carlile:** It did not sound like it.

**Mr. Brown:** Those were my arguments.

The British judiciary has interpretive functions. The question is how far those functions should be extended and whether they should be given as wide a discretion as incorporating the European convention on human rights would allow.

I shall explore the Thalidomide case in a little detail because it is an example that is held up regularly by advocates of the Bill of Rights of what such a Bill could achieve for Britain. In that case, Distillers was sued by the parents of a number of children who were born deformed because of their mothers' use of the drug Thalidomide during pregnancy. An offer of settlement was made by Distillers and rejected by some parents.

While the litigation was dragging on, *The Sunday Times*, in a more campaigning mode than is now the case, wrote an article criticising Distillers for what it said was the poor offer of compensation Distillers had made. The then Attorney-General took proceedings against *The Sunday Times* for contempt of court. The article was, so he said, an interference with the litigation between Distillers and the parents by bringing pressure on Distillers pending the court case.

The House of Lords agreed with the Attorney-General. The matter went to the European Court which upheld *The Sunday Times* on the basis that the House of Lords' decision was contrary to article 10 of the European convention on human rights. Article 10 refers to freedom of expression and the right to impart ideas. For that reason, the case is cited often in support of a bill of rights. In my contention, the citation is unmerited, to be justified, supporters of the Bill of Rights must show that somehow if the convention were made English law, the decision of the House of Lords would have been different. I am convinced that that is not so. The House of Lords' reasoning differs from that of the European court in one respect only. Whereas the House of Lords thought that the interests of the administration of justice triumphed over freedom of the press, the European court thought that the press should triumph. It was treated in both courts as a classic case of competing interests. The principles of domestic and European law were the same. Lord Reid said in the other place that freedom of speech should not be limited to any greater extent than is necessary but that it could be allowed where there would be real prejudice to the administration of justice.

Article 10 allows freedom of expression and the right to impart ideas and information. However, article 10(2) permits restrictions of those freedoms

"for the protection of the reputation or rights of others."

The European court could have used article 10(2) to uphold the House of Lords. It did not do so because, subjectively, it thought that in that case, the freedom of the press was more important. Equally, the House of Lords need never have decided the case against *The Sunday Times*. It chose to do so and it would be free to do so whether or not a Bill of Rights was incorporated into British law.

**Mr. Ottaway:** Is that not a classic example where it would have been far more appropriate for the matter to stop with the House of Lords?

**Mr. Brown:** The hon. Gentleman is saying something that would undermine our entire involvement in the convention, If the hon. Gentleman's view is that we should not be a party to the convention at all, it is one that I repudiate for the reasons that I have already set out. If the hon. Gentleman is saying that people should not be able to exercise their rights to appeal against a decision of the House of Lords, that is wholly wrong.

**Mr. Ottaway:** I intervene merely to clarify. If the House of Lords had the right to look at the articles in the convention, there would be no need to go to Europe and it would be able to stop with the House of Lords. It could make its decision based on is principles but with the benefit of the articles.

**Mr. Brown:** The hon. Gentleman, for whom I have considerable regard, is being uncharacteristically obtuse. My point is that the House of Lords and, indeed, any British court of human rights, however it was established, would have been perfectly free under the covention to decide either way. The enactment of the convention into English law does not necessarily mean that the decision on the Thalidomide case would go in the direction decided by the European court, rather than vice versa. My point is that the decisions are subjective and rely, to some extent at least, on political judgment rather than the letter of anything contained in the European convention on human rights to the exclusion of anything else that is contained in the convention.

My hon. Friends, the Members for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) and for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) said that the special branch raid on the BBC would have been prevented if the Bill had been passed in an earlier Parliament. That is not so. It is a red herring, which has been thrown into the debate — I am sure that it is well-intentioned. Nevertheless, it is a red herring—*[Interruption.]* Perhaps it is a pink herring—a Grimsby herring, to boot.

I am taken by the case that arose from recent events at GCHQ. The two issues that were in contention were the Government's right to take measures to protect the security of the state and the individual's right to join a trade union, both of which rights are clearly set out in the convention. Those who had to decide on the convention had to decide which right was paramount. In fact, the case did not even get beyond the Commissioners. They decided that the interests of state security were paramount. I cannot see that a different decision would have been made in that or the BBC case had the convention been enshrined in domestic legislation.

The thrust of my objection and, as I understand it, of the Solicitor-General's objection, is the political effect on our courts. It is also this. To allow the courts to question legislation would throw the whole of the law into a state of uncertainty. Any point of law could be challenged. Such opportunities would be exploited, largely at public expense. Legal aid would be invariably granted on disputes relating to such important constitutional issues. While I can see that that would be of enormous benefit to the legal profession, I am not convinced that anybody else would gain from it. The tradition in the United Kingdom has been to have firm remedies rather than vague and resounding general rights. There would be grave difficulties for judges in interpreting the non-specific articles, a point that was made tellingly by my hon. Friend the Member for Denton and Reddish (Mr. Bennett).

Our human rights are well protected in this country in any event. I am grateful to Lord Elwyn-Jones for his analysis of the convention's articles and the corresponding provisions of English law, in the debate in the other place in December 1985. The history of England is geared to human rights—the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights in 1688, habeas corpus, trial by jury. Those are all rights that are enshrined in British law.

**Dr. Godman:** And the history of Scotland.

**Mr. Brown:** I referred to British law. I concede that the Scots also have rights, and so they should.

**Dr. Godman:** Not enough.

**Mr. Brown:** Anyway, a Bill of Rights is no guarantee of liberty. The convention contains few absolute rights that are set out without restrictions.

Let me divert to a smaller point. The right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan) referred to the right of individual petition and our support for it. I was taken by most of the right hon. and learned Gentleman's speech, and I agreed with that aspect of his argument. In that context, I should like to alert the House to what is happening in the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands where, as I understand it, rights are to be removed or may have been removed. In the light of what has been said in the House today, may I prevail on the Solicitor-General to review what is happening in those two territories? It is a byway to the main argument, but an important byway and I take this opportunity to raise it with the Solicitor-General.

Supporters of the Bill have argued that there would be immediate access to a court in the United Kingdom for an individual who claimed that a public authority had violated a right guaranteed to him by the European convention. The point has been made that referrals to Strasbourg are expensive and take time. However, the right to go to Strasbourg would still be there. It would not be suppressed by incorporating the convention into English law. Thus, not only could we be extending the time in which a definite decision was reached but we would be extending the cost of the decision-making process because the aggrieved party, regardless of which side was the loser in the British court, would, in all likelihood, want to exercise the right of final appeal.

My speech has been, I hope, gently and courteously opposed to the issue of incorporation, but not to the principles that underline the Bill. I want to conclude by making some suggestions which I hope will be considered to be constructive alternatives to the possibility of direct incorporation of the conventions. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bethnal Green and Stepney, (Mr. Shore) who is here beside me on the Front Bench suggested that a review of the issue of incorporation through the House of Commons Select Committee procedure might be an appropriate avenue to pursue. That would update the work carried out in another place about 10 years ago, and that might not be a bad thing. Parallel to that, Parliament could also consider the possibility of making a provision to the effect that on an application for judicial review, it should be deemed unreasonable for a body to exercise its powers in such a way as to contravene the terms of the convention. It would also be possible for Parliament to decide that the Parliamentary Commissioner could be specifically empowered to investigate any alleged breach of the convention and to lay a report of his investigation before Parliament for consideration.

I put those ideas forward as constructive alternatives to what I believe is the too far-reaching proposal that we should incorporate the convention wholesale into English law. I have to oppose the Bill. However, I do that only on practical grounds. I hope that the Bill's sponsors will acknowledge that among those of us who have reservations about this proposal are hon. Members whose commitment to human rights are every bit as strong as theirs.

**Several Hon. Members** *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** Order. I appeal for brief speeches in what is obviously the closing phase of the debate.

1.46 pm

**Mr. Robert Maclennan** (Caithness and Sutherland): I begin my remarks by congratulating the hon. and learned Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) on his good fortune and on the eloquence with which he introduced the Bill. He referred a little to the legislative history and to its appearance in a previous Session of Parliament under the sponsorship of Lord Broxbourne. With all humility, I want to draw attention to the fact that the proposal made an even earlier appearance in this House when in December 1983 I introduced a Bill in almost exactly the same terms, and the hon. and learned Member for Fylde was kind enough to sponsor my Bill on that occasion. I am glad, therefore, to be able to support the hon. and learned Gentleman's Bill, which I believe is particularly timely.

Although the Solicitor-General in the course of his remarks spoke about this proposal as the subject of perennial debate, it is fair to say that the debate has not taken place on the Floor of this House perennially. This has been a subject for academic debate and comment perhaps by judges and politicians but not, alas, for this Chamber. There is a great opportunity today for the House to consider and pronounce upon these issues.

There are very few advantages in being called so late in a debate. However, one advantage is that I have had the good fortune to hear the comments of the Solicitor-General. He was united with the Government Front Bench and the Labour party in a degree of insularity which I found distressing from one whom I admire so much. In his insularity and conservatism—and his conservatism was mirrored by that of the hon. Member for Newcastle upon Tyne, East (Mr. Brown) — he seemed almost to be referring to a byegone age, an age on which Parliament was able, perhaps because of the limited responsibilities of the Executive, to rectify quickly perceived grievances flowing from the oppressiveness of the limited apparatus of the state.

One of the most thoughtful speeches in opposition to the Bill was made by the hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Silvester), who referred to the remedy for grievances being in the hands of Parliament.

I have served in Parliament for 20 years, and I wish that I could say that Parliament can remedy grievances in the way in which the hon. Gentleman so idealistically described. Alas, the position is different. We must recognise — this bears upon the insularity of the Solicitor-General's approach—that our experience in the delivery of remedies for grievances is almost unique in that we do not have a Bill of Rights to which our citizens can turn for redress.

*[Mr. Robert Maclennan]*

New Zealand and Israel are the only other countries to have held out against the introduction of a Bill of Rights. Many years ago, the House legislated to ensure that Canada should enjoy the benefits of a Bill of Rights, and there have been several cases since then. When giving independence to our former colonies, we almost invariably tried to give them the benefit of such a Bill. The only country to which we have denied the privilege is Britain. What is so unique about Britain that it stands apart from the tide of history in this matter and is so complacently content that its citizens are protected by the procedures which grew up in the 19th century, in an age when Governments had relatively limited responsibility?

The Solicitor-General invoked only one argument—the impact of such a Bill on the judiciary and the public perception of it. But I welcome his assertion, on behalf of the Government, that the rights guaranteed by the convention are rights which the Government wish to be retained, and that they accept that the right of individual petition to Strasbourg should be renewed. Other hon. Members pitch their opposition against the convention itself, but that was not the argument deployed by the Solicitor-General. He made it plain that our citizens should enjoy the rights guaranteed by the convention, but he also made it plain that, to obtain those rights, they must go through the tortuous, circuitous and expensive route of the Commission and court in Strasbourg.

The Solicitor-General was careful to say, I think rightly, that British judges are competent to consider issues that involve applying general constitutional provisions and general principles of law such as those enshrined in the European convention. He could scarcely have denied it, as the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council has adjudicated on precisely such matters. Indeed, I appeared before the Judicial Committee in a case where the definition of "cruel and unusual punishment" had to be considered. Such matters have been in the jurisdiction of our judges for many years, and it is not difficult for them to apply those principles.

Had there been any doubt about judges' competence in that area—one can insulate their experience of acting as a court of appeal from foreign jurisdictions—that doubt has been removed by the development of the jurisprudence of British courts since we joined the European Community. European Community legislation is frequently cast in the civilian tradition that incorporates broad principles into the law and requires judges to make the sort of judgments that they are making at present without difficulty, greatly assisted by the jurisprudence of the European court. The jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights will be of assistance when, as they should, these matters come before our courts.

It is imperative that we give our citizens the greater benefit of enjoying judgments on these broad issues by our own judiciary rather than entrust them to a foreign court when that is not necessary.

It has been argued that there is still a right of appeal to Strasbourg. That is true, but I think that the Solicitor-General would agree that, if a matter is settled in a higher court in Britain on an intepretation of the European convention, it is extremely unlikely that the judgment will be taken from our courts and placed in the European sphere, save in the most exceptional circumstances. The cost of doing that is great and involves much time and uncertainty. Most citizens who avail themselves of the right to go to British courts will be satisfied by the domestic jurisdiction.

The Solicitor-General spoke about a threat that judges would be politicised. What is that threat? Surely he is not suggesting that our judges are not involved in politics. They take decisions of great political sensitivity and many cases, such as the Ponting and Tisdall cases, have great political resonance. In considering the wide range of issues which come before them for judicial review, it is impossible for judges to avoid taking a stance that may be of great political importance and politically highly controversial. As the Solicitor-General rightly said, judges have been developing this jurisdiction and have not feared to develop their roles in this way. They have not felt that they were becoming politicised. Why should we fear that they would be politicised when they do not fear it?

The Solicitor-General quoted Lord Diplock. He might also have quoted a number of equally senior judges who take a very different view from that taken by Lord Diplock. The movement of judicial opinion is towards recognising that it is the judicial role of judges to interpret the will of Parliament expressed in statute, and to do it against the background of the broad principles that Parliament has espoused for generations.

The Bill is long overdue and has had powerful support in the debate. It was supported in principle by the Lord Chancellor in a debate in another place when the noble Lord Wade introduced his Bill. The principle of this Bill has the support of many hon. Members. One of its most notable supporters is the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason). As a result of his experience in Northern Ireland, he recognises that the entrenchment of the protection of human rights by a Bill of rights in that troubled province of the United Kingdom could make a powerful contribution to restoring harmony and trust to that part of our realm. I happily commend the Bill to the House.

1.59 pm

**Mr. Charles Irving** (Cheltenham): I have listened to the whole of the debate. Some of the comments have greatly disturbed me, but, before drawing attention to some of them, like other hon. Members I should like to pay a great tribute to my distinguished hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) for seeking to place his measure on the statute book. In this endeavour, he worthily sets himself beside the great reformers who have graced this House over many years. I note with special pleasure that many Ministers—I am a bit worried about the Solicitor-General — the judiciary and members of both Houses support this worthy initiative.

Like many right hon. and hon. Members present, I believe that British citizens should not need to go to Strasbourg to protect their human rights. It may be expedient for them to continue to do so. Some may feel that to transfer these matters to British judges in British courts would be a bit of a nuisance. It would be nearer. Strasbourg is a long way away. It is expensive. It takes a long time to get there. Perhaps the number of people who feel that they have a grievance will be boosted if they can pursue their case before British judges in British courts with people who understand British justice.

We are blessed in many ways in Britain. In recent centuries, we have not experienced invasion, dictatorship or great social division. By the standards of other countries, we enjoy a remarkable level of tolerance, but tolerance is a fragile thing. This great and unique gift of ours has no protection in our legal and judicial system.

Many changes in society are beyond the scope of the individual to comprehend, let alone control. In a world of instant communication, increased centralisation and bureaucracy and extra-territorial regulation, the individual, without the protection of positive, legally defined human rights, is placed at a serious disadvantage vis-a-vis the institutions of state and other large corporate organisations.

Information gathering seems to be the obsession of modern society. It imposes a great threat in that it casts suspicion on what are sometimes the most innocent of activities. It frightens and deters people from the full enjoyment of their tolerances and freedoms. For far too long we have paid lip service to various charters on human rights, but, in the reality of everyday life, they have absolutely no meaning. They have no force in law.

Nobody will disagree that, on issues of human rights and administrative law, our courts are slow, cumbersome and expensive. That is even truer of Strasbourg. They overwhelm the individual. The long road to Strasbourg could take many years. We are almost alone among the signatories of the European convention in not having incorporated it into our internal law.

If the Bill becomes law, the interpretation and adjudication of the contents of the Bill will become a matter for British judges sitting in British courts. I fail to understand the anxiety about the difference between a Strasbourg judge and a British judge. If it is expedient for justice to be available to all people, surely we ought to be satisfied that we can obtain it in our own country. If we are not, I have grave doubts about many of the issues that concern many right hon. and hon. Members on both sides of the House.

Individual petitions to the European Commission of Human Rights will become a thing of the past. Justice for the individual will come more speedily and less expensively, and it will be British. Far from taking away the sovereignty of Parliament, the Bill will strengthen its role in our society. However, it will do more. It will give the ordinary people confidence to face coming changes knowing that our great gift of tolerance is protected by law.

I should like to see these rights protected. At present, there is doubt about many of them. We should have the right to be protected from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to a fair and public trial; the right to respect for private and family life, with no interference by a public authority; the right to freedom of expression, thought, conscience and religion; the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others; the right to form and join a trade union; the right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions; the right to education and teaching to conform with parents' own religious and philosophical convictions; the right not to be expelled from the territory of the state of which the individual is a national.

Subject to the restraints in paragraph 2 of article 11 of the convention, the state is protected; state security is protected. I entirely support and commend the Bill to the House.

2.7 pm

**Mr. Steve Norris** (Oxford, East): I shall confine myself to two observations. First, I congratulate my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner), who moved the Bill, on his good fortune and the excellent way in which he introduced the motion. He used some words which gave the lie to the whole of the debate. He talked about a grand theme, and he used a phrase that other hon. Members have used since — "the celestial clarity of the convention". I shall concentrate on those words.

I confess that when I first came into the House I supported the Bill. I thought that it was a jolly good idea. Arguing against a convention on human rights is like arguing against Mum and apple pie — not the sort of thing that any of us want to do. My mind was changed only when I did something which is not a common exercise for me — which I must avoid in the future, because it confuses me terribly. I read the Bill. When I read the convention I became convinced that we were fortunate that we had merely restricted ourselves, at this stage, to the recognition of the right of the individual to petition and that we had not permitted the incorporation of th convention into British law.

My hon. Friend for Mid-Worcestershire (Mr. Forth) made an interesting intervention earlier on. My hon. Friend challenged the assertion made by the mover of the Bill that 70 per cent. of the general public, when asked whether they wanted the Bill, said that they did and that they felt surer and more secure. My hon. Friend asked how many of that 70 per cent. had read the Bill, to which my hon. and learned Friend for Fylde in a brilliant debating point, said that if more people had read the Bill more would have been in favour of it. That is wonderful stuff, but the point that my hon. Friend was making—which I entirely take—is that if the Bill had been read word for word, would those who claim the great advantages for the convention still be of that mind?

I shall make one topical point, which relates to the police in Scotland and the premises of the BBC. Much nonsense has been talked by some hon. Gentlemen who support the Bill — with friends like that, who needs enemies? — who endeavoured to suggest that if the convention was in force none of the action taken by the police against the BBC would have happened, or had it happened, the BBC would have been able to invoke some miraculous right that would have set aside all the police action. Those hon. Members obviously cannot have read articles 8 and 10 which govern these affairs. Article 10 says:

> "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression."

Of course, that would be the right under which the BBC presumably would have gone to the High Court and said "Set aside this action by the police." The High Court would have said, "But subparagraph (2) of the article states:

> "The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society."

The subparagraph continues with these wonderful words well remembered by those of us who considered the Data Protection Bill with my hon. and learned Friend the Minister of State, Home Office, and the Interception of Communications Bill and who, incidentally, helped to

*[Mr. Steve Norris]*

introduce the Access to Personal Files Bill, which will be considered on 20 February and which I am sure all hon. Members will be here to support. It states:

> "in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others"

and so on. In other words, there is nothing in the convention that would not find itself the subject of the most intense debate, speculation and disagreement as to precisely what these wonderful nebulous and of themselves utterly meaningless concepts would mean in relation to that activity.

**Mr. Marlow** *rose*——

**Mr. Norris:** The truth is that the existence of this legislation incorporated into British law as the Human Rights Act 1987 would not have made a blind bit of difference to the activities of the police at the BBC over the Zircon affair last week—indeed, it would have confused it.

**Mr. Marlow** *rose*——

**Mr. Norris:** I shall not give way to any hon. Member. This will enable at least one other hon. Member to speak. I am reminded that any examination of constitutions throughout the world will conclude that one of the most seamless documents and one of the most perfect examples of a constitution drafted with every conceivable human right catered for, explained, annotated and developed, is the Soviet Union's constitution. Anyone who believes that freedom is based on the existence of pieces of paper cannot have kept his eyes open throughout his examination of politics in any country. Freedom is maintained where there is a will to maintain it. If I may use a solecism of sorts, as my right hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General did, the common law exists to protect the principle of the common man and has done so before and after the Bill of Rights of 1688. That is the real answer. I believe in the process of the common law being developed by judges in our courts. I do not believe in the value of these pieces of paper, however high-minded and high-flown and however much they seek to better the lot of mankind. I believe that we would be in considerable difficulty if we were to draw every tighter the convention into British law. I oppose the Bill and invite hon. Members to join me.

2.13 pm

**Dr. Norman A. Godman** (Greenock and Port Glasgow): I compliment the hon. and learned Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) on the Bill and his presentation of it. My brief intervention will be somewhat briefer than some of the speeches to which we have had to listen.

There is a serious need to protect liberties and rights in Britain. One critical issue is the conflict between the judgments of unelected judges and those made by elected legislators. Some people claim that there is a need for greater protection of the individual. Neal Ascherson, writing last Sunday in *The Observer*, said:

> "There ought not to be any doubt now that liberties in Britain need protection. This particular Government has practised an odious combination of laissez-faire in the economy and society with a rapid increase in state and police power over the individual."

That is one view of the diminution in the rights of the individual in Great Britain today.

The Bill, which I welcome with some reservations, will provide an extra tier of defence for the citizen whose interests have been harmed by an uncaring or intolerant Government. There is a case for the incorporation of the European convention on human rights into our domestic law. That can be illustrated by *The Sunday Times* Thalidomide case, in which the Strasbourg judges gave a conflicting view about the conflict with public interests. In other words, the Strasbourg judges argued that there was an interference that was unnecessary in a democratic society. That is an example of a case in which different judges arrive at different conclusions, which is a serious matter for a domestic Parliament. The decision in Strasbourg on GCHQ was, of course, an entirely different matter.

There are those who put their trust in Parliament and in elected legislators to protect the interests of injured citizens. One such person is Lord McCluskey, who is an eminent Scottish judge, and a man I respect enormously. He had this to say about a Bill of Rights:

> "Why should it be supposed that elderly lawyers with cautious and backward-looking habits of thought are qualified to overrule the judgments of democratically-elected legislators . . . I do not profess to understand."

Lord McCluskey said that in the fifth of his Reith lectures.

I have a great deal of sympathy with Lord McCluskey's realistic view of judges. Alongside his scepticism about his own profession, he displays an astonishing trust in elected legislators and I part company with him on that.

In my view, human rights need a greater, or an added protection to that which is offered by Parliament and numerous decisions in Strasbourg have clearly shown the need for that added protection.

I agree with the comments made by my hon. Friend the Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) that the raid on the BBC offices in Glasgow had much more to do with the political concerns of the Prime Minister than with national security. The Lord Advocate's role in this unseemly affair has aroused consideration unease in Scotland. However, against that, in granting an interdict on behalf of the BBC against the police raid on its offices in Glasgow, Lord Clyde behaved in a reassuringly impartial manner. Nevertheless, the role of the Lord Advocate needs to be subject to rigorous scrutiny, because he caused deep alarm in Scotland by the wording of the initial warrant.

That squalid affair clearly shows the need for a Bill of Rights. The public, or large sectors of it, no longer trust the Prime Minister and her Ministers. Therefore, I support the Bill in principle, but, at the same time, I am seriously concerned about the potential conflict arising from judgments made by

> "elderly lawyers with cautious and backward-looking habits of thought",

and those made by democratically elected legislators. Therefore, on balance, I support the Bill.

2.19 pm

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford): I firmly oppose the Bill. We are in a different position in relation to these issues. The traditions of the House, which have developed over many centuries, are based on ministerial accountability to the House. To intrude into our constitution the notion that judges should be given a greater degree of political involvement in matters that should be dealt with by the House is to take a major and dangerous step.

I have grave doubts whether our Standing Orders and, indeed, the whole of the procedures of the House could withstand the provisions of the Bill if it were enacted. I ask the House to consider the Osmotherly rules and their practical application for Select Committees, whether people should be cross-examined before Select Committees, and all matters which are at present within the framework of the House, such as orders, procedures and Standing Orders. Our Standing Orders are subject to statutes, so we could find that the ultimate decisions about the proper way to conduct our proceedings were subject to judicial review. Clause 9 of the Bill and, indeed, the Bill itself would be subsumed into these provisions.

If the Bill is passed there will be much greater confusion and ambiguity between what is legislated in the House and what is decided in the courts. Moreover, if one considers the way in which the 21 countries that have incorporated these provisions into their domestic law have operated, one finds a great deal of uncertainty and confusion between the methods of dealing with these provisions in their courts and those in their legislatures.

Recently we legislated on public order. I hope that the articles will be referred to the Floor of the House so that we can consider properly the question that arise. If we were to apply the articles in the convention to the Public Order Act 1986, the questions that have arisen in relation to Wapping and the miners' strike would be completely overridden by what the judge in that case thought was necessary, rather than dealt with on the basis on which we proceed at present.

At the heart of this matter is the judges' method of interpretation of the laws which are brought before them for scrutiny. We have our canons of interpretation, known as stare decisis, which are not shared in the European courts. This is a matter of profound importance. I ask the House to consider a conflict between our legislation, which provides for that which is reasonable, and what is regarded as being necessary. Article 9 states that freedom of thought shall be subject to limitations as

"are necessary in a democratic society."

How would that be interpreted by judges? The short answer is that they would decide what was necessary and the normal rule about what is or is not reasonable would go out of the window. The Bill is much more fundamental than it has appeared from some speeches we have heard.

The question of the right to life raises grave doubts and, indeed, there must be a presumption of grave doubt. Article 2 states:

"Everyone's right to life shall be protected by law",

except where a person is convicted of a criminal offence. If one looks at European cultures that have incorporated these provisions, considers abortion and related matters, articles 2 and 8, and the principle that I have stated at the end of the day, one will have grave doubt about what this piece of paper amounts to.

I pay tribute to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde (Sir E. Gardner) for drawing attention to these important matters. It is not practicable to introduce provisions of this kind and to politicise not only judges' judgments but, in effect, eventually their appointment. At the end of the day, we must consider whether we wish to follow a system of interpretation of law that is relevant in Europe or whether we are prepared to go along with the traditions of the House that go back to 1688 and before. We must ensure that we stand four-square by the principles and traditions that have led to the redress of grievance in this House, and not have such matters dealt with by courts that would become entirely politicised. That would be a dangerous step. I hope that the matter can effectively be dealt with in detail on the Floor of the House.

2.26 pm

**Mr. Nicholas Baker** (Dorset, North): I am tempted to support the Bill so that we have the opportunity to express our views. But with great regret, and not because I am opposed to the sentiments expressed by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Fylde, (Sir E. Gardner), I oppose the Bill for three reasons. First, there is a small but distinct shift in political power to the judiciary, and that is undesirable. Secondly, there will be an increase in litigation, not necessarily in the libertarian cause. Thirdly, there will be uncertainty about the law which, ultimately, will not achieve greater protection for the individual citizen.

The European convention on human rights is not a body of law but a treaty. When judges in Strasbourg decide an issue about immigration or anything else, they do not give a judgment on the matter so much as say that the treaty has been broken, and it is up to the British Government to decide what they will do about the matter. As we know, British Governments have always taken action, in the opinion of the Parliament, to put matters right. I stress that it is in the opinion of the Parliament.

My concern is how we decide what the law is. How does the oil of the convention mix with the water of the common law of England? The Bill, if enacted, will leave that matter to judges. In effect, they will be asked to decide matters which presently fall to be decided by Parliament, however pressured we are by being a signatory to the treaty.

Most hon. Members will accept that the greatest protection of the human rights of our citizens is to be derived through the elected Members of this place. Judges are not trained to make such decisions and would find the political waters in which they are invited to dabble their feet unfriendly and unnatural.

The speech made by the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) was particularly significant. He expressed the greatest hostility to judges and to the type of decisions that they are asked to take today. How much greater would be his hostility, and, no doubt, that of some of his hon. Friends and others, to judges if they were asked to widen the area of their decisions, as they are being asked to do so under the Bill? I take seriously the risk that, if this convention were put into our law, it could lead to the political appointment——

**Sir Edward Gardner** *rose in his place and claimed to move,* That the Question be now put.

*Question put,* That the Question be now put:—

*The House divided:* Ayes 94, Noes 16.

**Division No. 83]** **[2.30 pm**

**AYES**

**Adley, Robert**
**Aitken, Jonathan**
**Anderson, Donald**
**Atkinson, David *(B'm'th E)***
**Beith, A. J.**
**Bonsor, Sir Nicholas**
**Braine, Rt Hon Sir Bernard**
**Brittan, Rt Hon Leon**
**Bruce, Malcolm**
**Campbell, Ian**
**Carlile, Alexander *(Montg'y)***
**Carlisle, Rt Hon M. *(W'ton S)***
**Cartwright, John**
**Clegg, Sir Walter**
**Cox, Thomas *(Tooting)***
**Crouch, David**
**Dalyell, Tam**
**Deakins, Eric**
**Dykes, Hugh**
**Finsberg, Sir Geoffrey**
**Fookes, Miss Janet**
**Fox, Sir Marcus**
**Fraser, J. *(Norwood)***
**Freeson, Rt Hon Reginald**

Gardner, Sir Edward *(Fylde)*
Gilbert, Rt Hon Dr John
Gilmour, Rt Hon Sir Ian
Godman, Dr Norman
Goodhart, Sir Philip
Greenway, Harry
Grist, Ian
Ground, Patrick
Hancock, Michael
Harvey, Robert
Haselhurst, Alan
Hayes, J.
Hayhoe, Rt Hon Sir Barney
Higgins, Rt Hon Terence L.
Holt, Richard
Hordern, Sir Peter
Howell, Rt Hon D. *(G'ldford)*
Howells, Geraint
Hughes, Dr Mark *(Durham)*
Hughes, Simon *(Southwark)*
Hume, John
Irving, Charles
Jackson, Robert
Janner, Hon Greville
Jenkins, Rt Hon Roy *(Hillh'd)*
Johnston, Sir Russell
Kennedy, Charles
Key, Robert
Kirkwood, Archy
Knowles, Michael
Lawrence, Ivan
Lewis, Sir Kenneth *(Stamf'd)*
Livsey, Richard
Maclennan, Robert
Maples, John
Mates, Michael
Meadowcroft, Michael
Mitchell, Austin *(G't Grimsby)*
Morris, M. *(N'hampton S)*
Morrison, Hon C. *(Devizes)*
Murphy, Christopher
Normanton, Tom
Osborn, Sir John
Owen, Rt Hon Dr David
Pavitt, Laurie
Prentice, Rt Hon Reg
Price, Sir David
Raison, Rt Hon Timothy
Randall, Stuart
Rathbone, Tim
Rees, Rt Hon Peter *(Dover)*
Rhodes James, Robert
Rhys Williams, Sir Brandon
Rippon, Rt Hon Geoffrey
Roberts, Ernest *(Hackney N)*
Rossi, Sir Hugh
St. John-Stevas, Rt Hon N.
Shelton, William *(Streatham)*
Shields, Mrs Elizabeth
Skeet, Sir Trevor
Squire, Robin
Steel, Rt Hon David
Temple-Morris, Peter
Townsend, Cyril D. *(B'heath)*
Wainwright, R.
White, James
Whitney, Raymond
Wigley, Dafydd
Wilkinson, John
Yeo, Tim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Mr. Jeremy Hanley and
Mr. Richard Ottaway.

NOES

Atkinson, N. *(Tottenham)*
Baker, Nicholas *(Dorset N)*
Bennett, A. *(Dent'n & Red'sh)*
Budgen, Nick
Fields, T. *(L'pool Broad Gn)*
Foot, Rt Hon Michael
Hart, Rt Hon Dame Judith
Haynes, Frank
Michie, William
Proctor, K. Harvey
Sedgemore, Brian
Short, Mrs R.*(W'hampt'n NE)*
Silvester, Fred
Skinner, Dennis
Stanbrook, Ivor
Stern, Michael

Tellers for the Noes:
Mr. Eric Forth and
Mr. Tony Marlow.

*Whereupon* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *declared that the Question was not decided in the affirmative, because it was not supported by the majority prescribed by Standing Order No. 36 (Majority for Closure).*

*Debate to be resumed on Friday 20 February.*

## HEDGEROW PROTECTION BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**Hon. Members:** Object.

*Second Reading deferred till Friday 20 February.*

## MOTOR CYCLE NOISE BILL

*Read a Second time.*

*Bill committed to a Standing Committee pursuant to Standing Order No. 61 (Committal of Bills).*

## RIGHT TO INTEREST BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**Hon. Members:** Object.

*Second Reading deferred till Friday 10 July.*

## GYPSIES (CONTROL OF UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS) BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**Hon. Members:** Object.

*Second Reading deferred till Friday 10 July.*

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT 1982 (AMENDMENT) BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**Hon. Members:** Object.

*Second Reading deferred till Friday 3 April.*

## SCHOOLS SELF-MANAGEMENT BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** Second Reading what day? No day named.

## LICENSING (RESTAURANT MEALS) BILL

*[Lords]*

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**Hon. Members:** Object.

*Second Reading deferred till Friday 13 February.*

## POLICE COMPLAINTS AUTHORITY (INFORMATION) BILL

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**Hon. Members:** Object.

*Second Reading deferred till Friday 13 February.*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

*Ordered,*

That, at the sitting on Wednesday 11th February, notwithstanding the provisions of Standing Orders No. 14 (Exempted business) and No. 15 (Prayers against statutory instruments, &c. (negative procedure)), Motions in the name of Mr. Secretary Rifkind or of Mr. Neil Kinnock relating to Housing (Scotland) may be proceeded with, though opposed, for one and a half hours after the first of them has been entered upon, and if proceedings thereon have not been previously disposed of, Mr. Speaker shall put successively the Question already proposed from the Chair and the Questions on such of the remaining Motions as may then be made.—*[Mr. Peter Lloyd.]*

## Official Secrets Act (Prosecution Policy)

*Motion made, and Question proposed,* That this House do now adjourn.—*[Mr. Peter LLoyd.]*

2.41 pm

**Mr. Ivan Lawrence** (Burton): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) spent 22 minutes of the previous debate on human rights deploying the same arguments as I anticipate he is likely to deploy in the Adjournment debate. Is it possible, in those circumstances, that those of us who were not able to make a speech on the Human Rights Bill because of the hon. Member for Linlithgow's actions should be able to take part in the Adjournment debate and deploy some of the important arguments that we were seeking to deploy on the Human Rights Bill?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Harold Walker):** The hon. and learned Gentleman knows that I cannot rule or make a judgment on a hypothesis.

2.42 pm

**Mr. Tam Dalyell** (Linlithgow): The hon. and learned Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence) will be disappointed, because there is another, different aspect to the issue.

Charmingly, the Solicitor-General began his speech this morning with what he said was a platitude. I should like to start with a non-platitude. While not being his easiest parliamentary colleague, and, trying though he may find me from time to time, being over-inquisitive, I have had every courtesy from an approachable and forthcoming Attorney-General. It is no platitude to wish him a speedy return to full health.

I heard the Solicitor-General this morning and I thank him for attending the Adjournment debate. In my opinion, in the 1950s he was the most eloquent Oxford president ever to come to the Cambridge Union. He was extremely eloquent this morning.

May I say at the outset that I gave the Attorney-General a copy of my speech in relation to the possible prosecution of Lord Rothschild and Mr. Bernard Sheldon on Monday, since it raises issues of byzantine difficulty and daunting delicacy, which should not be sprung out of the blue on any Minister. Knowing the Solicitor-General, I am sure that he will respond to this in the same spirit of considered seriousness.

The purpose of the first part of my speech is to give the Law Officers an opportunity to tell Parliament—these issues are ultra-party—what on earth they propose to do to clear up the Augean stables of inconsistency in prosecutions under the Official Secrets Act. The Law Officers will understand that my deep interest in these matters was born during the 11 days that I spent in the Old Bailey, in Mr. Justice Sir Anthony McCowan's court, during the trial of Clive Ponting.

Why prosecute Clive Ponting and dither, understandably—I do not use that word in a pejorative sense—over prosecuting Victor Rothschild? Why send Sarah Tisdall to prison for months and do nothing about Bernard Sheldon, albeit he is approaching retirement, in relation to Rupert Allason, alias Nigel West? Why fail to prosecute Bernard Ingham for the selective leaking of the Solicitor-General's letter? It looks as if there is one prosecution policy for the influential, the famous and the distinguished and another prosecution policy for the more junior, hitherto less famous, civil servants.

Compared with what Victor Rothschild set in train, with Peter Wright and Harry Chapman Pincher, anything that Clive Ponting put in my way melts into insignificance, in terms of national security, if not political embarrassment. There is an apparent inconsistency of policy, and it would be helpful to the House to know on what principles those discriminating practices are justified and on what basis discrimination is authorised by Ministers.

It is to the position of Lord Rothschild that I wish to refer. If, for the first time, I shelter under the cloak of parliamentary privilege, it is because Lord Rothschild can be a litigious man and, secondly, I do not think that what I am saying is to his discredit. I refer to 26 November—*[Interruption.]* Hon. Members had better wait and hear what I shall say. I refer to 26 November, when I asked the Attorney-General

> "what consideration he has given to proceeding against . . . Mr. Arthur Franks, formerly head of MI6, and . . . Lord Rothschild for breach of confidence in relation to information on matters of state security given to authors."

The Attorney-General replied:

> "I am considering with the Director of Public Prosecutions the allegations made in respect of the two named individuals."—[*Official Report,* 26 November 1986; Vol 106, c. *268*.]

I returned to the subject on 1 December 1986, and the Attorney-General said:

> "The matter remains under consideration."—[*Official Report,* 1 December 1986; Vol. 106, c. *415*.]

On 18 December 1986, I asked the Prime Minister

> "whether she will now release Lord Rothschild from his obligations of confidentiality as a former member of the security services; and if she will make a statement."

The Prime Minister replied:

> "All present and former members of the security services owe a lifelong duty of confidentiality to the Crown. They may not make unauthorised disclosures of information acquired in their work. Any requests for authorised disclosure would be considered in the normal way."—[*Official Report,* 18 December 1986; Vol. 107, c. *613*.]

Let me offer necessarily truncated points. First, in the 1930s, international Jewry, of which the Rothschilds were one of the leading families, were aghast at the anti-semitism that was then rampant in Germany. Secondly, Victor Rothschild may, as the author Douglas Sutherland suggests, have recruited Guy Burgess for a minor role in one of the Jewish intelligence services. Thirdly, as an understandably passionate anti-Fascist, Victor Rothschild may have had relations with Comintern agents. Talk of spying is jejune nonsense. Anyhow, a good agent is one who gets from foreign powers more than he gives.

Fourthly, the events of long ago fade into the past. Sleeping dogs from the 1930s and 1940s were rightly, in my view, allowed to lie. De mortuis nil nisi bonum. But in 1979, Britain gets a new species of Prime Minister. On 15 November 1979, the new Prime Minister makes a statement on Blunt, against advice, with the aplomb of a cow in a china shop. Sir Charles Cunningham tells me that Sir Anthony Blunt's activities as an agent of both sides many years previously were fully known to successive permanent secretaries at the Home Office.

Fifthly, I believe that Lord Rothschild was extremely angry about the Prime Minister's reaction on Sir Anthony Blunt. Some of us believe that Sir Anthony Blunt's memoir, given to his brother, and now lodged in an institution in London, will reveal a complex story, part of which is that Sir Anthony Blunt was asked by a former member of the security forces whose name I have given to

*[Mr. Tam Dalyell]*

the Attorney-General, and by Guy Liddell, to help get Burgess and Maclean, by that time embarrassments both, out of the country.

Sixthly, in the summer of 1980, Lord Rothschild had the Prime Minister to his flat in Saint James's. He is subsequently quoted in the press as saying:

"She does not understand intelligence matters."

Seventhly, Lord Rothschild then came to believe that his own reputation was at stake, especially after the Prime Minister's statement on Sir Roger Hollis on 23 March 1981, which appears in the *Official Report* at column 1079. At his own expense, Lord Rothschild brought Peter Wright from Australia. He discussed with Wright certain material which appeared to constitute a contravention of section 7 of the Official Secrets Act 1920. Section 7 states:

> "Any person who attempts to commit any offence under the principal Act or this Act, or solicits or incites or endeavours to persuade another person to commit an offence, or aids or abets and does any act preparatory to the commission of an offence under the principal Act or this Act, shall be guilty of a felony or a misdemeanour or a summary offence according as the offence in question is a felony, a misdemeanour or a summary offence, and on conviction shall be liable to the same punishment, and to be proceeded against in the same manner, as if he had committed the offence."

If the Attorney-General would decide to prosecute Lord Rothschild in open court, it would be possible to ask questions which are causing much public concern and which Lord Rothschild would then have to answer on oath. These are some of the questions that might be asked. First, how does Lord Rothschild explain his involvement with Sidgwick and Jackson over the Pincher-Wright book? While it is possible that Sidgwick and Jackson would consult Sir Arthur Franks about possible breaches of the Official Secrets Act 1911, that would not explain Lord Rothschild's involvement.

Secondly, why should Lord Rothschild expose himself by suggesting an unlawful enterprise to Mr. Wright, namely that he should breach the Official Secrets Act and then procure a writer, Mr. Pincher, to act as a channel for royalties?

Thirdly, why should Lord Rothschild fly Wright to London if, as has been suggested, all he needed was a testimonial to protect himself against suggestions that he had been a Soviet agent?

Fourthly, why pay Wright? Why introduce him to Harry Chapman Pincher? Why should Mr. Pincher pay him half the royalties?

Only by proceeding in open court on oath can obscurities be made less obscure. Only by proceedings in open court can there be an end to doubt and to the suspicion of discrimination.

I ask the Law Officers why they will or why they will not prosecute Victor Rothschild. If they decline to prosecute, apologies should be winging their way to Sarah Tisdall and Clive Ponting.

Even more clearly, the Law Officers owe Miss Tisdall and Mr. Ponting an explanation as to why they take no action against Mr. Bernard Sheldon for briefing Mr. Rupert Allason—alias Nigel West—who incidentally, and I do not intend to make much of this, is Conservative candidate for Torquay, for his books. I want to make it clear that I do not wish to enter the argument about Mr. Allason being Conservative candidate for Torquay.

If I am asked in general terms after my comments this morning about sources, part of my reply would be that there is an urgent need for an appeal body to which civil servants, policemen, service men or people in the intelligence services can go without jeopardising their careers if they believe that they have been abused. That is the official policy of the Labour party put down by the Cirencester and Tewkesbury amendment at the party conference at Bournemouth on the Sunday. I was interested to hear on the radio that Nigel West—alias Rupert Allason—said at 8.15 am on 5 February that he supported the idea of such an appeal body.

Finally, yesterday my right hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition and I raised with the Leader of the House the question of the *Interspace* articles with regard to Zircon. The question was whether the knowledge of Zircon or Skynet IV was in the public print at least two years ago. The Leader of the House said that he would draw that matter to the attention of the Solicitor-General.

I will leave the matter there, because the hon. Member for Thanet, South (Mr. Aitken), the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) and my hon. Friend the Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) have a very serious interest in these matters.

2.54 pm

**The Solicitor-General** (Sir Patrick Mayhew): I thank the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) for his kind good wishes for my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General and for his kind remarks about him, which are much appreciated. May I also thank him for his kind reference to me. I am grateful to him for having given the Law Officers advance notice of the contents of his speech, which was a helpful gesture. Even so, he made several allegations to which, as I shall explain, I shall be unable to respond.

The main theme of the hon. Gentleman's speech was whether Lord Rothschild should be prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act. On 17 December 1986, the police were requested by the Director of Public Prosecutions to investigate allegations that Lord Rothschild and Mr. Chapman Pincher had committed offences under the Official Secrets Act. The police investigation is continuing and no decision can be taken until the Director of Public Prosecutions is given the police report, which will then be sent to the Attorney-General, or to me if the Attorney-General has not yet returned to his duties.

In those circumstances, and in accordance with the normal practice of the Law Officers, I cannot comment, except to say that I am satisfied that the matters raised by the hon. Gentleman will be considered by the police officers who are carrying out the investigations. As far as I can recollect, most, if not all, of the allegations formed part of the evidence given by Mr. Wright in the proceedings in Sydney and, as allegations, they are common knowledge.

I emphasise once again that my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General has no discriminatory policy in considering cases submitted to him under the Official Secrets Act. Each case is considered openly upon exactly the same criteria, and there is no foundation for a claim that importance or seniority in rank provides a person who is under investigation with any advantage.

The hon. Gentleman asked a question today which is already the subject of a question on the Order Paper for priority written answer by my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General. It relates to the publishers of the Interspace newsletter in respect of an article or articles that might be considered to refer to the Zircon project. I can tell the hon. Gentleman that the matter raised in the written question and which he has raised today will be the subject of consideration.

> "My right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General has authorised me to inform the House that, on having considered the report by the head of the Civil Service, and on the material before him, he has decided after consultation with, and with the full agreement of, the Director of Public Prosecutions and senior Treasury counsel, that there is no justification for the institution of proceedings under the Official Secrets Act 1911 in respect of any of the persons concerned in this matter"—[*Official Report*, 23 January 1986, Vol. 90, c. 451]

—that matter being the one raised by the hon. Gentleman a considerable time ago relating to the Westland affair. I mention that in relation to the name which he mentioned today of Mr. Bernard Ingham. I do not recall that, in the copy of the speech which he furnished to the Attorney-General, he said that he would make allegations against Mr. Bernard Ingham to the extent that he has done today. The words that I have just uttered formed the basis of a statement on 23 January 1986 by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister.

In the context of remarks about the book, "A Matter of Trust" written by Mr. Rupert Allason, alias Nigel West, the hon. Gentleman mentioned Mr. Bernard Sheldon, who is an official. He asks why the Attorney-General has not prosecuted Mr. Sheldon. The answer is simple and I trust that it is welcome. I am informed that there is no evidence at all to show that Mr. Sheldon has committed any offence under the Official Secrets Act. The hon. Gentleman also mentioned Mr. Sheldon in connection with the recent searches of BBC premises. I am informed that neither that official nor the security service had any involvement at all in any decisions or actions relating to this matter. During the last debate the hon. Gentleman made allegations about my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate and his Department in connection with the search of BBC premises. Having had no notice of the allegations made in that debate, perhaps I may be permitted to say that in his answer in another place on Wednesday 4 February my noble and learned Friend the Lord Advocate set out the circumstances in which the search warrants were applied for and granted.

I am informed that there is no foundation for the allegation that the Crown Office, alarmed at the enormity of what it was being asked to do, made a direct or indirect approach to the Prime Minister's office and that the Crown Office was told by the Prime Minister's office to allow special branch officers to take everything and anything from BBC Scotland. I am informed that at no time was the Crown Office in communication with the Prime Minister's office. I understand that yesterday the hon. Gentleman told my hon. and learned Friend the Solicitor-General for Scotland that he would not expect him to be in his place today for this debate. Therefore, I find the allegations made earlier today a little surprising.

**Mr. Dalyell:** That was simply because as a Scottish Member I know that it is difficult to be here on Friday.

**Sir Patrick Mayhew:** I hear what the hon. Gentleman says about that, and no doubt it is an explanation. When officials enter the public service they know that throughout their service they will be unable to speak in their own defence to answer criticism and that they must rely on their Ministers to do that for them, especially when criticism is unfounded. The hon. Gentleman thinks it justifiable to allege that named officials should be prosecuted for offences under the Official Secrets Act. I have already repeated the Prime Minister's words about Mr. Bernard Ingham and I should now like to say something about Mr. Bernard Sheldon.

The hon. Gentleman earlier made a speech about human rights, but has not provided a scrap of evidence to support his allegation about Mr. Sheldon. Either he has evidence, as *The Independent* reports him as claiming he has, in which case it is disgraceful that he has not provided it, or he has none, in which case it is disgraceful to allege an offence.

**Mr. Dalyell:** This is part of the problem and the reason why I said in my speech that it is of great urgency to institute some kind of appeal body to which civil servants, service men, intelligence officers or policemen who think that they are being maltreated can go without jeopardy to their careers. That is important and that is why I raised the subject at my party conference and was one of those who made it helpful to be the policy of the party.

**Sir Patrick Mayhew:** Civil servants must be defended by their Ministers when they have no means, at present at any rate, of speaking in their own defence. However, officials are entitled to rely on more than defence by their Ministers. They are entitled to expect that hon. Members, protected as they take pains to be by privilege, will treat officials fairly. I regret that Mr. Sheldon and Mr. Ingham, both of whom have had careers of great dedication and distinction with successive Governments, have been unfairly treated in the Chamber.

**Mr. Dalyell:** Before the Solicitor-General sits down, may I remind him that I am talking about men of considerable power. I worked closely with the late Dame Evelyn Sharp and know how civil servants should properly be treated. The difficulty arises when civil servants become so powerful that they are not accountable in the normal sense of the word. That is why I had an Adjournment debate on the role of the Prime Minister's press officer, saying that we were dealing with the most powerful "man" in British politics. Later several of the Solicitor-General's colleagues vouchsafe to me—that I was quite right and that he is the most powerful——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker** Order. I thought that the hon. Gentleman was making an intervention. He cannot speak for a second time.

3.5 pm

**Mr. William Cash** (Stafford) *rose*——

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Does the hon. Member have the consent of the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) and the Solicitor-General to speak?

**Mr. Dalyell:** Most certainly.

**The Solicitor-General:** Yes.

**Mr. Cash:** I am most grateful for an opportunity to speak. We have just had a debate on human rights in which the hon. Member for Linlithgow (Mr. Dalyell) made a speech which stretched the procedures of the House. He has now made a series of apparently groundless allegations against certain people. I was not privy to that speech and I can only form a judgment on the basis of what he said. He said nothing specifically and he substantiated nothing with evidence.

*[Mr. Cash]*

There are times when we have reason to be worried that the hon. Gentleman is as much interested in grabbing headlines as in getting at the truth. I suspect that that is true of what happened earlier this morning.

Campaigns such as the Campaign for Freedom of Information and the hon. Gentleman's suggestion of an appeal body, which was apparently endorsed at the Labour party conference, raise central questions about the nature of authority and where it resides.

**Mr. Dalyell:** That is absolutely right.

**Mr. Cash:** The hon. Gentleman says that I am absolutely right, but I suspect that we disagree fundamentally about where the centre of gravity must remain.

Self regulation and the constraints that people impose on themselves to ensure a proper balance of responsibilities and, by contrast, the right to speak, are issues which go to the heart of the matter. We have become increasingly fed up — I am sure that is true for the country as well — with people who believe that their unsubstantiated opinions which appear in the media or here, and which are drawn from a fairly limited range of information, can be used to make assertions and inferences——

**Mr. Dalyell** *rose*——

**Mr. Cash:** I shall, of course, give way to the hon. Gentleman a little later. Such clashes of opinion ought to be resolved in the proper and normal way, which is within the framework of law prescribed by our procedures and Acts of Parliament. We are increasingly fed up with invasions of privilege.

**Mr. Dalyell:** The hon. Gentleman says that I have made unsubstantiated allegations. That was the type of speech which was made against me for 18 long months before the Old Bailey Clive Ponting trial substantiated everything that I had tried to say.

I named Colette Bow in the House and there was the matter of the Solicitor-General's letter. Who has since been proved right about that? The Solicitor-General will not comment but, with regard to his letter, I was attacked time and again by Conservative Members, but who now thinks that I have been wrong?

**Mr. Cash:** I have a straight and simple answer. If the hon. Gentleman was proved right in the courts before, he should make the unsubstantiated allegations that he made today outside the House and prove his point in the courts. That is my direct and simple answer to him. Will he reply to that?

**Mr. Dalyell:** If I go to a court of law and name names, people's careers are in jeopardy — not mine, other people's careers. I have to make a judgment whether what I have been told is the truth or not. From my inquiries in Scotland, I believe that every word that I am saying is true.

**Mr. Cash:** The record has to stand for itself. The only person's reputation that will be harmed by what has been going on here this morning is the hon. Gentleman's. I have offered the hon. Gentleman an opportunity, which he is not prepared to take up. If he thinks that making statements and allegations within the privilege of the House will enable him to be able to justify what he has to say, when what he is doing—because he knows perfectly well that everything he says will be splashed over the newspapers tomorrow — is not damaging people's reputations when they cannot reply to him, then he is absolutely wrong and we are fed up with it and the way that he carries on.

**Mr. Dalyell:** If there is going to be anger, I am exceedingly angry about what was done in BBC Scotland, which was a wholly un-British thing to do. What happened in Glasgow was horrific. That was something that has never happened in Britain before. I have been here for nearly a quarter of a century and previous Prime Ministers — the right hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Mr. Heath), Mr. Harold Macmillan and Sir Alec Douglas-Home—know that I have behaved impeccably towards them. This is a different kind of Government and a new species of Prime Minister. As a Member who has been here for a quarter of a century, I do not like it.

**Mr. Cash:** The hon. Gentleman may not like it, but he is shielding himself behind the privileges of the House.

*The question having been proposed after half-past Two o'clock and the debate having continued for half an hour,* MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.*

*Adjourned at eleven minutes past Three o'clock.*

# Written Answers to Questions

*Monday 26 January 1987*

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Insider Dealing

**Mr. Wrigglesworth** asked the Attorney-General if the Director of Public Prosecutions is considering prosecution of the junior official at the Office of Fair Trading referred to in the answer of 21 January, *Official Report*, column *583*, by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in connection with insider dealing.

**The Attorney-General:** No formal report has been submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions; but the Head of Legal Services has made himself available to give advice to those responsible for the conduct of the investigation to which the hon. Member refers.

### Northern Ireland (Juries)

**Mr. Stanbrook** asked the Attorney-General whether the Lord Chancellor has completed his review on the use of juries in personal injury actions in Northern Ireland.

**The Attorney-General:** The review announced in November 1985 has been completed. The Lord Chancellor has carefully considered the further views of interested parties in Northern Ireland and has concluded that there is no compelling reason why Northern Ireland should differ from England and Wales in the use of juries in personal injury actions. He intends to bring forward legislation in the near future to effect the change.

### Zircon Satellite

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General when he first learned of the existence of *(a)* the series of programmes on "The Secret Society" and *(b)* the programme on the Zircon satellite system.

**The Attorney-General:** I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's answer to him of today.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General (1) whether he will prosecute British Aerospace under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act for publishing information as to the location orbits of the Zircon satellite system;

(2) whether he will prosecute Sir Ronald Mason, former defence chief scientific adviser, under the Official Secrets Act, for disclosing information to Duncan Campbell for use in the media on the existence of the Zircon satellite system;

(3) whether he will prosecute Sir Frank Cooper, former permanent secretary at the Ministry of Defence, under the Official Secrets Act for disclosing information on the existence of the Zircon satellite system to Duncan Campbell.

**The Attorney-General:** The Director of Public Prosecutions will consider whether any criminal proceedings are appropriate and, if so, against whom in the light of the result of the investigation currently being conducted by the Metropolitan police.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General on what date he decided to seek an injunction against Duncan Campbell on the question of publishing information in relation to the Zircon satellite system.

**The Attorney-General:** The Government decided to seek an injunction against Duncan Campbell on 20 January.

## TRANSPORT

### Private Hire Vehicles

**Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied that the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 is operating as intended so far as licenced private hire vehicles are concerned; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I believe that, on the whole, this Act is achieving its intended purpose.

**Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many representations he has received from individuals and organisations about the workings of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as it relates to private hire vehicles.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** The Department has received a number of representations on these points over the years. Most of them have been requests from district councils for advice on the interpretation of the Act.

**Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce legislation to amend the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to impose upon persons applying for a licence to operate a private hire vehicle *(a)* a test of local knowledge, *(b)* standards of road worthiness and *(c)* a requirement to display a certificate of current fully comprehensive insurance and the local authority licence number in a prominent position inside the vehicle; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** It is already open to district councils to impose these requirements under the Act.

### Public Transport (Merseyside)

**Mr. Evans** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received regarding the condition of public transport in Merseyside; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I have received a number of representations, from the passenger transport authority and others. It is the responsibility of the passenger transport executive to secure public transport services to meet local needs in accordance with the policies formulated by the authority.

### A1 (Road Accidents)

**Sir Anthony Grant** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the number of road accidents on the A1 road in Cambridgeshire in each of the last three years and the number of deaths and serious injuries resulting; what steps he proposes to make this road safer; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The number of accidents on the A1 trunk road in Cambridgeshire are as follows:

| | *Fatal* | *Serious* | *Slight* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1984 | 9 | 42 | 93 | 144 |
| 1985 | 4 | 43 | 101 | 148 |
| 1986 | 12 | 48 | 114 | 174 |

The 1986 figures are provisional. The numbers of deaths and serious injuries are as follows:

| | *Deaths* | *Seriously Injured* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984 | 12 | 56 |
| 1985 | 4 | 55 |

The figures for 1986 are not yet available.

Accident rates (injury accidents per million vehicle kilometres) over three-year bands from 1982, are as follows:—

| | *per mvk* |
|---|---|
| 1982 to 1984 | 0·29 |
| 1983 to 1985 | 0·29 |
| 1984 to 1986 | 0·30 |

The Department has been considering what can be done to improve safety standards. Traffic management and improvements are being undertaken where justified and where resources are available. I shall take the needs of this road into account at the forthcoming programme review.

### Transport-Supplementary Grant

**Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Keighley (Mr. Waller) at column *137* on 13 January regarding the 1987-88 transport supplementary grant, what proportion of the £55 million grant for minor works has been set aside for schemes arising from accident investigation and prevention work both on trunk roads and on local roads eligible for transport supplementary grant.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We are still finalising details of the Department's programme for 1987-88. I expect a substantial proportion of the £35 million for schemes costing less than £1 million on trunk roads in 1986-87 to be spent on low cost-high return safety engineering schemes. The local authorities will be involved as agents in working up detailed proposals. To help them, we have already mounted a seminar in London and plan one in the west midlands. Others will follow.

Benefits to road safety are important considerations in the distribution of transport supplementary grant. The £360 million of expenditure my right hon. Friend announced that we intend to accept for 1987-88 will attract grant at 50 per cent. This will help local authorities improve their more important roads. Not all local authorities have a systematic accident investigation and prevention programme.

I have written to all local highway authority chairmen drawing their attention to the Department's new manual on accident investigation and prevention. I hope that over the coming years all local highway authorities will begin to use this proven method of reducing casualties much more extensively. It is for local authorities to decide their priorities and to take advantage of the increase in accepted expenditure towards their programme of minor works.

### Marine Pollution

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many vessels were prosecuted for illegally discharging oil in United Kingdom territorial waters in 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86; and what was the average fine levied in each year.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The last three years for which figures are available detailing vessels prosecuted for illegally discharging in United Kingdom territorial waters are:

| *Year* | *Number of prosecutions undertaken* | *Convictions* | *Average fine levied £* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1983 | 19 | 19 | 2,488 |
| 1984 | 13 | 13 | 1,709 |
| 1985 | 11 | 10 | 2,150 |

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent in 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86, on *(a)* capital investment in and *(b)* operating costs of Her Majesty's Government's marine pollution control unit.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The marine pollution control unit was set up in 1979. The costs incurred by the unit since then have been:

*£ thousand*

| | *(a) Capital expenditure* | *(b) Current expenditure*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 920 | 319 |
| 1980-81 | 592 | 126 |
| 1981-82 | 922 | 183 |
| 1982-83 | 480 | 1,222 |
| 1983-84 | 271 | 1,284 |
| 1984-85 | 323 | 1,459 |
| 1985-86 | 312 | 1,528 |

[1] Operating costs.

The large increase in current expenditure from 1982-83 reflects the introduction of a dedicated aerial spraying and surveillance capability in 1982.

### Midlands Link Relief Route

**Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the prospects for the completion of the M40, the M42 and the M6 midlands link relief route.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Given favourable weather the southern turn between the M42 and M5 will open to traffic within the next couple of months.

Programmed completion dates for the other new links in the motorway network are M40 — 1990, M42-M5 northern turn — 1990, northern relief route — 1993. Achievement of these dates is dependent upon statutory procedures.

### Roads (Study)

**Mr. Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has yet received the report of the independent study on his Department's administrative role in road scheme preparation up to the construction stage; and when he expects to be able to announce his conclusions thereon.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I have not yet received the report, which I expect shortly. I hope to announce conclusions in the spring.

### Drinking and Driving

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to prevent drivers of buses and taxis, driving instructors and drivers of vehicles regularly carrying dangerous goods to consume any alcoholic drink during their working hours and during the six hours before they start work.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** No. We see no case for any requirements beyond those in the existing legislation on drinking and driving. I believe that professional drivers are, in general, particularly aware of the risks associated with drinking and driving and set high standards of conduct in this respect. Drivers with vocational licences are aware that, should they be convicted of a drinking and driving offence, the vocational licence will not automatically be restored at the end of a period of disqualification ordered by the court.

### Bicycles

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what information his Department holds on the provisions for requiring the fitting of an obligatory red back reflector on a bicycle in *(a)* Austria, *(b)* Belgium, *(c)* Denmark, *(d)*Finland, *(e)* France, *(f)* Germany, *(g)* Ireland, *(h)* Italy, *(i)* Netherlands, *(l)* Norway, *(m)* Portugal, *(n)* Spain, *(o)* Sweden, *(p)* Switzerland and *(q)* the United Kingdom;

(2) if he has any plans to prohibit the sale of bicycles in the United Kingdom that fail to meet minimum technical safety standards;

(3) if he has plans to make it compulsory to fit a standard set of reflecting devices on bicycles including red to the rear, white to the front and yellow on pedals.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Pedal Bicycles (Safety) Regulations 1984 already prohibit the sale of new bicycles which do not comply with the British Standard for cycles, BS 6102. This standard specifies side facing reflectors, a red rear reflector, amber pedal reflectors and, if sold without a front lamp, a white lamp reflector. Any pedal cycle being used on the road at night must have a red rear reflector.

I have no information regarding obligatory requirements for red rear reflectors on bicycles in other countries. There is an International Standard, ISO 4210, covering safety requirements for bicycles which includes a specification for red rear reflectors. The standard is not mandatory but has been approved by, inter alia, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information his Department holds on the provisions for requiring the fitting of a mandatory audible warning device on bicycles in (i) Austria, (ii) Belgium, (iii) Denmark, (iv) Finland, (v) France, (vi) Germany, (vii) Ireland, (viii) Italy, (ix) Netherlands, (x) Norway, (xi) Portugal, (xii) Spain, (xiii) Sweden, (xiv) Switzerland and (xv) the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We hold no information for the foreign countries listed. Audible warning devices have never been compulsory for bicycles in this country.

### Bicyclists

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if his Department is currently funding any research into the relationship between the safety of cyclists and alcohol consumption by the cyclist.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** As part of the regular monitoring of blood alcohol levels in road traffic accident fatalities, the distribution of alcohol levels in adult pedal cyclists killed (that is those aged 16 years or over) is recorded. The latest figures available (for 1984) are:

| *Blood alcohol concentration Bac—mg/100ml* | *Percentage of pedal cyclists exceeded BAC level* |
|---|---|
| 9 | 17 |
| 50 | 12 |
| 80 | 8 |
| 100 | 6 |
| 150 | 4 |
| 200 | 1 |

Total number of adult cyclists killed in 1984 was 220.

No specific study of the relationship between the safety of cyclists and their alcohol consumption is planned.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* for Great Britain in 1985 the number of children aged 16 or under who were (i) killed and (ii) injured while riding pedal cycles.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The information is as follows:

*Children aged 16 or less,*
*killed or injured whilst riding a pedal cycle:*
*Great Britain: 1985*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Killed | 86 |
| Injured | 10,980 |

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* for Great Britain in 1985 the total number of cyclists (i) killed and (ii) injured in road accidents.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The information is as follows:

*Pedal cyclist casualties:*
*Great Britain 1985*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Killed | 286 |
| Injured | 26,712 |

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Moore:** Most types of paper in use in my Department contain varying amounts of British recycled paper, though not letterheads.

### Bus Services

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list in the *Official Report,* the studies that his Department is funding into the deregulation of bus services, including details of which geographical areas are being considered.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** We are sponsoring an extensive programme of research into the deregulation of bus services. This includes a series of studies of particular areas: Nottingham; the Medway Towns; Blackburn; West Wiltshire; and also (jointly with the Welsh Office) West Glamorgan, and parts of Powys and Clwyd. These studies are all being conducted by consultants on behalf of the Transport and Road Research Laboratory. In addition, the laboratory is conducting studies with the passenger transport executives in Tyne and Wear, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Merseyside, West Midlands and Strathclyde. Similar studies are being financed by the Scottish Office, with a contribution from my Department.

### Westminster Bridge

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) under what authority he has instructed the London borough of Lambeth to close the space in the centre island of Westminster Bridge road opposite Belvedere road;

(2) under what authority he has instructed the traffic control systems unit to remove the cycle signals on Westminster Bridge road at is junction with Belvedere road;

(3) under what authority he has called in the pedestrian crossing on Westminster Bridge road opposite Belvedere road for special approval;

(4) under what authority the facility for cyclists to switch on lights at the cycle facility on Westminster Bridge road was disconnected.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** My right hon. Friend has given no such instructions. The Secretary of State's approval for non-standard crossings is a national requirement under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. While discussions have been going on about a safe cycle facility at this crossing, we have provided advice about measures to avoid the incomplete facility causing a road safety hazard. The cycle facility has never been connected. I understand that the form of the facility has now been agreed.

### Skips (Lighting)

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information is held by his Department on fatalities and injuries in which there was contact with unlit or badly lit skips on the highway.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The presence of skips is not identified in road accident reports.

### National Bus Company

**Mr. Robert Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, in the sale of National Bus Company subsidiaries, he has attached any conditions on the sale of property or on the use of property for development, other than for transport use.

**Mr. Moore:** Properties surplus to operational requirements are being removed from the subsidiaries and sold separately. Where an operational property has a potentially high alternative use value which could be realised in later years by redevelopment, or relocation of the subsidiary's activity, the National Bus Company is imposing a mortgage charge which secures for the taxpayer a substantial share of any future development gain.

### Airlines (Passenger Control)

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if any joint action is proposed with all international airlines to obtain an agreed and firm policy on banning drunks from flying; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** In the case of all aircraft in the United Kingdom, whether United Kingdom or foreign registered, it is already an offence under the Air Navigation Order 1985 for any person to act recklessly or negligently in a manner likely to endanger an aircraft or any person therein; to enter any aircraft when drunk; or to be drunk while on board.

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance is issued by the Civil Aviation Authority regarding the authority of the captain of an aircraft to make the final decision on the fitness of a passenger to fly without endangering other passengers and the aircraft and on his right to allocate seats in the interests of safety; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Guidance is unnecessary. The duties and powers of the commander of any United Kingdom-registered aircraft are governed by the Air Navigation Order 1985. The commander may give any lawful command to secure the safety of his aircraft or the passengers and property carried. The order requires that any person in a United Kingdom-registered aircraft must obey all such commands. In addition, section 94 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 gives effect to the Tokyo convention on offences and certain other acts committed on board aircraft. Under the Act the commander of an aircraft in flight may take reasonable measures in respect of a person, including restraint, to protect the safety of the aircraft, persons or property on board, to maintain good order and discipline, and to enable the disembarkation of that person.

### Motor Cyclists

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* in rank order *(a)* the motor cycle casualties per million of the population and *(b)* the number of motor cycle casualties per 1,000 vehicles for Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley** [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 January 1987, col. *385*]: Because of the differences in definition of road casualties, the only meaningful comparison is of road deaths. The figures are for 1984 and are given separately for motor cycles and mopeds. For clarity, table *(b)* shows death per 10,000 vehicles licensed.

*(a)*

| *Motorcycle deaths per million population: 1984* | *Number* | *Moped deaths per million population: 1984* | *Number* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Finland | 4 | United Kingdom | 1 |
| Norway | 7 | Norway | 3 |
| The Netherlands | 7 | Germany | 5 |
| Denmark | 9 | Finland | 6 |
| Belgium | 14 | The Netherlands | 9 |
| France | 16 | Denmark | 10 |
| United Kingdom | 16 | Belgium | 11 |
| Italy | [1] 17 | Italy | [1] 14 |
| Germany | 20 | Switzerland | 15 |
| Austria | 21 | France | 17 |
| Switzerland | 24 | Austria | 25 |

[1] 1983 data.

*(b)*

| *Motorcyclist deaths per 10,000 licensed motorcycles: 1984* | *Number* | *Moped Deaths per 10,000 licensed mopeds: 1984* | *Number* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Finland | 3·8 | Norway | 0·9 |
| Italy | [1] 6·0 | Switzerland | 1·5 |
| Norway | 7·4 | United Kingdom | 1·6 |
| The Netherlands | 7·6 | The Netherlands | 1·9 |
| Switzerland | 7·8 | Finland | 1·9 |
| Germany | 8·9 | Germany | 2·2 |
| United Kingdom | 9·9 | Italy | [1] 2·3 |
| Belgium | 10·4 | Belgium | 3·0 |
| Denmark | 11·4 | Denmark | 3·3 |
| France | [2] 13·0 | Austria | 3·4 |
| Austria | 18·9 | France | [2] 3·6 |

[1] 1983 data.
[2] 1980 data.

### A419 (Blunsdon—Cricklade)

**Mr. Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the dualling of the A419 Blunsdon to Cricklade, to be commenced.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Work on dualling the A419 between Blunsdon and Cricklade started earlier this month and is expected to take 18 months.

### Roads (Appearance)

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give details of his Department's national initiative to improve the appearance of roads in England.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We announced a national initiative to improve the roadside environment on 15 December 1986, at column 402. The Department also wrote to local authorities in England encouraging them to promote suitable projects under this initiative. I am sending the hon. Member a copy of the letter. The scheme is intended to improve the appearance of roads by landscaping, tree planting, and litter clearance and provide better amenities for motorists. This will be achieved through the use of the community programme and will be over and above the normal programmes of the Department and local authorities.

### Remould Tyres

**Mr. Roger King** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will be arranging for departmental publicity aimed at users of remould tyres manufactured by Messrs. Arvoland of Cambridge;

(2) if, pursuant to his answer of 22 January, he is satisfied with the operation of the voluntary code of practice for tyre recalls in its application in the case of Arvoland after that firm went into receivership; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I am satisfied with the operation of the code of practice in this case. The receivers are co-operating with the Department in prohibiting the further sale of these tyres. The Department will shortly issue a press statement in accordance with the code of practice on tyre recalls.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Moore:** There can be no doubt about the legality of an Act of Parliament, nor can an Act be challenged in the courts. I assume that the hon. Member intends to ask about occasions when there has been some doubt about, or there have been challenges in the courts to, ministerial action in pursuance of legislation introduced since June 1979.

One Bill for an amending Act has been introduced in that period by the Secretary of State for Transport, namely, the London Regional Transport (Amendment) Bill.

No specific records are kept of the information requested about orders, which category is assumed to include all forms of legislative statutory instruments. Further, the functions relating to merchant shipping and civil aviation have been my responsibility only since June 1983. The following answer is therefore based on immediately available information. It excludes statutory instruments which, while being within the enabling powers, were amended or withdrawn on account of some defect or error in drafting or preparation.

No successful challenges have been made in the courts to legislative statutory instruments made by my Department. There have been five occasions on which instruments have been amended or withdrawn because of some legal doubt concerning them.

### General Lighthouse Authorities.

**Sir E. du Cann** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will instruct the General Lighthouse Authorities to contain their costs in the coming year within the levels which could be financed by an increase in light dues not exceeding the rise in the retail prices index.

**Mr. Moore:** I am considering this matter carefully, and I will make a statement shortly.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Deaf People (Teachers)

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the latest figure for the total number of people employed as teachers of the deaf; if he will analyse what proportion of these admitted into training courses for teaching the deaf come from *(a)* certified teachers with experience in teaching, *(b)* qualified teachers direct from college or university, *(c)* non-certified graduates, *(d)* undergraduates and *(e)* other; what effect he estimates the implementation of the White Paper, "Better Schools", would have on the numbers of teachers of the deaf being trained; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Dunn:** I shall reply as soon as possible.

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** None at present. I understand that British-made recycled paper suitable for these purposes is available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office but that supplies are limited and prices uncompetitive compared with a suitable general purpose woodfree printing and writing quality paper. I understand further that Her Majesty's Stationery Office will continue to encourage the greater use of recycled fibre in the paper it purchases.

### City Technology Colleges

**Mr. Gould** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science who organised the meeting on city technology colleges attended by Mr. Hedger from his Department in York on 12 December; what was the cost to Government funds of this meeting; what other meetings of a similar type have been attended by his officials; and if he will list the organisers, locations and cost to Her Majesty's Government in each case.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The meeting was organised by my hon. Friend the Member for York (Mr. Gregory). It was chaired by a member of the York chamber of trade and commerce and its purpose was to give parents and members of the local business community the opportunity to hear further details of my proposals for city technology colleges. The marginal cost to the Department's Vote was £138·15 for travel and other expenses. Three meetings with a similar purpose have been attended by officials of the Department in Birmingham, Norwich and Coventry. Each of them was organised by a local chamber of commerce. The marginal costs to the Department were £49·65, £49·05 and £41·25 respectively. These figures do not include the cost of official time, since the visits formed part of the normal work of the Department.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what recent discussions he has had concerning potential locations of the city technology college originally proposed for Moss Side, Manchester; what alternative locations were discussed; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend has considered a number of issues relating to the proposed city technology college in Manchester, including its location. It would be inappropriate to reveal the details of these discussions; or to make a statement until further progress has been made.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he proposes to discuss the location of the city technology college in the Manchester area with Trafford district council.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Neither I nor my right hon. Friend have at present plans to do so, but I am very willing to consider any suggestions which the district council may wish to make.

### Young Children

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will republish the figures in Statistical Bulletin 16/86 on international statistical comparison of the participation in education and care of three to six-year-olds, using the definitions normally used in the United Kingdom for pre-school education and care.

**Mr. Dunn:** The figures in "Statistical Bulletin 16/86", for three to four-year-olds, also given in my answer of 12 January to the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Rathbone), at column 30, are on the basis usually used for pre-school education in the United Kingdom except that a very small number of two-year-olds (usually included) have been excluded for consistency with other countries. If included they would add one percentage point to the 43 per cent. quoted in the statistical bulletin.

### Expenditure

**Mr. Radice** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table on the same basis as table 2.10 of the public expenditure White Paper, Cmnd. 9143-II, with all figures converted to 1986-87 prices.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** The information is set out in the table. The figures are those set out in Cmnd. 9143, revalued using the GDP (market prices) deflator and rounded to the nearest £1 million.

*£ million at 1986-87 prices*

| | *1978-79* | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Department of Education and Science Education | | | | | | | | | |
| 10.1 Schools | | | | | | | | | |
| Under fives | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 25 | 17 | 13 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 10 | 10 |
| Current | 284 | 294 | 311 | 307 | 326 | 347 | 342 | 330 | 330 |
| Primary, Secondary & other Capital | 536 | 520 | 527 | 367 | 339 | 315 | 247 | 237 | 240 |
| Primary | | | | | | | | | |
| Current | 2,926 | 2,836 | 2,924 | 2,880 | 2,794 | 2,804 | 2,634 | 2,585 | 2,590 |
| Secondary | | | | | | | | | |
| Current | 3,997 | 3,914 | 4,137 | 4,215 | 4,216 | 4,307 | 4,114 | 3,976 | 3,890 |
| Special schools | | | | | | | | | |
| Current | 416 | 414 | 433 | 443 | 458 | 454 | 420 | 412 | 410 |
| Other (supporting services, & fees at non-maintained schools) | | | | | | | | | |
| Current | 231 | 216 | 210 | 212 | 211 | 215 | 199 | 206 | 200 |
| Transport | 227 | 226 | 224 | 222 | 218 | 224 | 218 | 216 | 210 |
| Meals | 731 | 680 | 548 | 498 | 481 | 471 | 281 | 278 | 270 |
| Milk | 23 | 20 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 10 |
| 10.2 Higher and further education (including teacher training) | | | | | | | | | |
| Universities | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 157 | 170 | 158 | 152 | 143 | 138 | 135 | 134 | 130 |
| Non-universities | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 119 | 130 | 153 | 112 | 117 | 104 | 80 | 82 | 80 |
| Universities | | | | | | | | | |
| Current | 1,261 | 1,305 | 1,420 | 1,331 | 1,497 | 1,486 | 1,461 | 1,421 | 1,410 |
| Voluntary and direct grant | | | | | | | | | |
| Current | 99 | 101 | 111 | 105 | 107 | 107 | 107 | 103 | 110 |
| Maintained sector advanced | | | | | | | | | |
| Current | 626 | 615 | 622 | 621 | 713 | 683 | 639 | 618 | 620 |
| Student awards | 1,041 | 1,036 | 1,069 | 1,126 | 947 | 923 | 891 | 845 | 840 |
| Maintained sector non-advanced (except adult education) | | | | | | | | | |
| Current | 962 | 966 | 999 | 1,055 | 1,072 | 1,112 | 1,050 | 1,009 | 1,000 |
| Adult | 103 | 105 | 97 | 98 | 98 | 104 | 80 | 82 | 80 |
| 10.4 Miscellaneous educational services, research and administration | | | | | | | | | |
| Youth service | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 12 | 13 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 10 | 10 |
| Current | 103 | 108 | 109 | 112 | 119 | 120 | 100 | 103 | 100 |
| Research and other services | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 10 | 12 | 20 | 18 | 6 | 6 | 4 | | |
| Current | 66 | 68 | 66 | 70 | 71 | 77 | 66 | 62 | 60 |
| Administration | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | | | | | | 1 | 2 | | |
| Current | 538 | 534 | 554 | 556 | 550 | 589 | 555 | 546 | 550 |
| Total Education | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 859 | 861 | 882 | 671 | 629 | 587 | 489 | 474 | 480 |
| Current | 13,634 | 13,440 | 13,841 | 13,859 | 13,884 | 14,030 | 13,161 | 12,782 | 12,680 |
| Total Education | 14,491 | 14,302 | 14,721 | 14,530 | 14,514 | 14,618 | 13,650 | 13,266 | 13,160 |
| Science | | | | | | | | | |
| 10.5 Research Councils, etc | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 97 | 106 | 101 | 92 | 89 | 84 | 94 | 93 | 90 |
| Current | 478 | 459 | 451 | 485 | 484 | 506 | 508 | 494 | 500 |
| Total Science | 575 | 565 | 551 | 575 | 573 | 589 | 601 | 587 | 590 |
| Total Education and Science | | | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 954 | 968 | 981 | 763 | 719 | 672 | 582 | 567 | 570 |
| Current | 14,112 | 13,899 | 14,291 | 14,342 | 14,369 | 14,535 | 13,669 | 13,287 | 13,180 |
| Total Programme | 15,066 | 14,867 | 15,274 | 15,105 | 15,087 | 15,206 | 14,251 | 13,854 | 13,750 |

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to introduce amending legislation to *(a)* legislation introduced since June 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The Education (Fees and Awards) Act 1983 was introduced to make provision with respect to the fees to be charged by universities and other institutions to students not having the requisite connection with the United Kingdom and for the exclusion of such students from eligibility for certain discretionary awards, following the decision of the House of Lords in R *v.* Barnet London Borough Council Ex parte Nilish Shah [1983] 2AC 309 that the phrase "ordinarily resident", in section 1 of the Education Act 1962 had a meaning other than that which it had previously been held to have. Regulations made under sections 1 and 3 of that Act were also changed in consequence of that decision.

The Block Grant (Education Adjustments) (England) Regulations 1985 (S.I. 1985/2030) included a new formula for calculating the contributions of local authorities in relation to expenditure on advanced further education, following the decision of the Divisional Court in R *v.* Secretary of State for Education and Science, Ex Parte Inner London Education Authority (1985) The Times 20 June.

### Primary Schools

**Mr. Ashdown** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what information is available to his Department on the date of construction of each unremodelled primary school constructed before 1903 and still in use;

(2) if he will publish a list showing for each local education authority in England *(a)* the number of unremodelled primary schools constructed before 1903, *(b)* the number of places in such schools, *(c)* the number of such places in schools considered by the authority to serve areas of educational and social disadvantage and *(d)* the allocation of capital expenditure 1987-88 made in respect of primary school projects other than provision of basic need; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Dunn:** The Department does not have reliable up-to-date information on *(a)*, *(b)* or *(c)*. On *(d)* LEAs do not receive capital allocations for individual projects: a single block allocation is made to each LEA in respect of all its schools prescribed capital expenditure.

### Primary and Secondary Schools (Unit Costs)

**Mr. Radice** asked the Secretary of State for Eucation and Science if he will publish in the *Official Report* the estimated unit cost in 1985-86 for *(a)* maintained primary schools and *(b)* maintained secondary schools.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** On the basis of an apportionment of local education authorities' budgeted expenditure on education and attributing to 1985-86 back pay owed for that year, I estimate that the net recurrent expenditures per pupil in England were £810 in maintained primary schools and £1,200 in secondary schools. I would hope to have firm figures before Easter, but a few local education authorities have not yet reported their actual expenditure in 1985-86.

I take this opportunity to correct an error in table 3.12.6 of the Government's expenditure plans (Cmnd. 56). The percentage increase in real terms expenditure per pupil over the 1979-80 level is 18 per cent. for 1984-85, and is estimated at 22 per cent. for 1985-86, rather than the figures of 20 per cent. for the former year, and 24 per cent. for the latter, given in the table.

## PRIME MINISTER

### European Community

**Mr. Gould** asked the Prime Minister whether she will bring up to date the figures given in her written answer to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) dated 19 July 1985, *Official Report*, columns *286-87*, comparing the increase in European Economic Community spending with other increases; whether she is satisfied with the outcome for 1986 and the forecast for 1987; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** The information requested is set as follows:

(i) Percentage increase in European Community spending between 1980 and 1985: 75·7 per cent.

(ii) Percentage increase in the United Kingdom's gross contribution between 1980 and 1985: 100·3 per cent. (before taking account of the United Kingdom's 1000 mecu abatement in the 1985 budget) or 68·8 per cent. (after taking it into account).

(iii) Percentage increase in United Kingdom general Government expenditure for the financial years 1980-81 to 1985-86: 46·3 per cent.

The rapid increase in Community expenditure in 1986, though regrettable, was due in large part to enlargement and the exceptional circumstance of the rapid and substantial fall in the value of the dollar. In the Government's view, the budget for 1987 must respect budget discipline. No budget has yet been agreed.

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Prime Minister whether the outturn for the EEC budget for 1985 was consistent with the agreements reached at Fontainebleau; whether the same is expected to apply of 1986 and 1987; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes. The United Kingdom received an abatement of 1000 mecu (£605 million) from the 1985 budget in respect of 1984 and 1900 mecu (£1,250 million) from the 1986 budget in respect of 1985. The Community has not yet adopted a budget for 1987.

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Prime Minister what use her office makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**The Prime Minister:** This stationery is obtained from Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The contracts under which Her Majesty's Stationery Office purchases paper encourage the use of recycled paper in manufacture. The items used by my office are all British made, but none is wholly from recycled material.

### Ministerial Telephone Numbers

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop** asked the Prime Minister how many of the ministerial telephone numbers given in the October 1986 edition of "List of Ministerial Responsibilities" have changed since it was published.

**The Prime Minister:** The telephone numbers of 18 London-based Ministers have changed, together with the London numbers of Scottish and Welsh Office Ministers. These changes reflect the replacement of the 233 exchange by the new 270 exchange; the new number is given to those who call the old 233 exchange.

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop** asked the Prime Minister when a new edition of the Cabinet Office publication called "List of Ministerial Responsibilities", giving up-to-date ministerial telephone numbers altered since the October 1986 edition, will be available.

**The Prime Minister:** The "List of Ministerial Responsibilities" is published annually at the end of the summer recess, with further editions during the year if there are substantial changes in ministerial appointments. A new edition is not called for at present. However, further to his reply of 20 January, column *467*, my right hon. Friend the Lord Privy Seal has now arranged for sections of the Palace of Westminster directory to be updated, including the new numbers, and these will be available in approximately two weeks' time.

### AIDS

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Prime Minister whether Her Majesty's Government will provide additional funds for the appointment of experts to advise Ministers in Departments other than the Department of Health and Social Security on AIDS.

**The Prime Minister:** The current arrangements ensure that all Ministers get any scientific advice which they need on AIDS from their chief medical officer. The Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh Offices have their own chief medical officers. All other departments look to the chief medical officer of the Department of Health and Social Security. I am satisfied that these arrangements are fully effective in providing expert advice for Ministers in all Departments.

### Regional Assistance

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Prime Minister if she will publish a table showing forecast spending at 1986 prices on regional selective assistance in England, Scotland and Wales and for each region of England for each year until 1989-90.

**The Prime Minister:** The provision for regional selective assistance expenditure in England, Scotland and Wales in the current year, and in future years as incorporated in the public expenditure White Paper, adjusted to 1986 prices[1], is as follows:

*£ million*

| | *1986-87* | *1987-88* | *1988-89* | *1989-90* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| England | 88 | 118 | 133 | 113 |
| Scotland | 43 | 50 | 50 | 39 |
| Wales | 34 | 43 | 42 | 42 |
| TOTAL | 165 | 211 | 225 | 194 |

[1] Expenditure on a 1986 price basis for each year is calculated by applying the appropriate deflator to expenditure at current prices.

It is not possible to provide a breakdown by English region as estimates of regional assistance are produced only for England as a whole.

### Zircon Satellite

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Prime Minister, when she first learned of the existence of *(a)* the series of British Broadcasting Corporation's programmes "The Secret Society" and *(b)* the programme on the Zircon satellite system.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government became aware, in a general sense, of the BBC's plan for one or more programmes in the summer of 1986; and of the intention to include specific material on a secret defence project in October 1986. Discussions then took place between the Government and the BBC, which subsequently decided on grounds of national security not to show the material on the project.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### UNICEF

**Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has any plans to provide further assistance to UNICEF for mother and child care projects.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Yes. I have just agreed to give UNICEF an extra £5 million for immediate use in mother and child care programmes. This brings our contribution to UNICEF to £13·07 million since the beginning of 1986.

### EC (Food Aid)

**Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on measures to reform the European Community food aid programme agreed in Brussels in December.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** The new regulation governing the policy and management of European Community food aid was adopted by the Council on 22 December after agreement was reached with the European Parliament. I expect it to have the following main effects:

*(a)* The legal basis for food aid will cease to be article 43 of the Treaty of Rome (which established the common agricultural policy).
*(b)* Food aid now will need to be justified on the grounds that it meets the needs of recipient countries rather than as a means of surplus disposal.
*(c)* It is to be better integrated with other forms of Community development assistance.
*(d)* Procedures will be streamlined, particularly for emergencies.
*(e)* There will be new arrangements for purchasing food aid from other developing countries.

This is fully in line with the motion agreed by the House on 9 December, column 294.

The new regulation will apply for one year only in the first instance.

### Scientific Units

**Mr. Couchman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has for the Overseas Development Administration's scientific units; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** I have decided to integrate the Tropical Development and Research Institute (TDRI) and the Land Resource Development Centre (LRDC) with effect from 1 September 1987; and to assign to the director professional responsibility for members of the corps of specialists in certain natural resources disciplines. The combined organisation will be known as the Overseas Development Natural Resources Institute (ODNRI) and will have the following mandate:

> To promote the sustainable development of the natural resources sector in developing countries through:
> - assessment of land and water resources;
> - pilot-scale development projects;
> - applied research in the fields of pest control andof crop and animal processing, storage and marketing;
> - assessment of the environmental consequences of development projects.

Efficiency savings achieved by rationalising the support services for the new organisation will provide scope for further resources to be allocated to scientific and operational programmes.

The relocation of the ODA's scientific staff to a single site, due to take place in 1988, will bring significant professional benefits. The changes I am announcing today are intended to build on this, and to strengthen the important contribution which the staff make to our aid effort in the natural resources sector.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Animal (Experiments)

**Sir Hugh Rossi** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is his policy towards animal experimentation in the light of the recommendations and conclusions reached in the pamphlet, "The use of Non-Human Primates as Laboratory Animals in Great Britain", published jointly by the Fund for Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments and the Committee for the Reform of Animal Experimentation, a copy of which has been sent to him; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The welfare of animals used for experimental or other scientific purposes is safeguarded by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, the main provisions of which came into force on 1 January this year. We shall give full and careful consideration to the proposals in the recent pamphlet on the use of non-human primates in research and in due course notify both the Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments and Committee for the Reform of Animal Experiments of our conclusions.

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Hurd:** None. The price of the British-made recycled paper available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office, from which the Home Office obtains its supplies of stationery, is uncompetitive when compared with a general purpose woodfree paper of suitable quality.

### Automatic Cameras (Traffic Lights)

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce automatic cameras to monitor observance of traffic lights by motorists, together with the appropriate procedures for the notification and charging of offenders.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The scope for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of road traffic law enforcement through the further use of technology, and any necessary legislative changes, is being considered by the Road Traffic Law Review. The review's report is expected later this year.

### Bail (London)

**Mr. Stanbrook** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the annual cost to public funds of court time and other resources wasted by the failure of defendants to answer to their bail in courts in Greater London.

**Mr. Mellor:** Information on which an estimate could be based is not centrally available and could not be obtained without disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Stanbrook** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases occur daily on average within the Metropolitan police area in which recognisances have been estreated for failure to answer to bail; and what is the average penalty thus imposed.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information requested is not collected centrally.

**Mr. Stanbrook** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many defendants in cases before courts in the Metropolitan police area are reported to the police as having failed to answer to their bail on average every day on which courts are sitting.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information recorded centrally indicates that in the Metropolitan police area in 1985 about 13,000 persons failed to appear at magistrates' courts having been bailed either by the police or by the court.

### Myra Hindley

**Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for reports from the chief constables concerned about *(a)* the total cost of Myra Hindley's visit to Saddleworth Moor, *(b)* the breakdown of the number of officers from each force involved in the operation, namely Greater Manchester police, Lancashire constabulary, West Yorkshire police, Kent constabulary, and the Metropolitan police, *(c)* the cost of the overtime worked, *(d)* the cost of the helicopter that was used during the operation, *(e)* the cost of providing security for Myra Hindley and *(f)* the transport costs for the individual police forces involved.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I would refer the hon. Member to my previous answers on this matter on 12 January 1987, at column *64*, and on 19 January 1987, at column *358*. Police forces regularly assist each other in the conduct of criminal investigations and the total cost of such operations cannot readily be distinguished from the costs of other normal police work.

## Immigration

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people seeking admission to the United Kingdom are currently being detained; and if he will list their nationalities and the establishments where they are being held.

**Mr. Waddington:** On the night of 22-23 January 1987 the numbers were as follows:

| *Location and Nationality* | *Number detained* |
|---|---|
| *Harmondsworth* | |
| Sri Lanka | 22 |
| Iran | 20 |
| Ethiopia | 4 |
| Pakistan | 3 |
| Somalia | 3 |
| Ghana | 2 |
| India | 2 |
| Morocco | 2 |
| Singapore | 2 |
| Turkey | 2 |
| Algeria | 1 |
| Bangladesh | 1 |
| Chile | 1 |
| Gambia | 1 |
| Libya | 1 |
| Sierra Leone | 1 |
| Sudan | 1 |
| Uganda | 1 |
| Nationality Doubtful | 3 |
| Total | 73 |
| *Heathrow, Queen's Building* | |
| Iran | 4 |
| Nigeria | 3 |
| Somalia | 1 |
| Pakistan | 1 |
| Tunisia | 1 |
| Total | 10 |
| *Erlestoke YCC* | |
| Sri Lanka | 41 |
| Iran | 11 |
| Turkey | 2 |
| Chile | 1 |
| Colombia | 1 |
| India | 1 |
| Afghanistan | 1 |
| Total | 58 |
| *Latchmere House Remand Centre* | |
| Sri Lanka | 9 |
| Pakistan | 4 |
| India | 3 |
| Turkey | 2 |
| Iran | 1 |
| Libya | 1 |
| Morocco | 1 |
| Total | 21 |
| *Gatwick Detention Unit* | |
| Iran | 3 |
| Nigeria | 3 |
| Gambia | 2 |
| USA | 2 |
| South Africa | 1 |
| Total | 11 |
| Overall Total | 173 |

## Hon. Member for Gower (Correspondence)

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now reply to the letter sent to him on 17 November 1986 by the hon. Member for Gower regarding a constituent serving a two and a half year prison sentence.

**Mr. Mellor:** My noble Friend the Earl of Caithness replied to the hon. Member's letter on 15 January.

## Overseas Voters

**Mr. Robert Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what terms and conditions a list of overseas voters is available to political parties; and if any political party has been supplied with such a list.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** There is no centrally maintained list of overseas electors.

The electoral registration officer of each constituency is required to supply, on request and free of charge, four copies of the list of overseas electors for the constituency to a prospective candidate or to a person acting on his behalf, such copies may be requested at any time, but may not be supplied more than once. Information about the number of candidates so supplied is not recorded centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

## Mrs. Cherry Groce

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner as to how much alcohol Inspector Lovelock had been drinking within the time limits proscribed by Metropolitan police regulations before the search operation which led to the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce;

(2) if he will call for a report from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner as to what hours had been worked by Inspector Lovelock on the day before the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce; and how many hours this constituted over and above a normal working day;

(3) if he will call for a report from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner as to whether a shotgun recovered by police prior to the search operation which led to the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce was *(a)* known to have been used by and *(b)* presumed to have belonged to, Michael Groce; and what information was available on these matters to (i) Inspector Lovelock or (ii) other relevant officers before the search of her home which led to the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce;

(4) if he will call for a report from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner as to on what evidence or basis it was assumed that Michael Groce would be in his mother's home at the time of the search operation; and on how many occasions he had been seen or known to use the premises of her home before the search operation which led to the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce;

(5) if he will call for a report from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner as to whether he will publish the Metropolitan police inquiry's report concerning the role and behaviour of Inspector Lovelock in the events which led to the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Groce.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Police Complaints Authority has approved the proposal of the chief constable of Hertfordshire that nine Hertfordshire officers who were involved in the investigation of which the raid on Mrs.

Groce's home formed part should be charged with disciplinary offences. Following Inspector Lovelock's trial, the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis will shortly submit proposals to the Police Complaints Authority on whether disciplinary charges should be brought against any of his officers. It would be wrong for me to intervene at this stage on matters which could be at issue in disciplinary proceedings.

### Drugs

**Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress made towards obtaining a Europewide agreement on the confiscation of the assets of convicted drug traffickers.

**Mr. Mellor:** Within the Council of Europe Pompidou Group proposals have been drawn up for a range of measures relating to the tracing, freezing and confiscation of the proceeds of drug trafficking which might be included in a multilateral agreement among European states. Ministers of the group of their meeting on 20-21 January decided that, while the group should continue to examine such problems as the enforcement in one country of court orders made in another, they would press for action within the United Nations towards a worldwide convention which would include provisions in this field.

**Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on progress made towards obtaining a Europewide agreement to stop and search ships suspected of carrying drugs;

(2) if he will make a statement on progress made towards obtaining a Europewide agreement that any one country may stop and search ships suspected of carrying drugs without the consent of the flag state.

**Mr. Mellor:** Substantial progress has been made within the Council of Europe's Pompidou Group on the preparation of a convention setting out the principles of legal co-operation in this area. Some work has also been done on the technical and operational measures which might be considered by future contracting parties for inclusion in bilateral agreements.

The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs will be examining next month a draft worldwide convention on drug trafficking which contains provisions aimed at the suppression of illicit traffic by sea.

### Amphetamines

**Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress made towards controlling the supply of chemical substances, where it is believed amphetamines may be produced from them.

**Mr. Mellor:** Within the United Kingdom good progress is being made through the collaborative efforts of the enforcement agencies to attack illicit manufacture and supply. At the international level, proposals have been included in the draft of a new United Nations convention on drug trafficking, which will be discussed at next month's session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Mellor:** On the basis of the readily available information, I am not aware of any such primary legislation, but in 1985, following a decision of the European court of Human Rights, my right hon. and learned Friend, the then Home Secretary, introduced amending immigration rules to remove provisions which discriminated on grounds of sex. There have been several occasions in the period where primary or subordinate legislation has been amended because it had been found to contain a mistake or to produce an unitended result, but these were not occasions where there were doubts about legality or there had been a successful challenge in the courts.

### Chief Constable of Greater Manchester

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his discussions on 22 January with the chief constable of Greater Manchester.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Mr. Anderton and representatives of the Greater Manchester police authority separately met senior officials of the Department and her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary on the afternoon of 21 January. A joint meeting will take place on 27 January.

### Manchester University (Ministerial Visit)

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of the inquiry by the Avon and Somerset police concerning the complaint against Greater Manchester police following the visit of his predecessor as the Home Secretary, the right hon. and learned Member for Richmond, Yorks (Mr. Brittan), to Manchester university.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand that the report of the inquiry is under consideration by the Director of Public Prosecutions, who has asked that certain further questions be asked of a small number of witnesses. A supplementary report will be forwarded to the Director shortly.

### Criminal Injuries

**Mr. Soley** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans there are to extend the use of computers in the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board particularly for the calculation of loss of earnings and other benefits.

**Mr. Mellor:** A feasibility study has established the scope for automation of some routine aspects of the board's work. The Home Office is now carrying out a full study to identify the systems required. The calculation of loss of earnings and benefits is complex, and the board is examining whether any simplification of this function is possible before considering whether it can be automated.

**Mr. Soley** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state for the next three financial years, at constant prices for England and Wales *(a)* the estimated amount to be paid to victims of violence under the criminal injuries compensation scheme, *(b)* the amount allocated to administration of the scheme and *(c)* the amount allocated to local victims support schemes giving in each case the estimated increase over 1986-87.

**Mr. Mellor:** The table shows planned provision by the Home Office, adjusted to 1986-87 prices by the Treasury cash factor.

*Planned Provision for Criminal Injuries Compensation and Victim Support, 1987-88 to 1989-90*

*£000s at 1986-87 prices*

| | *1987-88* | *1988-89* | *1989-90* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Criminal Injuries* | | | |
| *(a)* Compensation provision | 60,700 | 61,800 | 66,600 |
| Increase over 1986-87[1] | 24,900 | 26,000 | 30,800 |
| *(b)* Administration provision | 5,300 | 6,400 | 6,700 |
| Increase over 1986-87[1] | 1,100 | 2,200 | 2,500 |
| *Victims support* | | | |
| *(c)* Local victims support schemes provision | 2,000 | 2,900 | 3,800 |
| Increase over 1986-87[1] | 1,900 | 2,800 | 3,700 |

[1] Comparison with Budget estimate provision.

### Nuclear Accidents

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if, pursuant to the answer of 18 December, *Official Report*, column *645*, he will specify the operators and the relevant authorities responsible for emergency arrangements in relation to the accident to a military convoy in Wiltshire on 10 January.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Emergency arrangements in relation to the accident on 10 January were the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence.

### Ethnic Minorities

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the applications he has received for funding of posts under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 since he issued draft revised administrative guidelines for section 11 grants on 26 March 1986; and if he will state, against each application, his reasons for not granting section 11 funding.

**Mr. Waddington:** I shall reply as soon as possible.

### Box Junctions

**Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if there have been any recent successful prosecutions *(a)* in London and *(b)* elsewhere of drivers obstructing the flow of traffic on yellow cross-hatched box junctions.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information requested is not available.

Any such offences would not be recorded separately from other offences of neglect of traffic directions.

### Greater Manchester (Civil Defence)

**Mr. Alfred Morris** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration he has given to the severe financial restrictions the Greater Manchester fire and civil defence authority is facing on both revenue and capital accounts; what representations he has received on the matter; if he will now increase the authority's expenditure limit and capital allocation for 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** [*pursuant to his reply,* 16 December 1986, c. *486*]: As the right hon. Member is aware, for 1987-88 it is the Government's intention that the precept maxima for the joint fire and civil defence authorities including Greater Manchester should be determined on the basis of the formula in paragraph 2*(a)* of schedule 2 to the Local Government Finance Bill at present before the House. In the case of the Greater Manchester authority its precept maximum derived from the formula is 9·75p in the pound.The authority was informed of this on 13 January.

The authority was informed of its 1987-88 capital allocation of £2·172 million by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment on 18 December 1986.

We have received written representations from and have had meetings with the Greater Manchester fire and civil defence authority about these matters; and my hon. Friend the Minister of State, the Earl of Caithness, met a number of hon. Members on 12 January.

### Citizens Band Radio

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what European legislation regulates citizens band radio in the United Kingdom; what information he has as to frequencies used in the European Community for this purpose; when Her Majesty's Government intend to comply with such legislation; when he intends to authorise the use of AM single side-band; what representations he has received on this matter from *(a)* citizens band users in the United Kingdom, and *(b)* other European countries; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher:** I have been asked to reply.

No European legislation regulates CB in the United Kingdom: the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 and its regulations are the appropriate United Kingdom legislation. There is, however, a European initiative to harmonise CB and the Conference of European Posts and Telecommunications has produced a recommendation T/R 20-02 which provides for a common frequency band at 26·965 — 27·405 MHz. The Government hope to adopt this recommendation later this year.

My Department has had no representations from other European countries, but does meet regularly with representatives of United Kingdom CB radio users and is aware of the desire of a few to use AM. My Department has no intention of authorising AM as it is more likely to cause interference to other users of radio than is the case with FM (frequency modulation) sets. The harmonised CEPT recommendation provides for FM only.

### Transport International Routier

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider making representation to the Transport International Routier to change the rules that allow Russian and European lorries to cross the mainland European borders without Her Majesty's Customs and Excise inspection; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Brooke:** I have been asked to reply.

Her Majesty's Customs and Excise have no jurisdiction outside the United Kingdom.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Community Programme

**Mr. Leighton** asked the Paymaster General if he will give details of how an Inner London health authority is participating in the community programme; and if he will name the authority concerned.

**Mr. Lee:** The Tower Hamlets health authority, Wandsworth health authority and Newham district health authority all participate in the community programme.

In Tower Hamlets, the health authority runs a small community programme agency which is based on Bethnal Green hospital. It operates four projects involving the design of posters and leaflets dealing with health topics, crafts for the disabled, and the landscaping of gardens. In Wandsworth, the health authority acts as an independent sponsor of a small gardening project, which is based at the Gardiner Hill unit of Springfield hospital. In Newham, the district health authority does not operate any projects itself but has decided it will refer potential projects to Interface, a voluntary agency which will operate projects on behalf of the health authority.

**Mr. Leighton** asked the Paymaster General what percentage of the places in the community programme are on schemes managed by local authorities.

**Mr. Lee:** On 12 December 1986, the latest date for which statistics are available, there were 247,607 community programme filled places on which 40·6 per cent. were managed by local authorities.

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Paymaster General what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Lee:** Supplies of letterhead stationery and notepads procured by the Department do not contain any British recycled paper. Recycled paper is substantially more expensive than general purpose paper.

### Work Leave

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to introduce a statutory minimum number of 24 days annual work leave entitlement per year.

**Mr. Lee:** No. Conditions of employment including holidays entitlement are a matter for the parties concerned. Moreover, any statutory minimum holiday entitlement would place additional costs and burdens on employers and would be harmful to jobs.

### Jobcentres

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Paymaster General (1) what was the target date for completion of *(a)* Bolton jobcentre and *(b)* jobcentres in the north-west region; what stage computerisation has now reached in (i) Bolton and (ii) the north-west region; what are the new target dates for completion; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many jobs are likely to be saved by the introduction of computerisation at *(a)* Bolton jobcentre and *(b)* jobcentres in the north-west region; if there will be reduction in staffing levels prior to the coming into full operation of computers; and if he will make a statement;

(3) what are the latest estimated costs of introducing computers in *(a)* Bolton jobcentres and *(b)* north-west region jobcentres; whether these costs will be met from within existing cash limits; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

### Unemployment Benefit

**Mr. Madel** asked the Paymaster General how many women, with children under the age of one year, are in receipt of unemployment benefit.

**Mr. Lee:** The information is not available in the precise form requested. Analysis of the labour force survey for the spring of 1985 suggests that in Great Britain there were of the order of 100,000 women with children aged under one year who were claiming unemployment benefit, or supplementary allowances or national insurance credits as an unemployed person at an unemployment benefit office.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Paymaster General if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table giving for the Norwich, North constituency *(a)* the population and *(b)* the number of unemployed as at (i) 1 January and (ii) 1 July for each year from 1974 to date.

**Mr. Lee:** Following is the available information, which is also in the library. The only source of information on the population in parliamentary constituencies is the decennial census of population. The 1981 census of population identified a population of 82,144 present on census night in Norwich, North.

The following table shows the numbers of unemployed claimants in the parliamentary constituency of Norwich, North on count dates closest to 1 January and 1 July. The comparison is affected by the change in the compilation of the unemployment statistics in March 1986. Statistics of unemployment for parliamentary constituencies are derived from the ward-based system and are available only from June 1983.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 14 July 1983 | 3,412 |
| 12 January 1984 | 3,565 |
| 12 July 1984 | 3,483 |
| 10 January 1985 | 3,833 |
| 11 July 1985 | 3,810 |
| 9 January 1986 | 4,210 |
| 10 July 1986 | 3,964 |

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Paymaster General which region in the United Kingdom has lost the highest number of jobs since May 1979; and if he will give the percentage unemployed in that region in 1979 and now.

**Mr. Lee:** Information about job gains and job losses is not available from the Department's statistics but an indication of the net changes can be seen by comparing levels of employment at different dates. Figures are not available for May 1979. Between June 1979 and June 1986, the largest net decrease in the size of the civilian employed labour force (employees in employment plus the self-employed) occurred in the north-west region.

In June 1979, seasonally adjusted unemployment in the north-west region represented 5·3 per cent. of the working population. The corresponding figure for December 1986 was 13·6 per cent.

### Job Training Schemes

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Paymaster General, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) of 16 January, *Official Report,* column *334*, about new job training schemes, if he will give, for each of the revised arrangements listed, the date on which they will be or have been implemented in the Dundee pilot scheme.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The revised arrangements apply to anyone beginning training on or after 26 January 1987.

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General (1) pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) of 16 January, *Official Report,* column *334*, in the case of those receiving supplementary benefit, what will be the rate of the training allowance paid; what will be the amount of top up supplement when those new schemes will take effect; and if he will make a statement on the way in which the new scheme will be a simplification of the old scheme;

(2) pursuant to the answer of 16 January, *Official Report,* column *334*, what will be the level of the various training allowances paid after 1 April, and if under 25-year-old trainees on the job training scheme will receive more than they would otherwise on the new reduced rate of supplementary benefit.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The rate of training allowance will normally be the same as the amount of unemployment benefit last paid or be at a fixed amount below the non-householder scale rate in the case of those whose last payment was supplementary benefit. Where a trainee was getting more when unemployed supplementary benefit paid as a training supplement will make up the difference.

The basic unemployment benefit rates and hence training allowances rates are £30·80 (adult) and £49·80 (adult plus adult dependant). From April these rates will go up to £31·45 and £50·85 respectively. The rates of supplementary benefit and hence training supplement depend on the circumstances of individuals and will vary accordingly. Training supplement will be uprated in line with supplementary benefit.

Normally the combined rate of training allowance and training supplement will be the same as the rate of unemployment/supplementary benefit which would have been paid if the trainee had remained unemployed. There are no changes associated with the April uprating which will decrease the amount paid to trainees under 25.

The reason for continuing payment of supplementary benefit by way of training supplement is to ensure that entitlement to certificated housing benefit and other passported benefits such as milk tokens and free school meals continues during training. The original pilot scheme did not provide for any part of the allowance to be paid as supplementary benefit with the result that entitlement to certificated housing benefit stopped when training started. Trainees in the pilot scheme were still entitled to help but had to make a claim for standard housing benefit from their local authority. The switch from one to another and similar changes in claiming other passported benefits was a disincentive. The new arrangements will avoid the potential for disruption by normally allowing arrangements made before [illegible]g to continue unchanged.

## Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Paymaster General on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** My Department has not introduced any amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979 for either of the reasons specified in the question.

The following orders were amended or withdrawn since June 1979 for reasons relating to their legality:

1. The Employment Agencies Act 1973 (Exemption) Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984/490) were revoked and replaced by the Employment Agencies Act 1973 (Exemption) (No. 2) Regulations 1984 (S.I. 1984/978).
2. The Notification of New Substances Regulations 1982 (S.I. 1982/1496) were amended by the Notification of New Substances (Amendment) Regulations 1986 (S.I. 1986/890).
3. The Petroleum (Regulation) Acts 1928 and 1936 (Fees) Regulations 1981 (S.I. 1981/1333) were amended by the Petroleum (Regulation) Acts 1928 and 1936 (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 1981 (S.I. 1981/1652).

## Disciplinary Procedures (Code of Practice)

**Mr. Bowen Wells** asked the Paymaster General if a decision has been reached on the draft ACAS code of practice on disciplinary procedures.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** My right hon. and noble Friend has decided, after careful consideration, that he cannot approve the draft. He has written to the chairman of the ACAS in the following terms:

Here follows the whole of the letter.

Sir Pat Lowry CBE
Chairman
Advisory Conciliation and
Arbitration Service
11/12 St James's Square
London SW1Y 4LA

26 January 1987

On 30 July 1986 you sent me a draft Code of Practice on Disciplinary and Related Procedures which would, if approved, take the place of the 1977 Code of Practice on Disciplinary Practice and Procedures in Employment. Under the Employment Protection Act 1975, section 6, I am required either to approve the draft and lay it before Parliament or, if I do not approve of it, to publish details of my reasons for that.

I appreciate the work which ACAS has put into preparing the draft and I welcome the proposals to revise the 1977 Code. I cannot, however, approve the draft you sent me for the following reasons:

(1) The purpose of the Code is to improve industrial relations. I agree that good disciplinary practices and procedures can help greatly to avoid unnecessary disputes and promote a productive working environment. For that reason it is vital for the Code to be directed at those employers and employees who stand most to benefit from it.

The length of the draft, its complexity and the language it uses are not designed to attract employers and employees to read and adhere to it. I believe that the code should be a reasonably short sensible document of a kind likely to be referred to by shop-floor mananagment and workers. The present draft seems to be aimed primarily at lawyers and personnel managers in larger firms.

(2) Good industrial relations depend on acceptance by employer and employee alike of their responsibilities. The draft gives insufficient weight to the role of employees;

(3) It is the essence of any code to provide a statement of accepted good practice which it is reasonable to expect of those to whom it applies. A large proportion of the employers to whom the new Code would apply are small firms who could not reasonably be expected (as the draft acknowledges) to adopt all the provisions of the Code, yet the draft does not contain a clear statement of which elements of the Code are to be taken to apply even to the smallest firms;

(4) The draft contains a mixture of descriptions of statute law, guidance based on case law and advice with no such legal origin but the reader cannot tell from the text which kind of guidance is which. It is important that there be clarity about legal obligations;

(5) I have borne in mind in considering the draft, a number of points made in the Lords debate on Codes earlier this year and these are reflected in the reasons I have given for rejecting it. There is a wider issue here. Once there is a Code, Tribunals must take account of it. Case law then develops on the back of the code. There is then pressure to revise the Code to keep up with the guidance in the caselaw but that process will inevitably lead to ever increasing detail in the Code. I do not think the draft Code submitted is consistent with all our efforts to prevent excessive legalism from developing in this area of industrial disputes.

I have discussed this matter with my colleague the Paymaster General who is closely involved with our industrial relations policy and consulted him before reaching my decision. We recognise that this will be a disappointment. We should like to invite ACAS to consider the matter again in the light of this response and to make a further proposals for a revised Code. We will, of course, be very happy to discuss with you any of the issues this raises. We hope we shall be able to make common cause in producing to Parliament a revision which better meets our common objective — to promote better industrial relations.

This letter will be published in a Press Release, in response to a Parliamentary Question this afternoon, and a copy of it will be sent to the Chairman of the Select Committee on Employment.

## Benefits

**Mr. Weetch** asked the Paymaster General how many people living [illegible] Ipswich have been refused benefit after being interviewed by his officials under the availability for work test.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke**: The information is not available in the form asked for. The improved procedures, which are designed to ensure that benefits are paid only to claimants who satisfy the long-standing legal requirement of being available for work, were introduced into the Ipswich unemployment benefit offices, which include the part-time offices at Felixstowe, Woodbridge and Leistone, on 19 November 1986. By 26 December 1986, the latest date for which information is available, 12 claimants have been disallowed benefit by the independent adjudicating authorities because they were not available for work.

## Employment Measures

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Paymaster General if he will publish in the *Official Report* the percentage of those long-term unemployed leaving the unemployment register after being contacted through the restart scheme, who have *(a)* been added to the sickness register or *(b)* added to the disablement register; and if he will further break down the latter figure, according to sex and age groups (i) under 24 years, (ii), 25 years to 44 years, (iii) 45 years to 59 years and (iv) over 60 years.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke** [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 January 1987, c. *481*.]: There is no such thing as a sickness register. We do not know how many people who register as disabled have previously had an interview under the restart programme but I see no casual connection between the two. I have received many groundless allegations about our restart programme but no one has so far suggested that an interviewee has been disabled as a result of it.

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Paymaster General if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each job club *(a)* its location, *(b)* the length of time it has been operatonal, *(c)* the numbers of males and females who have been members, *(d)* the percentage success rate in each case and *(e)* the average number of weeks as a member (i) for those unemployed finding employment through the job club system and (ii) for those unemployed leaving the job club scheme not having found employment.

**Mr. Lee** [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 January 1987, c. *481*]: The location of each job club open on 16 January 1987 is shown in the table. The length of time each had been operational at the same date is given in weeks.

Information about the number of males and females who have been members, the percentage success rate in each case and the average number of weeks as a member is not available in the form requested. However, an evaluation study produced in March 1986 showed that 67 per cent. of job club members were male and 32 per cent. female. The same evaluation also showed the average duration of membership was four to five weeks. A copy of this report is in the House of Commons Library. In the period 7 April 1986 to 5 December 1986, 7,397 (61 per cent.) of job club members found employment; 1,581 (13 per cent.) went on training, community programmes or the enterprise allowance scheme; the remaining 3,145 (26 per cent.) left for reasons which are not recorded.

| *Job Clubs* | *Number of Weeks Open* |
|---|---|
| *South-East* | |
| Banbury | 40 |
| Basingstoke | 23 |
| Bracknell | 10 |
| Brentwood | 25 |
| Brighton & Hove | 25 |
| Camberley | 31 |
| Canterbury | 68 |
| Chatham[1] | 32 |
| Chatham[2] | 7 |
| Chichester | 8 |
| Colchester | 22 |
| Crawley* | 26 |
| Dover[1] | 20 |
| Dover[2] | 10 |
| Eastbourne | 32 |
| Folkestone | 30 |
| Gravesend | 1 |
| Isle of Wight | 25 |
| Maidstone | 9 |
| Margate | 1 |
| Milton Keynes | 17 |
| Newbury | 25 |
| Oxford | 17 |
| Rayleigh | 1 |
| Reading* | 23 |
| Redhill | 2 |
| Southampton | 27 |
| Southend | 22 |
| Stevenage | 23 |
| Watford | 25 |
| *London* | |
| Balham | 32 |
| Brixton [1]* | 14 |
| Brixton [2]* | 10 |
| Croydon* | 50 |
| Deptford | 33 |
| Downham | 14 |
| East Finchley | 28 |
| East Ham | 30 |
| Eltham | 28 |
| Enfield | 7 |
| Hammersmith [1] | 31 |
| Hammersmith [2] | 2 |
| Harrow | 27 |
| Hayes | 28 |
| Hounslow | 16 |
| Isle of Dogs | 52 |
| Islington | 9 |
| Kentish Town | 30 |
| Kingston | 27 |
| Orpington | 14 |
| Shoreditch | 25 |
| Stockwell | 33 |
| Swiss Cottage | 11 |
| Tooting | 8 |
| Walthamstow [1] | 48 |
| Walthamstow [2] | 1 |
| Wembley | 10 |
| West Ealing | 65 |
| West End | 31 |
| West Norwood | 29 |
| Willesden | 34 |
| Wimbledon | 22 |
| Wood Green | 34 |

| *Job Clubs* | *Number of Weeks Open* |
|---|---|
| *South-West* | |
| Bath | 19 |
| Bedminster (Bristol) | 23 |
| Bodmin | 10 |
| Bournemouth | 6 |
| Bridgwater | 1 |
| Cheltenham* | 19 |
| Cinderford | 23 |
| Exeter | 17 |
| Falmouth | 31 |
| Gloucester | 14 |
| Kingswood | 30 |
| Penzance | 33 |
| Plymouth [1]* | 48 |
| Plymouth [2]* | 10 |
| Poole | 28 |
| Redruth* | 25 |
| Salisbury | 19 |
| Stroud | 35 |
| Swindon | 31 |
| Taunton | 29 |
| Torquay | 33 |
| Warminster | 14 |
| Westbury-on-Trym | 12 |
| Weston-super-Mare | 30 |
| Weymouth | 13 |
| Yeovil | 15 |
| *West Midlands* | |
| Aston | 19 |
| Bilston | 6 |
| Birmingham | 15 |
| Birmingham (Erdington) | 6 |
| Birmingham (Northfield) | 9 |
| Birmingham (Sparkhill) | 19 |
| Birmingham (Selly Oak)* | 9 |
| Burton-on-Trent | 17 |
| Cannock | 6 |
| Coventry | 27 |
| Dudley | 27 |
| Halesowen | 28 |
| Handsworth | 28 |
| Kidderminster | 19 |
| Leamington Spa | 7 |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 1 |
| Oswestry | 34 |
| Redditch* | 9 |
| Solihull | 9 |
| Smethwick | 1 |
| Stoke[1]* | 48 |
| Stoke[2]* | 30 |
| Sutton Coldfield | 12 |
| Telford[1]* | 31 |
| Telford[2]* | 19 |
| Walsall | 8 |
| Washwood Heath | 26 |
| West Bromwich | 66 |
| Wolverhampton[1] | 22 |
| Wolverhampton[2]* | 6 |
| *East Midlands* | |
| Alfreton | 1 |
| Bedford | 68 |
| Boston | 40 |
| Bury St. Edmunds | [illegible] |
| Cambridge | 26 |
| Chesterfield | 21 |
| Corby | 23 |
| Derby[1] | 10 |
| Gainsborough | 27 |
| Grantham | 15 |
| Great Yarmouth* | 38 |
| Kettering | 11 |
| King's Lynn | 15 |
| Leicester[1] | 20 |
| Leicester[2] | 18 |
| Leicester (Highfield) | 2 |
| Lincoln[1] | 14 |
| Lincoln[2] | 1 |
| Long Eaton | 1 |
| Lowestoft | 24 |
| Luton | 2 |
| Mansfield | 23 |
| Norwich[1] | 38 |
| Norwich[2] | 7 |
| Northampton | 23 |
| Nottingham[1] | 15 |
| Nottingham[2] | 7 |
| Peterborough | 27 |
| Wisbech* | 25 |
| *Yorks & Humberside* | |
| Barnsley | 9 |
| Bransholme | 27 |
| Dewsbury | 31 |
| Doncaster | 27 |
| Grimsby* | 27 |
| Halifax (Caldervale)* | 25 |
| Harrogate | 26 |
| Huddersfield* | 45 |
| Hull | 62 |
| Keighley (Aire Valley) | 28 |
| Leeds[1] | 72 |
| Leeds[2] | 15 |
| Morley | 26 |
| Northallerton | 26 |
| Pontefract | 29 |
| Rotherham[1] | 14 |
| Rotherham[2] | 2 |
| Scarborough | 27 |
| Scunthorpe* | 50 |
| Sheffield[1]* | 68 |
| Sheffield[2]* | 19 |
| Sheffield (Woodhouse) | 1 |
| Wakefield[1] | 25 |
| Wakefield[2] | 1 |
| York | 26 |
| *North-West* | |
| Accrington* | 32 |
| Altrincham | 22 |
| Ashton-Under-Lyne* | 11 |
| Barrow | 21 |
| Birkenhead[1] | 28 |
| Birkenhead[2] | 25 |
| Blackburn* | 32 |
| Blackpool South[1] | 28 |
| Blackpool South[2] | 28 |
| Bolton[1] | 18 |
| Bolton[2] | 1 |
| Bootle | 23 |
| Burnley | 33 |
| Bury | 15 |
| Carlisle | 27 |
| Chorley* | 13 |
| Crewe | 16 |
| Crosby | 28 |
| Denton (Hyde) | 17 |
| Didsbury* | 16 |
| Ellesmere Port | 36 |
| Everton | 11 |
| Farnworth | 24 |
| Fleetwood | 73 |
| Garston [1] | 29 |
| Garston[2] | 22 |
| Kirkby | 23 |
| Lancaster* | 11 |
| Leigh | 16 |
| Liverpool (Lord St) | 29 |
| Liverpool (Old Swan) | 29 |
| Liverpool (Wm Sq) | 28 |

| *Job Clubs* | *Number of Weeks Open* |
|---|---|
| Manchester (Aytown St)[1] | 27 |
| Manchester (Aytown St)[2] | 26 |
| Moss Side | 71 |
| Nelson | 22 |
| Newton Heath* | 25 |
| Oldham | 24 |
| Prescot (Huyton) | 35 |
| Preston[1] | 52 |
| Preston[2] | 1 |
| Prestwich* | 10 |
| Rochdale[1] | 33 |
| Rochdale[2] | 1 |
| Runcorn | 22 |
| Salford* | 69 |
| St. Helens | 21 |
| Skelmersdale* | 23 |
| Stockport* | 15 |
| Stretford (Partington)* | 31 |
| Wallasey | 24 |
| Walton Vale | 27 |
| Warrington | 28 |
| Whitehaven | 22 |
| Widnes | 23 |
| Wigan | 16 |
| Winsford | 33 |
| Workington* | 21 |
| Worsley | 30 |
| Wythenshawe | 18 |
| *Northern* | |
| Ashington | 21 |
| Bishop Auckland* | 1 |
| Cramlington | 16 |
| Darlington | 28 |
| Durham[1] | 58 |
| Gateshead | 28 |
| Hartlepool | 30 |
| Hexham | 8 |
| Jarrow | 14 |
| Loftus* | 24 |
| Middlesbrough[1] | 106 |
| Middlesbrough[2] | 48 |
| Newcastle[1] | 10 |
| Newcastle[2] | 8 |
| North Shields | 17 |
| Peterlee | 28 |
| Redcar | 25 |
| South Shields | 33 |
| Stanley | 19 |
| Stockton | 30 |
| Sunderland | 73 |
| Wallsend | 73 |
| Washington* | 28 |
| *Wales* | |
| Aberdare | 11 |
| Bangor | 11 |
| Caernarfon* | 8 |
| Caerphilly | 72 |
| Cardiff[1] | 27 |
| Cardiff[2] | 25 |
| Carmarthen* | 12 |
| Cwmbran | 74 |
| Haverfordwest* | 15 |
| Llandudno | 2 |
| Llanelli | 23 |
| Newport | 22 |
| Pontypool | 33 |
| Pontypridd | 28 |
| Port Talbot | 66 |
| Rhyl* | 33 |
| Shotton | 71 |
| Swansea*[1] | 37 |
| Swansea*[2] | 14 |
| Wrexham* | 38 |
| ***Scotland*** | |
| Aberdeen[1] | 31 |
| Aberdeen[2] | 30 |
| Airdrie | 28 |
| Arbroath | 31 |
| Ayr | 31 |
| Bathgate | 29 |
| Camouslang[1] | 30 |
| Camouslang[2] | 28 |
| Coatbridge[1] | 31 |
| Coatbridge[2] | 13 |
| Cowdenbeath | 31 |
| Cumnock | 6 |
| Dalkeith | 23 |
| Dumfries | 31 |
| Dundee*[1] (DTEEP) | 68 |
| Dundee[2] (City House) | 49 |
| Dundee[3] | 13 |
| East Kilbride | 28 |
| Edinburgh[1] (Shandwick Place) | 69 |
| Edinburgh[2] (Shandwick Place) | 31 |
| Elgin | 32 |
| Falkirk | 33 |
| Galashiels | 18 |
| Glasgow (Alexandria) | 25 |
| Glasgow (Easterhouse[1]) | 30 |
| Glasgow (Easterhouse[2]) | 30 |
| Glasgow (Hillington[1]) | 30 |
| Glasgow (Parkhead[1]) | 14 |
| Glasgow (Parkhead[2]) | 1 |
| Glasgow (Shawlands[1]) | 68 |
| Glasgow (Shawlands[2]) | 33 |
| Glasgow (Springburn[1]) | 68 |
| Glasgow (Springburn[2]) | 32 |
| Glenrothes | 6 |
| Greenock | 32 |
| Invergordon | 27 |
| Irvine[1] | 25 |
| Irvine[2] | 24 |
| Kirkcaldy | 31 |
| Kirkintilloch | 37 |
| Leven | 9 |
| Livingston | 20 |
| Paisley | 19 |
| Perth | 6 |
| Peterhead | 32 |
| Port Glasgow | 29 |
| Renfrew | 38 |
| Saltcoats[1]* | 68 |
| Saltcoats[2]* | 8 |
| Stirling* | 5 |
| Wishaw | 30 |

*Notes:*

[1] [2] [3] = Multiple Job clubs.

* Job clubs Housed in premises other than job clubs.

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Paymaster General if he will number and identify *(a)* those groups who have been successful in finding employment through the job club system, and *(b)* those groups who have left the job club system not having found employment, in terms of standard age groups, sex and standard duration of prior unemployment groups.

**Mr. Lee** [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 January 1987, c. 481]: The information is not available in the form requested. Records of job club members do not include age or sex. However, 61 per cent. of members leave to enter employment, and a further 13 per cent. go on to training, community programmes or the enterprise allowance scheme. Records of success by duration of prior unemployment are available for the period 8 September to 5 December and show:

*Duration of Unemployment*

| | *27-52 weeks* | *per cent.* | *53-104 weeks* | *per cent.* | *105+ weeks* | *per cent.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Left to go into employment | 1,756 | (69) | 1,425 | (61) | 1,414 | (53) |
| Left to go onto training Community Programme or Enterprise Allowance Scheme | 287 | (11) | 298 | (13) | 401 | (15) |
| Left for other reasons | 511 | (20) | 615 | (26) | 832 | (32) |
| Totals | 2,554 | (100) | 2,338 | (100) | 2,647 | (100) |

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Tom King:** To provide all the information requested would involve disproportionate cost, but I shall write to the hon. Member with what is available.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Vietnamese Boat People

**Sir John Farr** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will initiate negotiations with the Vietnamese Government with a view to making arrangements to repatriate boat people, arriving in Hong Kong, who do not meet the United Nations definition of refugees.

**Mr. Renton:** Repatriation clearly raises very difficult political and humanitarian questions. We recognise, however, the burden placed on Hong Kong by the continuing flow of boat people into the territory. We are actively examining all practical ways of achieving a durable solution to the problem.

**Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made on the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** 3,816 Vietnamese refugees were resettled from the camps in Hong Kong during 1986. As a result, and despite an increase in new arrivals in 1986, the population of the camps fell from 9,443 to 8,039 during the year. We are now considering, in consultation with the UNHCR, what more might be done to help Hong Kong.

**Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he is satisfied that boat people arriving in Hong Kong meet the United Nations definition of refugees; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** We do not examine individual newly arriving boat people in Hong Kong in order to determine whether or not they are refugees under the terms of the 1951 convention. Since 1979 we and Hong Kong have continued to base our treatment of the boat people on the international understanding, reached at the 1979 Geneva conference on Indo China; that all who left Indo China illegally were to be treated as refugees. None has been turned away by the Hong Kong authorities.

**Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place with the Vietnamese Government on the subject of the repatriation of boat people arriving in Hong Kong; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** No discussions have taken place between the Government and the Vietnamese authorities on the subject of repatriation. Repatriation clearly raises difficult political and humanitarian questions. We recognise, however, the burden placed [illegible] Hong Kong by the continuing flow of boat people into the territory. We are actively examining all practical ways of achieving a durable solution to the problem and are discussing these with the major resettlement countries.

### Pakistan (Afghan Refugees)

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consultations he has had with the Government of Pakistan about the continued presence in that country of Afghan refugees.

**Mr. Eggar:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) on 3 December 1986 at column *652*. This continues to be a problem of very considerable concern; Pakistan continues to provide a refuge for over 3 million Afghans and the flow across the border has continued.

### Departmental Staff (Languages)

**Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his answer of 3 December, *Official Report*, column *652*, how many of those included in these figures were British nationals who learnt the appropriate foreign language prior to their appointment to the overseas staff.

**Mr. Eggar:** All of them.

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Eggar:** First-grade letterhead stationery, used for correspondence of record, is British but at present contains no recycled material. Other letterheadings are printed on British paper containing up to 20 per cent. recycled material. Notepads are purchased from HMSO and may contain a proportion of recycled waste according to the conditions and specifications of HMSO contracts.

### Soviet Jews

**Mr. Mason** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has on the numbers of Soviet Jews who were allowed to emigrate during December 1986, and the total figure for that year.

**Mr. Renton:** A total of 77 Jews were allowed to emigrate from the Soviet Union in December 1986. The figure for the whole year is 914.

**Mr. Mason** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information he has from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the further tightening of regulations and on restrictions introduced this year which are designed to slow down the number of Soviet Jews who wish to emigrate.

**Mr. Renton:** In my recent discussions in Moscow I was told that the new rules on departure from the Soviet Union should substantially increase the numbers of those who can go abroad temporarily or permanently for family reasons. We shall watch developments closely, and continue to press for improvement.

**Mr. Mason** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the discussions he held with Mr. Yuri Kashlev, Head of Moscow's Department of Humanitarian and Cultural Relations, on the question of human rights and especially the plight of Soviet Jews and whether there are any prospects of a more humanitarian attitude on these matters likely to be forthcoming this year.

**Mr. Renton:** I expressed serious concern both to Deputy Minister Kovalev and to Ambassador Kashlev at the Soviet Government's human rights record and the low level of Jewish emigration. Ambassador Kashlev said he expected an increase in departures from the country. We shall have to see.

### Diplomatic Immunity

**Mr. Bendall** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, in the light of the refusal of the United States Government to waive diplomatic immunity in the case of the spouse of one of its London embassy staff accused of sexual offences, he will now take steps to discuss diplomatic immunity with his fellow European Economic Community Foreign Ministers with a view to seeking a review of the Vienna convention; whether he will also discuss the possible formation of a blacklist amongst European Economic Community countries of persons on whose behalf diplomatic immunity is claimed who are alleged to have committed criminal offences; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** We have regular discussions and exchanges of information with our European Community partners on questions related to diplomatic immunity. We have paid particular attention to drawing our partners' attention to the conclusions of the White Paper on diplomatic immunities and privileges (Cmnd. 9497) of April 1985.

As part of the Twelve's efforts to combat terrorism there is already an arrangement for the mutual exchange of information about those entitled to diplomatic immunity excluded from the territory of one member state so that others can have advance warning of possible risk.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list each occasion during the last five years on which Her Majesty's Government have agreed to waive diplomatic immunity in respect of legal proceedings against one of its officials serving abroad for alleged serious offences; if he will specify, in each case, the rank of the official involved, the alleged offence or offences involved, the date or dates on which they were alleged to have taken place and the date on which the diplomats concerned were prosecuted; if Her Majesty's Government has ever refused to waive diplomatic immunity in such cases; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** During the last five years the waiver of diplomatic immunity for officials or dependants serving overseas has been agreed on 28 occasions, 25 of which involved the appearance of an officer or dependant in court as a witness. The remaining three involved minor traffic offences committed by an officer or a dependant.

During the same period, the FCO did not waive immunity on four occasions because it was considered inappropriate for an officer to appear in an official capacity as a witness in a civil case. On two occasions, both involving officers in alleged motoring offences, it was decided that waiver of immunity would be inappropriate and the officers were withdrawn from post.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list each occasion during the last five years on which a foreign Government have agreed to waive diplomatic immunity in respect of legal proceedings against one of its officials for alleged serious offences; if he will specify, in each case, the rank of the official involved and the Government he represented, the alleged offence or offences involved, the date or dates on which they were alleged to have taken place and the date on which the diplomats concerned were prosecuted; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** There has been one instance where a foreign Government agreed to waive immunity in connection with a drugs charge. The diplomat concerned was tried and acquitted.

According to our records, waivers have been granted in an additional 24 cases to allow members of missions to appear in court as a witness.

### Television Sets

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many television sets there are at his official residence in London; and who is responsible for paying for the licence fee.

**Mr. Eggar:** One television set is provided at the official residence of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. There is Crown exemption from the need to pay for a television licence fee for this property.

### Tripartite Commission

**Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects to write to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr about the expenses of the Tripartite Commission for the restitution of monetary gold as promised in his answer of 3 November 1986, *Official Report*, column *309*.

**Mr. Renton:** We are still in discussion with the other Governments in the tripartite gold commission about provision of the information requested. I hope to be able to write to the hon. Member shortly.

### Zircon Satellite

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he first learned of the existence of *(a)* the series of programmes on "The Secret Society" and *(b)* the programme on the Zircon satellite system.

**Mr. Renton:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister earlier today.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he will dismiss Sir Peter Marychurch, as a result of the communication of the position of the Zircon satellite to British Aerospace.

**Mr. Renton:** No.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date the instruction was given to carry out an investigation to try to identify the source or sources of information on the Zircon satellite system given to Duncan Campbell and others for use in the media.

**Mr. Renton:** Investigations were initiated as soon as it was learnt what the BBC programme relating to this project might contain and were intensified when full information about it actually became known. At the request of my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General the Metropolitan police are carrying out an investigation into the matter.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Radioactive Waste

48. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to receive a report on the review of costs of radioactive waste disposal currently being undertaken by UK Nirex Limited.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** UK Nirex Limited keeps estimates of disposal costs under constant review. A full review will be made following receipt of work on repository designs being undertaken by consultants, which Nirex expect to receive in April. Revised cost figures will be given to the Department and published as soon as possible thereafter.

**Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce a compensation scheme for those householders in the South Killingholme area who cannot now sell their houses at normal valuation prices in cases where the decline in value can now be directly attributed to the presence of contractor test drilling for the suitability of a nuclear waste dump and where surveyors' reports on such properties indicate that the test drilling has contributed to a fall in market value; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Compensation policy, both in the areas of the four potential disposal sites and at any site which might eventually be selected, is primarily a matter for UK Nirex Limited. The company has already announced measures which are intended to maintain the level of house prices locally. Nirex is also considering the possibility of further measures, which it is discussing with my right hon. Friend.

### Departmental Staff

**Ms. Richardson** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, for each year from 1979 to 1986, the numbers of women employed within each grade in his Department and the percentage this represents of the total number of employees within each grade.

**Mr. Ridley:** The statistics requested by the hon. Member are not immediately available. They are being collated. I will write to the hon. Member in due course.

**Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many people are employed in his Department dealing with *(a)* public libraries, *(b)* heritage arts, and *(c)* historic buildings.

**Mr. Ridley** [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 January 1987]: The Department of the Environment (central) has no staff employed dealing with public libraries. The staff employed on heritage arts is two. On historic buildings, including the Royal palaces open to the public, the staff employed (not including staff employed by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England) is 261½.

### Heveningham Hall, Suffolk

**Mr. Andrew Faulds** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he intends to take to ensure that Heveningham Hall, Suffolk, is opened to the public in 1987, in accordance with the covenant agreed when it was sold by his Department in November 1981 to the effect that the principal rooms, including the hall, would be open for at least 30 days a year from 1982.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** For various reasons, including a fire which occurred in 1984, the owner of Heveningham Hall, Mr. A. Al-Ghazzi, has not been able to comply with the covenant relating to public access and work on repairing the wing damaged by fire has been held up. Responsibility for ensuring that the owner complies with the covenants now lies, in the first instance, with the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission who, together with the local planning authority, have been monitoring the condition of the building and are in touch with the owner and his agents. I have asked the chairman of the commission for his assessment of the position with a view to considering whether intervention by my right hon. Friend would be desirable.

### Housing Development

**Mr. Heddle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he is taking to prevent local planning authorities which have granted outline planning consent for residential development from making subsequent demands in terms of house-type design and layout, open space provision, landscape and other reserve matters outside the guidance given in circulars 22/80 and 1/85.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Where a local planning authority refuses approval of reserved matters or grant approval subject to conditions or fails to make a decision within eight weeks, it is open to an aggrieved applicant to appeal to the Secretary of State. If the appeal arises from unreasonable behaviour by the local planning authority, an inquiry is held and an application for costs is made, it is possible that costs might be awarded against the authority concerned. This point will be emphasised in the forthcoming circular on award of costs in planning cases.

### Weather Damage (Payments)

**Mr. Moate** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will specify the number of occasions and circumstances since 1970 in which central Government have offered increased financial support to local authorities as a consequence of flooding, snow or other adverse conditions; what was the actual cost of the support; and if he will list his powers to provide support of this nature.

**Dr. Boyson:** Since 1970 special financial assistance has been given to local authorities as a consequence of flooding, snow or other adverse weather conditions on three occasions: during the winters of 1977-78, 1978-79 and 1981-82. In 1977-78 the need for payments arose mainly from storms, flooding and snow, in 1978-79 from prolonged snow and frost, and in 1981-82 from storms, flooding and snow.

Payments were made in response to claims by local authorities in the following years:

| *Financial year* | *Amount £ million* |
|---|---|
| 1977-78 | 1·18 |
| 1978-79 | 7·35 |
| 1979-80 | 4·57 |
| 1980-81 | 3·02 |
| 1981-82 | 0·38 |
| 1982-83 | 11·19 |
| 1983-84 | 1·61 |
| 1984-85 | 0·06 |
| TOTAL | 29·36 |

The Secretary of State has made such payments on the authority of the Appropriation Act.

### Environmental Research

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how Her Majesty's Government have co-operated since 1979 with industry to develop environmentally friendly products; and if he will list those products which have resulted from such co-operation.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 9 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *90*.

### Royal Parks

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to purchase land to add to the Royal Parks.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** No.

### Conservation Measures

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list those parties to the Ramsar convention which require the securing of national conservation status of wetlands before granting international status; and if he will make a statement on the means for the pursuit of such policies in England and Wales;

(2) if he intends to make available to the Nature Conservancy Council further resources to enable notification of the Severn estuary both as a site of special scientific interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and also as a special protection area under the European Community Direction 79/409 on the conservation of wild birds, to be completed by the end of 1987;

(3) if he intends to make available to the Nature Conservancy Council further resources to enable notifications as sites of special scientific interest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 of the 101 sites originally intended to be notified under the Ramsar convention by the end of 1986, and not so notified by that date, to be completed by the end of 1987;

(4) if he will explain why, in the light of his statement to the meeting in 1984 of parties to the Ramsar convention at Gronningen that 132 sites eligible for notification under the convention would be notified by the end of 1986, only 31 sites were so notified; and what steps he intends to take towards notification of the outstanding sites.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Conservation involves more than merely putting labels on sites. It is therefore our policy to designate sites under the Ramsar convention only when they have been properly protected through notification as sites of special scientific interest. I have no information about the detail of the procedures adopted by other contracting parties to the convention, but I believe firmly that our approach is the right one. However, the sheer size and complexity of the task of notifying and renotifying some 30,000-40,000 owners and occupiers of almost 5,000 existing and proposed SSSIs was not fully appreciated at the time of the Groningen conference. This coupled with subsequent unforeseen technical difficulties has meant that progress has been less rapid than hoped for.

We have taken steps to speed things up by providing the Nature Conservancy Council with very substantial increases in resources. In the past two years it has received increases of 25 per cent. and 41 per cent. respectively, bringing its total grant in aid for the current year to £32·1 million. With the assistance of those additional funds, the NCC expects that the SSSI renotification exercise will be substantially completed by July 1987.

The priority which should be given to the renotification of particular sites is for the NCC to determine in the light of its other priorities.

### EEC Directives

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the proposed European Economic Communities directives relating to matters subject to his Department upon which Her Majesty's Government hold a reserved position; and if he will make a statement as to the reasons for reservation in each particular case.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Apart from maintaining a necessary negotiating position, Her Majesty's Government have placed no general reserve on any proposed European Community directive on matters for which my Department is responsible.

## North Sea

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list, year by year, the projects funded by his Department in 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 on research improving knowledge of the fate of pollutants in the North sea.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Projects funded by the Department on research to improve the knowledge of the fate of pollutants in the North sea are listed below. These include projects aimed at the marine environment in general as well as specific projects aimed at the North sea.

*1981-82*
Surveys of the river Tyne sludge dumping ground.
Disposal of sludge to sea.
Heavy metal contamination in estuaries.

*1982-83*
Surveys of the river Tyne sludge dumping ground.
Disposal of sludge to sea.
Heavy metal contamination in estuaries.

*1983-84*
Surveys of the river Tyne sludge dumping ground.
Disposal of sludge to sea.
Heavy metal contamination in estuaries.
Estimates of list I and list II discharges to tidal waters.
Input of contaminants to the North sea.

*1984-85*
Disposal of sludge to sea.
Heavy metal contamination in estuaries.
Estimates of list I and list II discharges to tidal waters.
Survey of pentachlorphenol and other pesticides in coastal waters.
Input of contaminants to the North sea.

*1985-86*
Disposal of sludge to sea.
Heavy metal contamination in estuaries.
Estimates of list I and list II substances discharged to the North sea.
Water balance and pollution loads in the North sea.

## Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Ridley:** Most types of paper used by my Department, including letterhead stationery and notepads, contain varying amounts of British made recycled paper.

## Housing Defects

**Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list *(a)* the types of Airey type houses and Wates type houses, *(b)* the type of house in both categories which are eligible for grant for rehabilitation purposes; and when those not eligible for grant will be made eligible.

**Mr. Tracey:** The Airey and Wates prefabricated reinforced concrete dwelling types, designed before 1960, are designated under the housing defects legislation; private owners are eligible for assistance (either reinstatement grant or repurchase) in accordance with the rules laid down in the legislation. Wates large panel properties are a later, different form of construction and are not designated. Such systems are being investigated by the Building Research Establishment and any further action will need to be considered in the light of BRE's findings.

## Housing Associations

**Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of the numbers of dwellings owned and managed by charitable housing associations which were not purchased using housing association grant.

**Mr. John Patten:** Around 170,000 dwellings owned by charitable housing associations in England have been acquired, built or converted without housing association grant.

## Housing Investment Programmes

**Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* the bids submitted for housing investment programmes for 1986-87 and the respective allocation in each case, giving totals for each region.

**Mr. John Patten:** Regional totals are given in the following table:

| *Region* | *Total programmes proposed in HIP submissions £ million* | *Total of initial capital allocations £ million* |
|---|---|---|
| North excluding Cumbria | 293·575 | 63·887 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 617·966 | 111·628 |
| East Midlands | 297·703 | 76·740 |
| Eastern | 478·892 | 98·126 |
| Greater London | 1,935·446 | 386·406 |
| South Eastern | 554·364 | 132·104 |
| South West | 319·253 | 80·184 |
| West Midlands | 619·951 | 131·170 |
| North West including Cumbria | 790·314 | 194·291 |

Corresponding information about individual authorities has been placed in the Library in response to a question from the hon. Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) on 14 January.

The capital allocations issued by my Department give local authorities approval to fund capital expenditure on housing by borrowing. However, the major portion of their housing investment programmes in 1987-88 is likely to be funded by using capital receipts from the sale of houses or flats, rather than by borrowing.

## Sports Council

**Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he has initiated over alleged financial irregularities in the affairs of the Sports Council; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** Following discovery of irregularities at one of the Sports Council's national centres, audit staff of the council and of the Department are examining the financial controls at all the national centres. This has already been drawn to the attention of the National Audit Office and Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland offices for any action they may need to take and, as soon as possible, the Department will consider what further advice may need to be given to other sponsored bodies.

It would not be possible to comment further in advance of the completion of police inquiries.

### Urban Regeneration

**Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when it is proposed to introduce urban regeneration grants using the powers contained in the Housing and Planning Act.

**Mr. John Patten:** Urban regeneration grant will be paid under the authority of part III of the Housing and Planning Act 1986. My Department will shortly be inviting formal applications and some potential applicants are already in touch with my officials.

### Gipsies

**Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what action he will take to ensure that all the West Yorkshire district councils provide adequate accommodation for gipsies.

**Mr. Tracey:** As I stated in reply to a question from my hon. Friend on 21 January 1987, at column *590*, any proposals put to my right hon. Friend by my hon. Friend will be considered on their merits.

### Nitrates

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what monitoring work is being conducting by his Department on the use of nitrogen in agriculture.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The Department is contributing to a study with MAFF and the Nature Conservancy Council into the effects of nitrogen on species diversity and agriculture on the Somerset levels. Other monitoring work is also available to the Department such as the survey of fertiliser practice carried out annually by the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service, Rothamstead research station and the Fertiliser Manufacturers Association.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Ridley:** There can be no doubts about the legality of Acts of Parliament, nor can they be challenged in the courts. I assume that the hon. Member is referring to doubts about the legality of actions taken by me or my Department under Acts of Parliament. There have been two occasions when Bills have been introduced to amend legislation introduced since 1979 because of such doubts —the Rate Support Grant Act 1986 and the current Local Government Finance Bill.

I assume that by "orders" the hon. Member is referring to all forms of legislative statutory instrument. There has been no case since June 1979 when the legality of such an instrument made by me or one of my predecessors has been challenged in the courts. Since that date it is believed that one statutory instrument has been revoked and not replaced because of doubts about the extent of the enabling power and that one instrument has been revoked and replaced by an amended instrument because the enabling power was inadvertently misquoted.

### Enterprise Zones

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what would be the cost of extending enterprise zone status to *(a)* all assisted areas and *(b)* to all assisted and intermediate areas.

**Mr. John Patten:** There are no plans at present to extend the enterprise zones and estimates of the cost of extending EZ status to the assisted areas and intermediate areas could only be made at disproportionate cost.

### Departmental Lawyers

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many lawyers were employed in his Department on 1 April and 1 October in 1984, 1985 and 1986; if he will give the establishment figures for the same dates; and how many different individuals have occupied these posts, giving the average length of employment in the period 1 April 1984 to 1 October 1986.

**Mr. Ridley:** I will answer this question shortly.

### Windsor and Maidenhead (Planning Appeals)

**Dr. Glyn** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many planning decisions made by the Royal borough of Windsor and Maidenhead have been reversed on appeal by him in the last year for which records are available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The number of determined planning appeals against decisions made by the Royal borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in the calendar year 1985, the latest period for which information is available, and the number of appeals unheld were:

Number of appeals decided in 1985 — 97
Number of appeals allowed in 1985 — 40

14,639 planing appeals were decided in England in 1985 of which 5,477 were allowed. This represents a success rate of 37·4 per cent.

### Royal Opera House

**Mr. James Lamond** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will call in the proposed Royal Opera House re-development phase II.

**Mr. Tracey:** My right hon. Friend has considered carefully whether the planning applications should be called in for his decision. However, he has decided that his intervention would not be justified.

The proposals also involve a number of applications for listed building consent. If the local planning authority is minded to allow these, it is required to submit them to my right hon. Friend in order that he may consider whether to call them in. A decision on whether or not such action is appropriate will be taken if and when any such applications are referred to the Secretary of State.

### Fuel Conservation

**Mr. Rost** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage increase in fabric heat loss would be permitted by the disapplication to industrial and storage buildings of the provisions for the conservation of fuel and power in the Building Regulations (England and Wales); and whether this accords with the objectives set by Her Majesty's Government during Energy Efficiency Year.

**Mr. John Patten:** Any increase would depend on the level of heating and type of construction proposed. The Department's consultation letter on the review of the building regulations proposes that decisions about the appropriate level of insulation in industrial and storage buildings should be left to those commissioning and building them. This is because of the wide variety of industrial processes and the different heating and humidity levels found in this type of building where the use of impervious claddings can cause problems of condensation. For other kinds of buildings the review proposes significantly higher standards for the conservation of fuel and power.

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress is being made on the re-notification of sites of special scientific interest.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I am advised by the Nature Conservancy Council that on 30 November 1986, 2,571 SSSIs notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 had been re-notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. A further 1,024 new sites had been notified under the 1981 Act.

The NCC expects to achieve substantial completion of the re-notification programme as a whole by July 1987.

### PSA (York Office)

**Mr. Straw** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when the Property Services Agency management provided their cost appraisal in respect of the re-organisation of the York area office; what conclusions he has reached on it; to whom copies have been made available; and if a copy will be placed in the Library.

**Mr. Chope:** I shall answer this question shortly.

### Water Legislation

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, further to his reply of 18 December, *Official Report*, column *685*, about expenditure incurred in preparation for water legislation, he will provide a detailed analysis of the expenditure on fees incurred in 1985-86 and 1986-87.

**Mr. Ridley:** I shall answer this question shortly.

### Television Sets

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many television sets are at the official residence of the Lord Chancellor; and who is responsible for the payment of the licence fee.

**Mr. Chope:** I shall answer this question shortly.

### National Water Grid

**Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy on a national water grid; and what action his Department is taking towards the creation of such a grid.

**Mr. John Patten** [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 January 1987]: Water sources and supply areas are linked by pipelines to form integrated systems in some regions and a few inter-regional transfer schemes exist, in cases where they are the most economic way of meeting demands. Advantage can usually be taken, however, of the proximity of sources to areas of demand in regional development, leading to economy and efficiency. By comparison, the cost of building and operating a complete national water grid would be excessive because water is bulky and heavy to transport.

## ENERGY

### Energy Efficiency Year

2. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the overall results of energy efficiency year.

16. **Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the achievements of energy efficiency year.

**Mr. David Hunt:** During Energy Efficiency Year my original target of 1,000 events was surpassed by over 50 per cent. Awareness of the Monergy slogan rose from 4 per cent. to around 70 per cent. and energy efficiency survey grants in October were 82 per cent. up on the previous October.

The campaign was highly successful in alerting the nation to the benefits of adopting energy efficiency measures.

As a fitting climax to Energy Efficiency Year the national energy management conference and exhibition was the biggest in its 10-year history — attracting 236 exhibitors and 1,264 delegates.

14. **Mr. Evans** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will estimate what savings were made by industry in the north-west of England during and as a result of energy efficiency year.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Organisations in the north-west have responded enthusiastically both to Energy Efficiency Year and to our continuing campaign to improve energy efficiency. Overall we estimate that energy efficiency measures undertaken by industry and commerce throughout the United Kingdom are currently leading to savings of over £500 million a year.

23. **Mr. Rost** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what plans he has to build on the outcome of energy efficiency year.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I intend to discuss with the industries which have helped in making the year so successful the ways in which we can continue to benefit permanently from the continuation of our mutual aims.

To assist in this I have announced a 14-point programme of action which is summarised as follows:

1. maintain discussions with the energy efficiency industries
2. build up the prestige and training of energy managers
3. expand our monitoring and targeting programme

4. encourage management to use the energy efficiency survey schemes
5. vigorously market the energy efficiency demonstration scheme
6. improve the performance of the public sector
7. incorporate energy efficiency measures in major housing rehabilitation schemes
8. educate every architect in the country on the importance of energy efficiency in building design
9. create a system of home energy audits that everyone can afford
10. publish a simple checklist for house purchasers to evaluate standards of energy efficiency in their prospective home
11. expand community insulation projects for low income families
12. double the number of demonstration projects in buildings
13. allocate a good proportion of our Research and Development fund to energy efficiency
14. ensure that the financial institutions recognise the importance of funding energy efficiency projects.

These proposals were universally welcomed by my energy efficiency strategy board last week and, together with the continuing intiatives being taken by my energy efficiency office, will further accelerate the pace of progress towards greater energy efficiency.

## Coal Firing Scheme

10. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what number of projects have been offered assistance under the coal firing scheme; how many of that number were offered the full 25 per cent. grant; how many applications were rejected; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** A total of 624 projects have been offered assistance under the coal firing scheme, of which 481 were offered full 25 per cent. grants; a total of 413 applications were rejected or withdrawn before or after grant was offered.

The scheme will close to new applications made after 30 June 1987.

## Sacked Miners

13. **Mr. Eadie** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he has received any information from the chairman of British Coal about sacked miners.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The dismissal and re-employment of mineworkers is a matter for the management of British Coal.

## British Coal Enterprise Limited

15. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his latest estimate of the number of jobs created by British Coal Enterprise Ltd.; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I am pleased to report that British Coal Enterprise Ltd. is continuing to make good progress in its work of creating alternative employment in coalfield areas. At the end of December 1986 the company had committed nearly £21 million and had helped create over 13,000 new job opportunities.

## Chernobyl

17. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on his visit to Chernobyl in December 1986.

**Mr. Goodlad:** During my right hon. Friend's visit to Chernobyl he saw the remarkable efforts which have gone into dealing with contamination and into preventing further contamination through construction of a massive shield around the destroyed reactor. My right hon. Friend was able to learn at first hand of Soviet measures to prevent any recurrence of the disaster and of their plans for a programme to double their nuclear capacity. My right hon. Friend agreed with Soviet Ministers on the importance of working through the IAEA to secure improvements in international co-operation on nuclear safety. My right hon. Friend has placed the joint communiqué issued after his visit in the Library of the House.

## Sizewell

18. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate expects to conclude the assessment of the safety case for a pressurised water reactor nuclear power station at Sizewell; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** The chief nuclear inspector has advised me that the NII's assessment of the safety case should be complete in two to three months.

## British Coal (Productivity)

19. **Sir Trevor Skeet** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what increase there has been in productivity in British Coal from 1979 to the most recent date for which figures are available; how this compares with the increase from 1973 to 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hunt:** Average deep mined revenue output per man shift rose from 2·24 tonnes in 1978-79 to 3·21 tonnes in the current year to 3 January, an increase of 43 per cent. This compares with a drop from 2·33 tonnes in 1972-73 to 2·24 tonnes in 1978-79. The recent dramatic increases underline the industry's potential.

## Coal-fired Power Stations

20. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what considerations have delayed the announcement of preferred sites for the next coal-fired power stations.

**Mr. Goodlad:** The selection of sites for new power stations is a matter for the CEGB. The board has made known which sites it is considering for new coal-fired power stations.

## Coal Imports

21. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his estimate of the monthly totals of coal imported into the United Kingdom in 1986.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The latest available information, which covered the period January to November 1986, is as follows:

| *Month* | *Quantity '000 tonnes* |
|---|---|
| January | 847 |
| February | 893 |
| March | 805 |
| April | 1,139 |

| Month | Quantity '000 tonnes |
|---|---|
| May | 828 |
| June | 801 |
| July | 1,106 |
| August | 694 |
| September | 1,193 |
| October | 954 |
| November | 612 |
| TOTAL | 9,782 |

*Source:* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise.

24. **Mr. Skinner** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what the level of coal imports for 1986 was *(a)* by tonnage and *(b)* by country of origin.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I refer to the reply given earlier today to the member for Caerphilly (Mr. Davies). On the countries of origin of coal imports, the latest available information which covers the period January to November 1986 is as follows:

| Country of origin | Quantity '000 tonnes |
|---|---|
| Australia | 3,621 |
| United States | 3,241 |
| Poland | 1,084 |
| West Germany | 416 |
| Canada | 393 |
| South Africa | 308 |
| Netherlands | 197 |
| Belgium | 166 |
| Bulgaria | 135 |
| Colombia | 56 |
| Others | 165 |
| TOTAL | 9,782 |

*Source:* Her Majesty's Customs and Excise.

### Coal Industry (Privatisation)

22. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he is considering plans to privatise the coal industry.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The Government have no plans to privatise British Coal.

### Cavity Insulation

25. **Mr. Sayeed** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what action his Department has taken to realise savings in energy costs through cavity insulation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The energy efficiency office is actively promoting cavity wall insulation as a highly cost effective energy saving measure. My right hon. Friend launched wall insulation month in September during Energy Efficiency Year with the National Cavity Insulation Association. Cavity wall insulation featured in one of the energy efficiency office's television advertisements and one of the press advertisements. A special leaflet for householders has also been produced by the energy efficiency office in consultation with the NCIA. The office has also had several meetings with the NCIA in the past year as a result of which a number of initiatives to improve the industry's consumer protection plan are under consideration.

### Leicester (Combined Heat and Power)

26. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the feasibility study of the Leicester combined heat and power consortium.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I met the Leicester CHP consortium on Wednesday 21 January in Leicester to receive a presentation on its report. The Government fully support CHP district heating schemes where they are economically viable, but believe the key to development must lie with the private sector. It is now up to the Leicester consortium to take the project forward.

### Gas and Electricity (VAT)

27. **Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what discussions he has had with the gas and electricity boards about the implications of the case initiated by the European Economic Community Commissioners before the European Court on their objection to the value added tax zero rating of gas and electricity; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** The gas and electricity industries have been consulted during the preparation of the United Kingdom response to the case brought by the European Community Commission to the European Court of Justice. The Government completely reject the Commission's case and will defend the issue strongly before the European Court.

### CEGB (Capital Requirements)

28. **Mr. Orme** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he will next review detailed forecasts of Central Electricity Generating Board capital requirements.

**Mr. Goodlad:** In the spring, when I receive the board's 1987 proposed capital investment programme.

### Cold Weather (Energy Demand)

29. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the capacity of the United Kingdom energy supplies sectors to cope with extra demand for heating and lighting during cold weather.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** The supply industries have the capacity to cope with additional demand for heating and lighting during periods of severe weather.

This was demonstrated recently when, apart from a few local difficulties in distribution, they were able to meet record levels of demand for gas and electricity during some of the coldest temperatures experienced this century.

### National Coal Board

30. **Mr. Barron** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he last met the chairman of the National Coal Board; what was discussed; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I have regular meetings with the chairman of British Coal to discuss all aspects of the coal industry.

## Coal Industry (Investment)

31. **Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is his most recent estimate of investment in the coal industry in 1986-87; how this compares with 1978-79; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Hunt:** British Coal's investment approval for 1986-87 is £650 million, £169 million more than was invested in 1978-79. Over £5 billion has been invested in the coal industry since 1979.

## Domestic Heating Costs

32. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on the current costs of domestic heating; and how these compare with those for 1979.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** In 1986 the price of energy generally to the home was 18 per cent. higher in real terms than in 1979. However, in recent years the real prices of all domestic fuels have been falling: since 1983 those of gas and electricity have fallen by 8 per cent. and 11 per cent. respectively.

## Sellafield

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he will now make available for independent assessment all the details of the incident involving possible radiation contamination of a worker at the Windscale works on 15 December 1980 and all the documents relating to subsequent inquiries.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to him on 8 December 1986, at column 6.

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what reports he expects to receive during the next 12 months concerning progress on implementing recommendations made by Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate in the safety audit of British Nuclear Fuels Ltd., Sellafield; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive intends to make a progress report to the Health and Safety Commission after six months. I shall be kept informed of its contents.

## Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Peter Walker:** My Department uses envelopes made from such paper.

## Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** I am not aware of any such occasions.

## Oil Prices

**Mr. Hayward** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the average Brent crude oil spot price since 1 April 1986.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** There is no single definitive price series for the Brent crude oil spot price, but rather several competing price reporting systems. For the period 1 April to end December 1986 the estimated average across several prices series is in the range $13·1 to $13·5 a barrel.

## Sizewell Power Station

**Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list his estimates for the cost of nuclear power from Sizewell compared with coal power from the stations planned for the south of England.

**Mr. Goodlad:** My right hon. Friend has today published the inspector's report on Sizewell B. In view of the decision he has to take, I cannot comment on matters related to the CEGB's application to build the station. The board has made no application to build a coal-fired station.

## Electricity Prices

**Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list electricity prices *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* in France for (i) domestic and (ii) industrial consumers.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Civil Nuclear Power

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the categories of information held by his Department on civil nuclear power which are deemed necessary to be kept secret on grounds of national interest.

**Mr. Goodlad** [*pursuant to his reply,* 12 January 1987, c. *80*]: The categories of information to which security classifications apply are the same for civil nuclear power as for all other subjects. Security classifications apply only to information the unauthorised disclosure of which would not be in the interests of the nation and to information passed to us by another country on the express understanding that it shall be treated as classified information.

# SCOTLAND

## Glasgow (Health Board Manager)

**Mr. David Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland on what date the present general manager of the Greater Glasgow health board took up his appointment; and which hospitals within the board's area he has visited since then.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Mr. Laurence Peterken took up the post of general manager of the Greater Glasgow health board on 1 January 1986. I am asking the chairman of the board to write to the hon. Member about Mr. Peterken's visits to hospitals within the board's area.

## Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what use his Department makes of British-made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The Scottish Office uses British-made recycled paper for envelopes, but not otherwise. We are discussing with Her Majesty's Stationery Office whether, having regard to cost and quality, wider use would be appropriate.

## Prisons

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will have discussions with the General Secretary and office bearers of the Scottish Prison Officers Association to discuss the draft interim report of the working party on alternative regions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** The draft interim report of the working party on alternative regimes has not yet been agreed by the members of the working party.

I met members of the trade union side of the Scottish prison service, including representatives of the Scottish Prison Officers' Association, on Friday 23 January and we had useful and wide-ranging discussions on the problems facing the Scottish prison service, including the problems of handling difficult prisoners. My Department will keep in close touch with the trade union side on any new proposals or development affecting staff in the Scottish prison service.

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make it his policy to appoint to his Department an additional press officer whose duties would be solely to deal with the running of the prison service in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I am considering this at present along with other prison service requirements.

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* the total amount of Government funding granted to Peterhead prison for general services in the years 1979 to 1986 showing each year separately.

**Mr. Lang:** The information is as follows:

| *Year* | *Expenditure £'000* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | Not available |
| 1980-81 | Not available |
| [1]1981-82 | 3,328 |
| [1]1982-83 | 3,631 |
| [1]1983-84 | 4,162 |
| 1984-85 | 4,623 |
| 1985-86 | 4,911 |

[1] Excludes cost of inter-establishment transfers: information not available.

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what progress is being made in the implementation of the recommendations of the 1979 May report on prison services; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** The May committee made a very large number of recommendations, many of which applied only to the prison service in England and Wales. If my hon. Friend will let me know in which recommendations he has a specific interest, I shall reply to him as soon as possible.

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now make it his policy that, before prison officers are accepted for service in Scottish prisons, they should be in possession of a professional qualification equivalent to a higher national certificate in prison studies; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

## Fish

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will place in the *Official Report* the increase in the landings of the following species of fish, at Peterhead fish market in the years 1979 to 1986 showing each year separately: *(a)* cod, *(b)* haddock, *(c)* herring, *(d)* mackerel, *(e)* Norway lobsters, *(f)* Queen scallops and *(g)* scallops.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information requested is given in the most readily available form in the following table.

*Fish Landings at Peterhead District by United Kingdom Vessels: Landed Weight (tonnes)*

| | *1979* | *1980* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cod | 16,762 | 18,881 | 25,361 | 24,821 | 25,335 | 24,277 | 28,904 | 21,291 |
| Haddock | 24,330 | 29,630 | 38,568 | 49,538 | 46,565 | 42,336 | 51,586 | 61,122 |
| Herring | 6 | 13 | 3 | + | 42 | 689 | 3,415 | 10,324 |
| Mackerel | 23 | 23 | 48 | 3 | 2 | 149 | 16 | 691 |
| Norway lobsters | – | 15 | 11 | 3 | 52 | 13 | 135 | 81 |
| Queen scallops | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| Scallops | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – |

[1] Estimate.

*Symbols:* – =Nil; + =less than 0·5 tonne.

## Hypothermia

**Mr. Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he publish in the *Official Report* a table to show, by age group and by month, the number of deaths in Scotland with any mention of hypothermia on the death certificate for the last five years for which figures are available.

**Mr. John Mackay:** The information is as follows:

*Deaths with any mention of hypothermia, by age group and month, Scotland, 1982-86*

| | *Under 25* | *25-34* | *35-44* | *45-54* | *55-64* | *65-74* | *75-84* | *85+* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1982* | | | | | | | | | |
| January | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 21 | 26 | 12 | 70 |
| February | — | — | — | — | 3 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 26 |
| March | — | 1 | — | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 19 |
| April | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| May | — | 1 | — | 1 | 2 | 4 | — | 2 | 10 |
| June | 1 | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 9 |
| July | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | 1 |
| August | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 3 |
| September | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| October | — | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | 1 | — | 4 |
| November | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | — | 11 |
| December | — | — | 2 | — | 2 | 10 | 15 | 8 | 37 |
| TOTAL | 2 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 18 | 52 | 73 | 38 | 196 |
| *1983* | | | | | | | | | |
| January | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 26 |
| February | 1 | — | — | 5 | — | 7 | 16 | 9 | 38 |
| March | — | — | — | — | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 18 |
| April | — | — | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 19 |
| May | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| June | — | — | — | 2 | 1 | — | 2 | 3 | 8 |
| July | — | 1 | — | — | 1 | — | — | 1 | 3 |
| August | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| September | — | — | — | 1 | — | 4 | 5 | — | 10 |
| October | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 13 |
| November | 1 | — | — | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 11 |
| December | 1 | — | — | 2 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 23 |
| TOTAL | 5 | 2 | 2 | 15 | 16 | 35 | 60 | 44 | 179 |
| *1984* | | | | | | | | | |
| January | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 6 | 13 | 19 | 12 | 53 |
| February | — | — | — | 1 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 24 |
| March | — | — | 1 | — | — | 9 | 5 | 1 | 16 |
| April | 1 | — | — | — | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 13 |
| May | — | — | — | 1 | 3 | — | 1 | — | 5 |
| June | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| July | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| August | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| September | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 2 | — | 4 |
| October | 1 | — | — | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 10 |
| November | — | 1 | — | — | 3 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 21 |
| December | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 21 |
| TOTAL | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 23 | 44 | 56 | 41 | 176 |
| *1985* | | | | | | | | | |
| January | — | 1 | — | — | 5 | 19 | 29 | 11 | 65 |
| February | — | 1 | — | — | — | 5 | 18 | 11 | 35 |
| March | — | — | — | 2 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 9 | 24 |
| April | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 19 |
| May | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| June | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| July | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| August | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | 4 | 2 | 7 |
| September | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | 2 | 3 | 6 |
| October | — | — | — | — | 2 | 3 | — | 1 | 6 |
| November | — | 1 | — | 3 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 32 |
| December | 1 | — | — | — | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 27 |
| TOTAL | 2 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 16 | 46 | 93 | 66 | 233 |
| *1986*[1] | | | | | | | | | |
| January | — | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 12 | 25 | 6 | 54 |
| February | — | — | — | 2 | 1 | 5 | 14 | 6 | 28 |
| March | — | — | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 28 |
| April | — | — | — | — | 2 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 16 |
| May | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| June | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | 2 |
| July | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | 1 | 2 |
| August | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 6 | 2 | 9 |
| September | — | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 |
| October | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | 6 | 2 | 10 |
| November | 1 | — | — | 2 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 20 |

| | *Under 25* | *25-34* | *35-44* | *45-54* | *55-64* | *65-74* | *75-84* | *85+* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| December | 2 | — | — | — | 2 | 6 | 10 | 1 | 21 |
| TOTAL | 3 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 18 | 41 | 91 | 39 | 206 |

[1] Provisional figures.

### Forestry

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide estimates of the area of woodland felled in each month in Scotland for the past 36 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information is not available in the form requested.

### Regional Development Grant

**Mr. George Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what criteria he used in deciding *(a)* to make offers under regional development grant headings to the Burroughs Corporation and *(b)* not to make offers to Northern Engineering Industries, in respect of Reyrolle Belmos Blantyre; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** The criteria used when considering applications for regional development grant under the Industrial Development Act 1982 (as amended) are the same in all cases. These criteria are published in the regional development grant guide for applicants.

No recent applications have been received by the Department from either company.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Rifkind:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Criminal Injuries

**Mr. Soley** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state, at constant prices, for each of the next three years *(a)* the estimated amount to be paid to victims of violence under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, *(b)* the amount allocated to administration of the scheme and *(c)* the amount allocated to local victim support schemes giving in each case the estimated increase over 1986-87.

**Mr. Lang:** The information is as follows. With regard to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, which operates on a Great Britain basis, the Scottish element is currently estimated at 20 per cent. of the planned provision for Great Britain as a whole.

| | *1987-88 £ million* | *1988-89 £ million* | *1989-90 £ million* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Estimated expenditure on compensation under criminal injuries compensation scheme | 15·183 | 15·443 | 16·637 |
| Increase over 1986-87 | 6·235 | 6·494 | 7·689 |
| Estimated cost of administration of scheme | 1·319 | 1·593 | 1·666 |
| Increase over 1986-87 | 0·279 | 0·553 | 0·626 |

Central Government grant is paid to the Scottish Association of Victim Support Schemes (SAVSS) which distributes funds as appropriate to 12 local victim support schemes. Grant has been paid to the Scottish association since it was formed in March 1985; and in 1986-87 amounted to £26,000 revenue and £1,500 capital. In addition, further revenue grant of £15,000 per year has been offered to the association to assist specific projects. The level of grant for future years is still under consideration.

### Repairs Grant

**Mr. Maclennan** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what increase there has been in the property rateable value eligibility limit for repairs grant to take account of the rating revaluation in 1985.

**Mr. Ancram:** I refer the hon. Member to the Housing (Limits of Rateable Value for Improvement Grants and Repairs Grants) (Scotland) Order 1985 (SI. 1985, No. 297 (S.30)), copies of which are in the Library.

### Gill Nets

**Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if, further to the answer given by the hon. Member for Argyll and Bute (Mr. MacKay) on 21 January 1986, he will specify the salmon and sea fisheries organisations which were consulted prior to the Prohibition of Carriage of Monofilament Gill Nets (Scotland) Order 1985 being laid before the House.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The following organisations were consulted:

The Salmon Net Fishing Association of Scotland
The Association of Scottish District Salmon Fishery Boards
The Scottish Fishermen's Federation
The Highlands and Islands Fishermen's Association (SG)
The Orkney Fisheries Association
The Western Isles Fishermen's Association
The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
The Association of Sea Fisheries Committees

## WALES

### HMI Reports

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of Her Majesty's inspectors' reports on secondary schools in Wales published in *(a)* 1975 and *(b)* 1976 which included specific reference to the teaching of geography separately distinguishing those containing sketch maps and those which do not;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of Her Majesty's inspectors' reports on secondary schools in Wales published in *(a)* 1975 and *(b)* 1976, in which specific reference was made to the role in the curriculum of (i) road safety, (ii) fire safety and (iii) health education;

(3) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of Her Majesty's inspectors' reports on secondary schools in Wales published in *(a)* 1975 and *(b)* 1976.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Reports by HMI were not published prior to 1983. The number of HMI reports prepared on secondary schools in 1975 was 10, and in 1976 was eight. These reports sought to cover all aspects of the curriculum of the schools concerned.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will arrange for Her Majesty's inspectors' reports on schools to include more visual material such as maps and diagrams where this would aid understanding.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Reports by HMI sometimes include diagrams illustrating the layout of the facilities where this is likely to assist the reader. I have no evidence that wider use of illustrative material is felt to be necessary.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales, if he will arrange for the name of Her Majesty's inspector's producing reports on schools in Wales to be included in those reports.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** No. Since all reports by Her Majesty's Inspectors in Wales give the corporate view of the inspectorate it would not be appropriate to name individuals.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will identify the schools examined in the report by Her Majesty's inspectors on a survey of three recently amalgamated primary schools (West Glamorgan).

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The schools are Cwm primary, Swansea; Blaenymaes primary, Swansea and Gnoll primary, Neath.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many of Her Majesty's inspectors involved in preparing their report on "A Survey of three Recently Amalgamated Primary Schools (West Glamorgan)" have had teaching experience in primary schools.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The actual visits for the survey in question involved four inspectors, two of whom have held teaching posts in primary schools. However, additionally several of Her Majesty's inspectors with local or specialist expertise and responsibilities usually make contributions to the planning of an inspection and the completion of a report.

## School Inspectors

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of Her Majesty's inspectors currently in post who have previously held the position of headteacher.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Six.

## Staffing Statistics

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of staff currently employed in Gwydyr house which are attached to (i) the Secretary of State and (ii) each of the parliamentary under-secretaries.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** There are 10 staff attached to my Office who also provide support to the Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State who each have a private secretary and a personal secretary. In addition, there are, within Gwydyr house, a further 11 staff providing support to all Ministers and visiting officers.

## Specialist Subject Advisers

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the information his Department holds on the numbers of specialist subject advisers in each local authority in Wales;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* the year in which each local authority in Wales first appointed a specialist adviser in religious education.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The Department does not collect information on specialist subject advisers employed by local authorities.

## Religious Education

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of Her Majesty's inspectors that visited the schools in West Glamorgan as referred to on page 1, paragraph 2 of report by Her Majesty's inspectors on "A Survey of Religious Education in 20 Primary Schools in West Glamorgan."

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Two members of Her Majesty's inspectorate undertook visits to schools in connection with this survey.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many of Her Majesty's inspectors involved in visiting schools in West Glamorgan while preparing their report on "A Survey of Religious Education in Primary Schools in West Glamorgan" have had experience of teaching in primary schools.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Two of Her Majesty's inspectors of schools were involved in visits directly related to this survey. Both are specialists in religious education and have considerable experience of all aspects of primary schools, but neither has held a teaching appointment in a primary school.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will identify in the *Official Report* the names of the schools ranked in random order in appendix III of the report by Her Majesty's inspectors of schools on, "A Survey of Religious Education in 20 Primary Schools in West Glamorgan".

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** No. The value of the report of this survey would not be enhanced by the identification and attribution of the practices of individual schools.

## Childhood Leukaemia

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the incidence of childhood leukaemia by district health authority in Wales.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The information requested is shown in the following table:

*Registration of Leukaemias*[1] *1974 to 1983, persons aged 0 to 14 years*

| *District Health Authority* | *Number* | *Annual registration rate per 100,000 population aged 0-14 years* |
|---|---|---|
| Clwyd | 26 | 3·0 |
| East Dyfed | 18 | 4·1 |
| Gwent | 35 | 3·6 |
| Gwynedd | 20 | 4·1 |
| Mid Glamorgan | 45 | 3·6 |
| Pembrokeshire | 11 | 4·6 |
| Powys | 4 | 1·8 |
| South Glamorgan | 22 | 2·6 |
| West Glamorgan | 26 | 3·3 |

[1] ICD9, 204-208.

## Central Heating

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information his Department holds on the percentage of elderly households in Wales that have central heating where these households are with two adults, one or both aged 60 years or over and for households of one person aged 60 years or over.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** It is estimated from the Welsh house condition survey that, in 1981, the percentage of single pensioner households and two-person households with at least one pensioner, which had full or partial central heating were 42·0 per cent. and 48·5 per cent. respectively. The 1986 Welsh inter-censal and house condition surveys will provide more up-to-date information on house conditions.

## Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** My Department obtains letterhead stationery and notepads from HMSO whose products contain a small and not readily quantifiable amount of recycled paper.

## Welsh Development Agency

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the overseas offices of the Welsh Development Agency.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The Welsh Development Agency as such has no offices overseas, but WINVEST, its inward investment arm, has representatives in Palo Alto, California, Princeton, New Jersey, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; Bad Bocklet in the Federal Republic of Germany and Tokyo, Japan.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will estimate the number of jobs which will be safeguarded or created in Wales over the next three years arising out of the impact of the Welsh Development Agency's programme.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The latest public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56 II) shows that the agency's budget is set to rise by about a quarter over the period from 1986-87 to 1989-90. This will enable the agency to contribute to the creation of a significant number of job opportunities, although it is not possible to forecast the numbers involved.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the increase in real terms of the Welsh Development Agency financial allocations for each of the financial years 1980-81 to 1986-87.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The information is as follows:

*Initial gross expenditure budget at 1986-87 prices*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1980-81 | 120·3 |
| 1981-82 | 121·9 |
| 1982-83 | 101·3 |
| 1983-84 | 86·1 |
| 1984-85 | 78·2 |
| 1985-86 | 72·5 |
| 1986-87 | 76·9 |

The figures for 1980-81 to 1983-84 reflect the additional resources made available to the agency to assist those areas of Wales affected by steel closures.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing the capital expenditure allocated for the Welsh Development Agency for each of the past five years and details for the year 1985-86 for land reclamation schemes.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The information is as follows:

*Capital expenditure by the Welsh Development Agency*

*£ million*

| | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Land | 2·8 | 2·6 | 2·0 | 0·2 | 0·9 |
| Construction | 75·3 | 49·4 | 36·3 | 33·9 | 24·5 |
| Land reclamation | 9·3 | 10·4 | 13·0 | 6·5 | 9·0 |
| Environmental schemes | 0·3 | 0·5 | 0·6 | 0·8 | 0·5 |
| Grants | — | — | 0·2 | 0·4 | 0·5 |
| Loans | 0·3 | 0·5 | 0·4 | 0·5 | 0·7 |
| Total [1] | 88·0 | 63·4 | 52·5 | 42·3 | 36·1 |

[1] Owing to rounding, the totals may not equal precisely the sum of the constituent items.

I shall write to the hon. Gentleman with details of the land reclamation projects undertaken by the agency during 1985-86.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many of the projects of the Welsh Development Agency's service industries division currently being considered for financial support are related to tourism.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** Ten out of a total of 87 investment proposals presently under consideration are directly related to tourism.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the number of factories owned by the Welsh Development Agency indicating the number of 5,000 sq ft and under, 5,000 to 10,000 sq ft, 10,000 to 20,000 sq ft, 20,000 to 50,000 sq ft and over 50,000 sq ft showing how many are *(a)* currently in productive use, *(b)* allocated, but not operational, and *(c)* unallocated, respectively.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** I shall write to the hon. Gentleman with details.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will estimate the number of jobs created by the Welsh Development Agency and the total expenditure for each year in each Welsh county since 1979.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The Welsh Development Agency contributes to the job creation process through a range of activities including the provision of factory space, investment funds and advice. It is not possible to quantify the full cumulative impact in terms of jobs created. Information on job opportunities provided through the agency's factory building programme is published in its annual report and accounts, copies of which are available in the Library.

Information is not available on the pattern of expenditure at county level.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many factory units have been built by the Welsh Development Agency since its inception.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The information is as follows:

| *Type* | *Number of units built since 1976* |
|---|---|
| Advance factories | 1,254 |
| Bespoke developments | 126 |
| High-tech schemes | 4 |
| Estate centres | 2 |

*Note:*

The WDA has also been involved in several projects aimed at converting old industrial property into modern factory units.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will estimate the number of employees currently working in factories constructed by the Welsh Development Agency.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** At 31 March 1986 employment in Welsh Development Agency factories and estates was 43,803. Information on employment in other factories constructed by the agency and subsequently sold is not available.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give for each year since 1976, the percentage of lettable floor space that was unoccupied in Welsh Development Agency factories.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The information is as follows:

| *As at 31 March each year* | *Per cent. of total floor space vacant and available for letting* |
|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 1·0 |
| 1979-80 | 2·5 |
| 1980-81 | 6·5 |
| 1981-82 | 14·6 |
| 1982-83 | 14·8 |
| 1983-84 | 13·5 |
| 1984-85 | 13·2 |
| 1985-86 | 10·4 |

*Note:*

Information for 1976-77 and 1977-78 is not available.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of Welsh Development Agency factory floor space is currently being used for *(a)* manufacturing purposes, *(b)* service industry purposes, *(c)* social purposes and *(d)* other purposes; and what is the balance of unused factory floor space.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** At 31 December 1986, 9·5 per cent. of Welsh Development Agency factory space was vacant and available for letting. The agency does not hold summary information on the activities of tenants.

## Mid-Wales Development

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he has any proposals for increasing funds available to Mid-Wales Development for the purpose of industrial development in mid-Wales.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** I hope to make available about £10 million in total to the Development Board for Rural Wales in 1987-88. The final figure will be published in the Supply Estimates when they are presented to Parliament in March. The allocation of these funds between individual activities is largely a matter for the board.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the amounts of cash given to Mid-Wales Development in each of the years 1979-80 to 1986-87; and if he will publish a corresponding table giving each of these figures in constant money terms.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** Funds, including housing subsidy, provided or expected to be provided to the Development Board for Rural Wales are, in cash terms:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 9·97 |
| 1980-81 | 7·45 |
| 1981-82 | 8·18 |
| 1982-83 | 8·92 |
| 1983-84 | 9·14 |
| 1984-85 | 9·72 |
| 1985-86 | 10·34 |
| 1986-87 | 10·10 |

Comparison in the terms asked for is not directly possible. Government programmes are no longer planned on a constant price basis. However, applying the gross domestic product deflator and at 1986-87 prices, the figures are:

| | £ million |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 16·59 |
| 1980-81 | 10·44 |
| 1981-82 | 10·44 |
| 1982-83 | 10·61 |
| 1983-84 | 10·40 |
| 1984-85 | 10·61 |
| 1985-86 | 10·65 |
| 1986-87 | 10·10 |

### Key Workers (Housing)

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will estimate the number of key workers' houses which are owned by the Mid-Wales Development, the Welsh Development Agency and local authorities in Wales; how many of these are currently standing empty; and if he will estimate the annual cost to public authorities in Wales, in terms of loss of rent, in holding key workers' houses empty.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** At 31 December 1986, the Development Board for Rural Wales owned 84 houses specifically for key workers of which 14 were empty. The loss of rent during the current financial year is estimated to be £26,000. In addition, housing associations and local authorities in Mid Wales identify houses to which, for a limited time and in return for a guarantee of rent, they give the board nomination rights for key worker tenants. There were 231 such houses at 31 December 1986 of which 19 were empty. Rent guarantee payments made by the board are estimated at around £19,000 in the current financial year.

The Welsh Development Agency does not provide housing for key workers. It owns a small number of houses originally provided for key workers but no longer used for that purpose.

Information on key worker dwellings owned by local authorities throughout Wales is not collected centrally.

### Information Technology Centres

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to how many information technology centres are currently operating in Wales; and what information he has as to the plans of the Welsh Development Agency to invest in more such centres.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** There are 12 information technology centres currently operating in Wales. The Welsh Development Agency has not invested in the development of these centres and has no plans to do so.

### Breast and Cervical Cancer

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many women died of *(a)* breast cancer and *(b)* cervical cancer in each health authority area in Wales in 1986; and what are the corresponding figures for each year since 1979.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply given to a question by the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) in the *Official Report* on 14 January 1987 at columns *47-50*.

Information for 1986 is not yet available.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will initiate a uniform national screening programme for the prevention of breast cancer for women aged over 50 years using oblique mammography; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on his Department's initiatives in promoting the early detection and prevention of *(a)* breast cancer and *(b)* cervical cancer; and what are the future plans in these spheres.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** We have received the report of the United Kingdom expert working group on breast cancer screening and we shall make a statement as soon as possible on how we shall respond in Wales. During this financial year an additional £400,000 has been made available to district health authorities to strengthen the cervical cancer screening programme. Also, we have asked the Health Education Advisory Committee for Wales to advise on health education support for this programme. We expect to receive a reply shortly.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many specialist staff are employed by each of the district health authorities in Wales in the detection of *(a)* breast cancer and *(b)* cervical cancer.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** This information is not available centrally.

### Welsh Office (Parking)

**Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he proposes to take any measures to eliminate the necessity of paying fines or fixed penalty payments incurred by official vehicles for unauthorised parking outside or near to the Welsh Office; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Steps are being taken to improve off-street parking facilities.

### Woodland

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish estimates of the area of woodland felled in each month in Wales for the past 36 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** This information is not available in the form requested.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Wales on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had *(a)* to introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** I shall reply as soon as possible.

## THE ARTS

### Clore Gallery

36. **Mr. Gale** asked the Minister for the Arts when he expects the Clore gallery extension to be opened to the public.

**Mr. Luce:** I am delighted to take this opportunity of acknowledging on behalf of the Government this generous gift by the Clore Foundation.

The Clore gallery extension to the Tate gallery will be opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 1 April and will be open to the public from Monday 6 April.

The Government are providing funds for the running costs of the new gallery.

## Marketing

37. **Mr. Rowe** asked the Minister for the Arts what response he expects to his recently announced scheme to encourage marketing within the arts.

**Mr. Luce:** The response so far has been very good; everyone has welcomed the scheme and many arts organisations have asked for application forms. The scheme is experimental and I anticipate making between 25 and 50 awards depending on the size of the project.

## Public Funding

38. **Mr. Conway** asked the Minister for the Arts if he is satisfied that arts bodies are making the best possible use of the various sources of public funding available.

**Mr. Luce:** There are a wide variety of sources of funding both public and private and I urge all arts bodies to exploit them to the full.

## Ministerial Visits

41. **Mr. Key** asked the Minister for the Arts how many arts organisations and bodies he has visited since becoming Minister for the Arts.

**Mr. Luce:** I have visited the following arts bodies and functions:

*Nationals*
Arts Council
British Film Institute
Craft Council
English National Opera
Hayward Gallery
National Film Theatre
National Theatre
Queen Elizabeth Hall
Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
Royal Shakespeare Company (Stratford and Barbican)
Royal Academy

*National Museums and Galleries*
British Library
Imperial War Museum
British Museum
Museums and Galleries Commission
National Gallery
National Maritime Museum
National Portrait Gallery
Science Museum
Tate Gallery
Victoria and Albert Museum
Walker Art Gallery

*Scotland*
Burrell Collection, Glasgow
Easterhouse Festival Society
Edinburgh College of Arts
Edinburgh Festival
Edinburgh Tapestry Company
Kelvingrove Gallery, Glasgow
Kings Theatre, Edinburgh
National Youth Music Theatre
Richard Demarco Gallery, Edinburgh
Royal Museum of Scotland
Scottish Arts Council
Scottish National Orchestra

*North*
Abbot Hall Gallery
Beamish Museum
Billingham Folk Festival
Museum of Lakeland Life, Kendal
Northern Arts
Harris Museum, Preston

*North West*
Bluecoat Theatre, Livepool
City Museum and Art Gallery, Manchester
Cornerhouse, Manchester
Halle Orchestra
Manchester Evening News Theatre Awards
Manchester Hospitals Arts Project
Merseyside Arts Project
NW Arts
Octagon Theatre, Bolton
Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester
Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

*Yorkshire and Humberside*
British Library, Boston Spa
Ferens Art Gallery, Hull
Grimsby Leisure Centre
Humberside Theatre in Education Company
Jorvick Viking Centre, York
Museum of Photography, Bradford
New Theatre, Hull
Nostell Priory
Railway Museum, York
Spring Street Theatre, Hull
Town Docks Museum, Hull
Yorkshire Museum, York

*West Midlands*
Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham
Birmingham Repertory Theatre
Black Country Museum, Dudley
City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke
City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra
Ironbridge Gorge Museum
Lichfield Festival
Shakespeare Centre, Stratford
The Birthplace, Stratford
Wedgewood Museum, Stoke
Weston Park

*East Midlands*
Concordia Theatre, Hinckley
Leicestershire Museum and Art Gallery
Nottingham Playhouse

*Wales*
Adopt-a-student awards, Cardiff
Caernarvon: BSIS awards reception
Mold: BSIS awards reception
Plas Newydd
Ruthin Crafts Centre
Theatr Clywys, Mold
Welsh Arts Council
Welsh National Opera

*South West*
Artside Gallery, Bath
Beaford Art Centre
CORAA Conference, Plymouth
Craft Study Centre, Bath
First Stop Photography, Bath
Salisbury Playhouse
Theatre Royal, Bath
Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham
Pittville Pumproom, Cheltenham
Wyvern Theatre, Swindon

Dance and Media Arts Centre, Swindon
Great Western Railway Museum, Swindon
Bracknell Arts Centre

*South*
Amberley Chalk Pits Museum
Arundel Festival
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
Bournemouth College of Art and Design
Bournemouth Sinfonetta
Chichester Festival
Chichester Festival Theatre
Lewes Living History Model
Museum of Modern Art, Oxford
National Film and TV School, Beaconsfield
Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford
Theatre Royal, Brighton
Weald and Downland Museum
West Deam College
Kings Theatre, Portsmouth
Portsmouth College of Art, Design and Further Education
D-Day Museum, Portsmouth
Mary Rose Exhibition, Portsmouth
Royal Navy Museum, Portsmouth
New Theatre Royal, Portsmouth
Hornpipe Community Arts Centre, Portsmouth
Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth
Mountbatten Gallery, Portsmouth

*London*
Architectural Association
Almeida Theatre
Ballet Rambert
Book Trust
Booker Prize
British Theatre Association Library
City of London Library
Contemporary Art Society
English Chamber Orchestra
Guildhall: United Kingdom Presidency Concert
Hamilton's Gallery
London Bach Society
London Philharmonic Orchestra
London Symphony Orchestra
Mall Galleries
Museum of London
Museums Road Show
National Campaign for the Arts
National Youth Theatre
Photographers' Gallery
Royal Academy
Sadler's Wells
St. John's, Smith Square
Society of London Arts Publicists
Spink Gallery
Sir John Soanes Museum

*Eastern*
Cambridgeshire Symphony Orchestra
Cambridgeshire Courts Archives
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Imperial War Museum, Duxford
Museum of East Anglian Life
Norwich Castle Museum
Sainsbury Centre
Winafield College

This excludes overseas and libraries visits.

## News International Publications

42. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Minister for the Arts what information he has as to the legal costs of Ealing, Camden and Hammersmith and Fulham councils concerning their ban on *The Times*, *The Sun* and other News International publications.

**Mr. Luce:** I have no information as to the legal costs incurred by these councils. As I told the House on 15 December, at column 407, I have written to the Audit Commission, which has informed me that the district auditors are alert to the situation.

## Gallery Collections

**Mr. Frank Field** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will procure from each of the galleries for which he is responsible a list of those collections for which they are responsible, and which have not been shown to the public for *(a)* the last five years, *(b)* the last 10 years and *(c)* the last 20 years.

**Mr. Luce:** The collections in the galleries for which I am responsible are normally composed of individual items rather than discrete sub-collections. Information is not held in the form requested, but the galleries have provided the following information:

*National Gallery*
All paintings are on display

*Tate Gallery*
Because of contraints on space, only a proportion of the collection can be shown at one time. About 25 per cent. of the collection of British historic painting and sculpture is on display, a similar proportion of modern foreign art and about 12 per cent. of the large number of modern British works. Items from the collection are rotated between public display and the reserve collection. All items can be seen by arrangement. The opening of the Clore extension in April 1987 and the Tate in the north in the summer of 1988 will increase the proportion of works on display at any given time.

*National Portrait Gallery*
Between 20 and 25 per cent. of the collection is on display at any one time. Again, items are rotated between public display and the reserve and all items can be seen by arrangement.

*Wallace Collection*
All items are on public display.

*National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside*
*(a) Walker Art Gallery.* About 30 per cent. of the collection is on display at any one time. Displays are rotated and all items can be seen by arrangement. About half of the collection has not been on public display in the last ten years.
*(b) Sudley Art Gallery.* 90 per cent. is on display.
*(c) Lady Lever Art Gallery.* 80 per cent. is on display.

All museums and galleries are aware of the need to improve public access to their collections and I encourage them to do all they can within available resources.

## Royal Opera House

**Mr. Janner** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will make a statement on the alternative proposals for the Royal Opera House redevelopment scheme, phase II.

**Mr. Luce:** The board of the Royal Opera House is seeking planning and other approvals for an improvement scheme which would be funded by a commercial development. The Government have not yet taken a view.

**Mr. James Lamond** asked the Minister for the Arts what consultations he has had with *(a)* the Covent Garden Community Association or *(b)* other bodies concerning the Royal Opera House redevelopment, phase II.

**Mr. Luce:** I met representatives of the Covent Garden Community Association on 12 January to hear their views. I have also had discussions with the Royal Opera House. No other body has approached me.

**Mr. Janner** asked the Minister for the Arts what information he has received from the chairman of the Royal Opera House concerning his discussion with the Arts Council on the annual deficit of the Royal Opera House and the anticipated deficit for 1987; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce:** I am advised that the Royal Opera House hopes to break even in 1986-87. The Arts Council and the Royal Opera House are discussing the later's financial prospects for 1987-88. It would be premature to comment before these consultations are completed.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Steel Industry

**Mr. David Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the total number of jobs dependent on the British steel industry; and if he will list the figures for each area of Great Britian.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** On the basis of a broad definition of the steel industry, which includes SIC groups 221 (the iron and steel industry), 222 (steel tubes) and 223 (drawing, cold rolling and cold forming of steel), the latest available regional distribution is based on the annual census of production (ACOP) for 1984 as follows:

| *Standard Regions of England* | *Employment (1000s)* |
|---|---|
| North | 12·4 |
| Yorkshire & Humberside | 31·0 |
| East Midlands | 6·7 |
| East Anglia | 0·7 |
| South East | 7·9 |
| South West | 1·2 |
| West Midlands | 18·8 |
| North West | 3·8 |

| *Standard Regions* | *Employment (1,000s)* |
|---|---|
| England | 82·6 |
| Wales | 21·2 |
| Scotland | 10·7 |
| GREAT BRITAIN | 114·4 |

*Note:* The figures do not add to the sub total because of rounding.

Evidence based on the Department of Employment series of estimates of employees in employment suggests that total employment in these industry sectors fell between 10 and 15 per cent. between 1984 and 1986. The Department of Employment warns, however, that its estimates are subject to a considerable potential estimating error due to the relatively small number of employees in the industry. There are no figures available for the number of jobs which are indirectly dependent on the steel industry, but calculations based on input-output tables indicate that the ratio of the number of jobs associated with the steel industry to the number of jobs in the steel industry itself is of the order of 1·5 to 1. It is not possible to give a regional breakdown of these associated jobs as the input-output tables are not broken down regionally and the jobs occur in a large number of industry and service sectors.

### Fireworks

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements his Department is making to monitor the import of banger and minirocket fireworks into Britain.

**Mr. Howard:** The Health and Safety Executive, which samples all imported fireworks for safety in normal use, is revising its licensing arrangements to tighten up on monitoring and approving imports in order to overcome the problems experienced over the last two years. In addition, the firework manufacturers have agreed to reduce this year the number of mini-rockets with bangers in their tips and to eliminate the latter altogether by the following season. I am not aware of problems with imported bangers as such.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what has been the change in the number of firework accidents taking place in the street in Scotland in the latest two available years;

(2) if he will publish the incidence of firework accidents by age group in Scotland in each of the latest two available years;

(3) what has been the change in the number of firework accidents in the latest available year attributed to *(a)* bangers and *(b)* rockets in Scotland;

(4) what has been the incidence of firework accidents in Scotland in each of the past 10 years.

**Mr. Howard:** The figures for firework injuries in Scotland for 1986 will be available shortly. The figures for previous years are as follows:

| *Year* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| *(1) Total injuries* | |
| 1976 | 22 |
| 1977 | 24 |
| 1978 | 41 |
| 1979 | 30 |
| 1980 | 30 |
| 1981 | 35 |
| 1982 | 25 |
| 1983 | 38 |
| 1984 | 37 |
| 1985 | 62 |
| *(ii) Street injuries* | |
| 1984 | 15 |
| 1985 | 32 |

| | *1984* | *1985* |
|---|---|---|
| *(iii) Injuries by age* | | |
| Over 20 | 6 | 13 |
| 16-20 | 5 | 8 |
| 13-15 | 15 | 19 |
| Under 13 | 11 | 22 |
| *(iv) Injuries caused by bangers and rockets* | | |
| Rockets | 7 | 14 |
| Bangers | 16 | 21 |

All these figures are for Scotland only.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is satisfied with the workings of the agreement reached with the Firework Makers Guild on restricting the number of banger fireworks made.

**Mr. Howard:** Yes. Since 1975 the number of bangers let off has been cut by well over one half, and since 1979 their explosive content has been reduced by 20 per cent.

### Companies Acts Investigations

**Mr. Hanley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) on 16 January, *Official Report*, column *324*, about Companies Act investigations, if he will give for each of the investigations listed the grounds for appointing the inspectors.

**Mr. Howard:** No. There is no statutory requirement to disclose the grounds for an investigation and it is a long-established practice not to do so.

### 2,4,5-T (Imports)

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish in the *Official Report* the quantity of 2,4,5-T imported into the United Kingdom for each month in 1986.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Information is available only for the months January to October 1986. The United Kingdom imported no 2,4,5-T for that period.

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Butcher:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Cement Imports

**Mr. Mason** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter), *Official Report*, 10 December 1986, column *175*, what has been the outcome of discussions with the European Commission and with the Greek Government concerning subsidised cement imports from Greece; what further steps he proposes to take to protect both the British cement industry and those parts of British Coal's operations which are dependent on a healthy cement industry; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The European Commission reached agreement with the Greek Government in December on the phasing out of Greek export subsidies and the introduction of a safeguard clause which could be triggered if market disruption is threatened. The Greek Government have also given an assurance not to disrupt the United Kingdom market. I met a delegation of Members representing United Kingdom cement and coal industries on 22 January to discuss these arrangements and am sending the right hon. Member a note of the meeting.

### Lloyd's

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reason he has not published the report of his inspectors' inquiry into the affair involving Ian Posgate, Lloyd's and Alexander Howden; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Aircraft (Retrofitting)

**Mr. Eastham** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what representations he has received regarding the contract for the retrofitting in the United States of America of British Aerospace aircraft belonging to British airlines; what estimate he has made of the employment effects of this contract on British engineering industries; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on the contract for the retrofitting of British aircraft in the United States of America with Rolls-Royce Tay engines; and if Rolls-Royce has given any financial guarantees in connection with this contract.

**Mr. Pattie:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Regional Assistance

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will estimate for each region of England, at 1986 prices, spending on *(a)* regional development grant and *(b)* regional selective assistance for each year until 1989-90.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** Estimates of regional assistance are produced only for England as a whole. I would refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to him on 20 January, (at columns 466-67; by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister about future provision for regional development grant expenditure in England. The Prime Minister has today answered a further question from the hon. Gentleman requesting the equivalent information on regional selective assistance.

### Manufacturing Investment

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the change in the real value of manufacturing investment from 1979 to the latest date for which figures are available for each region of England; and if he will express the figures for each region for manufacturing investment in 1979 and the latest year for which figures are available at 1984 prices.

**Mr. Butcher:** The information is as follows:

*Net Capital Expenditure for Regions of England in 1979 and 1984 at 1984 Prices*

| *Region* | *1979 £ million* | *1984 £ million* | *Percentage cha[illegible]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| North | 899 | 522 | −42 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 916 | 605 | −34 |
| East Midlands | 701 | 557 | −21 |
| East Anglia | 309 | 255 | −17 |
| South East | 2,318 | 2,013 | −13 |
| South West | 553 | 541 | −2 |
| West Midlands | 1,034 | 842 | −19 |
| North West | 1,424 | 976 | −31 |
| England | 8,153 | 6,311 | −23 |

*Sources:* Annual Census of Production and United Kingdom National Accounts.

## Car Sales

**Mr. Speed** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has about the proportion of cars sold in the United Kingdom which were assembled in the United Kingdom by the Rover Group, Ford, General Motors and Peugeot, respectively, for 1984, 1985 and 1986.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The following is the information requested, based on new car registration data for the United Kingdom.

*Percentage*

| | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rover Group | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Ford | 57 | 56 | 64 |
| General Motors | 42 | 44 | 56 |
| Peugeot/Talbot | 35 | 31 | 35 |

*Source:* Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders.

## Insider Dealing

**Mr. Wrigglesworth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the number and qualifications of the inspectors engaged on the inquiry, the number and grades of staff assisting the inspectors and the percentage of their normal working time being spent by each in all current inquiries established by him under the Companies Acts or in relation to insider dealing.

**Mr. Howard:** The total number of inspectors engaged on inquiries under the Companies Act or in relation to insider dealings is 42, including 20 specialist departmental officers engaged full-time on confidential inquiries under section 447 of the Companies Act. Of the other 22, 11 are lawyers, seven are accountants, and the other four have extensive experience relevant to the matter under investigation. I regret that information about the percentage of normal working time spent on the inquiries by each inspector could be provided only at disproportionate cost and by diverting effort from the investigations themselves. Inspectors are well aware of the importance of completing their investigations as rapidly as possible.

**Mr. Wrigglesworth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to the answer of 21 January, *Official Report,* column *583,* about civil servants in the Office of Fair Trading, what action was taken by the junior official referred to; and how many Office of Fair Trading and Monopolies and Mergers Commission investigations were involved.

**Mr. Howard:** I could not answer the first part of the question without risking prejudice to the investigation and to any criminal proceedings which might result.

As regards the second part, the inspectors' inquiries are continuing. They are empowered to investigate any possible contravention of the Company Securities (Insider Dealing) Act involving information relating to the exercise of the functions of the Director General, the Commission or the Secretary of State in relation to merger situations under the Fair Trading Act.

## Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Butcher:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Timeshare Properties

**Mr. Michael Cocks** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will introduce legislation to ensure that those who agree to buy timeshare properties are given a limited period of reflection during which they may change their mind and retrieve any money placed with the developers as a deposit; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will initiate and publish a code of practice to be observed by firms selling timeshare properties; and if he will make a statement;

(3) when he expects his Department's consumer advice leaflet on timeshare properties to be published; what type of advice or information it will contain with particular regard to standards to be observed in approaches to potential customers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** As I said in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley (Mr. Oppenheim) on 3 December 1986, at column 634, I do not at present intend to introduce legislation on time share. There are three trade associations covering most United Kingdom developers and members of these associations voluntarily provide cooling-off periods during which customers may have an opportunity to reconsider their purchase. I welcome this and I do not feel that a code of practice would materially add to the protection offered by this arrangement. I also believe that it is important that people are fully aware of the facts when they are considering purchasing time share. With this object my Department will be publishing a consumer advice leaflet on time sharing on 27 January. It is aimed at the potential time share buyer and provides advice and a checklist of items to bear in mind.

## Share Dealing

**Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will establish a scheme under section 54 of the Financial Services Act 1986 to compensate clients of licensed share dealers who default on their obligation to buy shares, unit trusts and other securities.

**Mr. Howard:** Not in anticipation of the rest of new regulatory framework within which section 54 is intended to operate. Besides this, the application of the arrangements made in due course under section 54 retrospectively would run counter to the general presumption against retrospective legislation, and it is difficult to see how it could be arranged equitably.

**Mr. Wrigglesworth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to his answer of 21 January, *Official Report,* column *583,* what action has been taken or is proposed in relation to the junior official at the Office of Fair Trading implicated in the inquiry into insider trading.

**Mr. Howard:** The Director General announced on 27 January that he is reviewing the position of the employee concerned.

### City Investment Centres

**Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will consider making ex gratia payments to compensate clients of City Investment Centres who dealt with the company during the period after his Department's inspector had gone into the company and before his Department closed the company down on 7 November 1986.

**Mr. Howard:** Much as I sympathise with the people in question, I do not consider that there are grounds for ex gratia payments. The institution of confidential inquiries does not necessarily mean that the firm in question is unsound.

### Patent Office

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what plans he has for the future of the Patent Office;

(2) what plans he has for the patent information network;

(3) whether he will make it his policy that the British Library should retain responsibility for running the patent information network on behalf of the Patent Office;

(4) if he will direct P. E. Consultancy to reconsider the findings it has recently submitted on the future of the patent information network.

**Mr. Pattie:** The Government's plans for the Patent Office were announced in the White Paper, "Intellectual Property and Innovation," Cmnd. 9712. It is the intention to make the Patent Office a statutory non-departmental public body as soon as legislation can be introduced. P. E. Consultancy Services were retained by the Patent Office to assist in the preparation of plans for hiving-off. They were not asked to examine the patent information network. My Department wishes to see the patent information network used to the best advantage of United Kingdom industry, and the Government's plans to hive-off the Patent Office include proposals to develop information services to this end. My Department is not, however, responsible for the British Library and it is not open to us to determine the policies of the British Library. The Patent Office and the British Library do, nevertheless, work closely together and will continue to do so.

## CIVIL SERVICE

### Management and Personnel Office

43. **Mr. Rowe** asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he intends to publish a report on the work on the Management and Personnel Office.

**Mr. Luce:** This is the first report on the work of the Management and Personnel Office during 1985 and 1986 and will be released on Wednesday 28 January. Copies will be placed in the Libraries of Parliament.

### Management Reform

45. **Mr. Conway** asked the Minister for the Civil Service if he will list the major improvements in the Civil Service attributable to management reform since 1979.

**Mr. Luce:** Higher productivity, better value for money, and more professional management.

### Northern Region

46. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Minister for the Civil Service what is the number of Civil Service posts transferred to the northern region since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce:** The dispersal programme announced on 26 July 1979 does not include any transfer of posts to the northern region. Full details of posts that may have been transferred there by Departments for management reasons are not held centrally, but the Government continue to provide a substantial number of Civil Service jobs in the region; in fact, over 33,000 posts. This represents a higher proportion of the regional labour force than in many other regions in the country and is above the national average.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### National Debt

**Mr. Ground** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the national debt, including foreign currency debt but excluding official holdings, outstanding at the end of March in each of the years 1979 to 1986, inclusive, as a percentage of gross domestic product, average measure, at current market prices centred on 31 March; and what is his estimate of the national debt so expressed for 1987 and 1988.

**Mr. MacGregor:** The figures are as follows:

*Market holdings of national debt[1] as a percentage of gross domestic product[2] at market prices*

| | *Per cent.* |
|---|---|
| end March 1979 | 36.5 |
| 1980 | 34.5 |
| 1981 | 38·3 |
| 1982 | 38·3 |
| 1983 | 38·6 |
| 1984 | 41·2 |
| 1985 | 42·2 |
| 1986 | 42·6 |

*Note:*

No estimates for 1987 or 1988 are available.

[1] National debt, including foreign currency debt, but excluding official holdings, at nominal rates.

[2] GDP, average measure seasonally adjusted quarterly, centred on end March.

### Transport International Routier

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Her Majesty's Customs and Excise permits were issued to Transport International Routier in 1970 to 1975, 1975 to 1980 and 1980 to 1985 from the Geneva headquarters; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Brooke:** Her Majesty's Customs and Excise does not issue permits to Transport International Routier.

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Transport International Routier licences were taken up in 1970 to 1975, 1975 to 1980 and 1980 to 1985 by the eastern bloc countries and the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Brooke:** TIR carnets for eastern bloc countries are issued by guarantee associations approved in the individual countries concerned. Her Majesty's Customs and Excise has no readily available statistics.

### Value Added Tax

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what would be the cost of extending value added tax bad debts relief *(a)* to all debts eligible for relief under section 130(i) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970 and *(b)* to all unsatisfied judgment debts, indicating in each case the extent to which the cost would be affected by the proposals in his consultative document, "Value-added Tax: Small Business Review", to permit smaller traders to account for value added tax on a cash basis;

(2) what information he has concerning the increase in value added tax revenue which would occur if the standard method of reckoning gross takings were abolished as proposed in his consultative document "Value-added Tax: Small Business Review"; and what is the number and size of traders who would be affected.

**Mr. Brooke:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

### Capital Gains Tax

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many individuals paid capital gains tax on the sale of shares, for the year 1985-86; and what was the total yield on capital gains tax for 1985-86 from such sales of shares;

(2) how many individuals paid £750 or more capital gains tax on the sale of shares for 1985-86; and what was the total yield in capital gains tax from such individuals.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Television Sets

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many television sets there are at his official residence; and who is responsible for paying for the licence fee.

**Mr. Brooke:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### NHS (Staff)

**Mr. Mates** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many employees work for each regional health authority in England, excluding medical and dental staff working at district level; what is the total cost of these employees by each region; and how many districts there are in each region.

**Mr. Newton:** I am sorry that I cannot provide the information precisely as my hon. Friend wishes. In particular, it is not possible separately to identify medical and dental staff working at district level; all medical and dental staff have, therefore been excluded. Such information as is available centrally is shown in the table.

*National Health Service Non-medical staff at Regional Health Authority headquarters and headquarter units by region at 30 September 1985 and number of districts per region at this date.*

| *Region* | *Number of districts in region* | *National Health Service non-medical staff in post in Regional Health Authority headquarters and headquarter units at 30 September 1986[1][2] whole-time equivalents* | *Total cost of National Health Service non-medical staff 1985-86 £[3]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northern Regional Health Authority | 16 | 990 | 8,120,814 |
| Yorkshire Regional Health Authority | 17 | 1,180 | 9,175,822 |
| Trent Regional Health Authority | 12 | 1,400 | 9,874,950 |
| East Anglian Regional Health Authority | 8 | 640 | 4,703,592 |
| North West Thames Regional Health Authority | 14 | 460 | 6,215,503 |
| North East Thames Regional Health Authority | 16 | 690 | 8,451,735 |
| South East Thames Regional Health Authority | 15 | 740 | 6,722,578 |
| South West Thames Regional Health Authority | 13 | 780 | 9,978,642 |
| Wessex Regional Health Authority | 10 | 500 | 4,051,159 |
| Oxford Regional Health Authority | 8 | 900 | 7,442,827 |
| South Western Regional Health Authority | 11 | 850 | 6,899,234 |
| West Midlands Regional Health Authority | 22 | 1,880 | 16,233,187 |
| Mersey Regional Health Authority | 10 | 990 | 6,917,725 |
| North Western Regional Health Authority | 19 | 1,520 | 11,845,125 |
| ENGLAND TOTAL | 191 | 13,520 | 116,632,893 |

Notes:

[1] Figures are independently rounded to the nearest ten (10) whole time equivalents.

[2] Includes General Managers.
Excludes Ambulance staff. These figures are derived from DHSS Annual census of non-medical manpower.
[3] These figures are derived from annual accounts of Regional Health Authority's in England. Excludes expenditure on ambulance staff.

### Pharmaceuticals (Code of Practice)

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on how many occasions since 1979, the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry has informed his Department that it has been investigating an alleged breach of its code of practice; on how many occasions there was a ruling that there had been a breach; and what action was taken by the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry on each occasion.

**Mr. Newton:** Available information is for the period from 1984 when the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) began to communicate the findings of its code of practice committee to the Department of Health and Social Security, the British Medical Association, the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, the British Medical Journal, and the Pharmaceutical Journal. Our records are of 10 such communications during this period and of ABPI inquiries into 106 allegations, 48 of which were proven. ABPI's normal action is to require an undertaking that the breach will cease and not recur. In the case of one breach, it was decided also to suspend the company's membership of ABPI and to conduct a further review of its promotional activity.

### Drug Companies (Monitoring)

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will request the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry to inform him of the methods it uses to monitor the relationship between general practitioners and drug companies, and the marketing methods of companies.

**Mr. Newton:** No. The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry provides for complaints of breach of its code of practice to be received from any person. These are investigated by a committee whose chairman is an independent lawyer and the outcome is made available for publication.

### Heating Additions

**Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the total cost of heating additions in 1978-79 and in the latest year for which figures are available in actual and real terms, together with the numbers of persons who received such additions in each year.

**Mr. Major:** Information about expenditure on supplementary benefit heating additions is as follows:

| *Year* | *Numbers qualifying (000s)* | *Expenditure £ (millions)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 1,546 | 90 |
| 1984-85 | 2,829 | [1]400 |

[1] Estimated.
*Source:* Annual statistical inquiry for 1978-79 and 1984-85.

It is estimated that expenditure in 1984-85—the latest year for which information is available — is approximately £140 million more in real terms than in 1978-79.

### Severe Weather Payments

**Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals the Government now have to amend the £500 saving limitation in connection with cold weather payments.

**Mr. Major:** I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Brighton, Kemptown (Mr. Bowden) on 25 November 1986 at column *191*.

**Mrs. Beckett** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims for cold weather payments have been received by each local office of his Department in respect of the week commencing 12 January.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many applications have been received for the £5 severe weather payment for the week 12 to 18 January; how many had been paid by 20 January; and what is each figure as a percentage of the estimated number of people eligible.

**Mr. Major:** Information on the number of applications for exceptionally cold weather payments received in respect of week commencing 12 January and the number of payments made by 20 January is not yet available. It will be provided in due course.

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why Tottenham Department of Health and Social security office has refused to accept a bulk claim for severe weather payments for the week 12 to 18 January inclusive from the Broadwater Farm neighbourhood office on behalf of pensioners over 65 years and families with children under the age of two years on supplementary benefit living within the London borough of Haringey; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make it his policy that pensioners not normally in receipt of supplementary pensions should have their heating requirement assessed as £5 per week greater during exceptionally severe weather; and that if this additional cost puts them over the supplementary pension threshold they should receive the severe weather payment.

**Mr. Major:** I shall let the hon. Members have replies as soon as possible.

### Benefits

**Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate for the most recent possible date *(a)* the cost of extending long-term supplementary benefit to the long-term unemployed and *(b)* how many claimants would benefit.

**Mr. Major:** *(a)* £540 million; *(b)* 1·2 million claimants.

### Health Expenditure

**Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proportion of *(a)* United Kingdom and *(b)* English and Welsh gross domestic product was spent on the Health Service in (i) 1966 and (ii) 1983.

**Mr. Newton:** It is customary to express spending on particular services as a proportion of gross domestic product, measured at market prices. These data are available only on a United Kingdom basis. National Health Service gross spending in 1983 was 5·5 per cent. of GDP; the comparable figure for 1966 was 3·7 per cent.

### AIDS

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will include in his campaign against the spread of AIDS promotion of the diaphragm, together with the use of a spermicide containing nonoxinol-9; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** The Government already stress the value of condoms in reducing the risk of transmitting HIV infection. As yet, there is no clinical evidence that other barrier methods are effective, with or without these spermicides. However, this is being kept under review.

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what additional resources Her Majesty's Government intend to provide for counselling and treating AIDS patients, for the extra nursing and medical staff, including research staff needed, for the general education of the public about AIDS, and for the provision of clinics and hospices needed for patient care; and what resources will be provided for those needs over five and 10 years respectively.

**Mr. Newton:** The Government recognise the importance and necessity of allocating resources appropriately to meet the needs of patients and the public with regard to AIDS. My right hon. Friend has set out in his replies to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 1 December 1986 at columns *525-526* and to my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) on 18 December at column *703* the level of additional resources already allocated or planned in England for publicity and research, for extra work in the blood transfusion and public health laboratory services, for special counselling for haemophiliacs, for services to drug addicts, for support by voluntary services and for health authorities, who will decide upon the staffing requirement and service provision for patients that is most appropriate to local needs. Similar measures are being taken or are under consideration in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Government will continue to keep the future need for resources under close review in the light of increasing knowledge, both in the United Kingdom and abroad, of how best to meet the problem of AIDS.

### Departmental Computer Network

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) in relation to the planned computer network proposed by Electronic Data Systems, what kind of data he proposes to obtain from or transfer to the Inland Revenue; what is the anticipated number of such transfers; and for what purpose those transfers will take place;

(2) in relation to the planned computer network proposed by Electronic Data Systems, what kind of data he proposes to obtain from or transfer to Her Majesty's Customs and Excise; and for what purpose those transfers will take place;

(3) in relation to the planned computer network proposed by Electronic Data Systems, what kind of data he proposes to obtain from or transfer to the Home Office; what is the anticipated number of such transfers; and for what purpose those transfers will take place.

**Mr. Lyell:** Electronic Data Systems is among five consortia which have expressed an interest in the proposal for the possible establishment of a shared Government data network. Each consortium will shortly have an opportunity to submit formal proposals.

If such a network is established there are no plans to use it for exchange of information between this Department and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise or the Home Office.

It is expected that this Department will, in due course, wish to use the facility (with appropriate safeguards to protect confidentiality) to transfer information relating to income tax deductions and taxable national insurance benefits between it and the Board of Inland Revenue. This information, currently exchanged on magnetic tape, helps the board to calculate the correct income tax liability.

The number of such transfers is primarily determined by the number of individuals who are in employment or who receive taxable national insurance benefits.

### Board and Lodging Payments

**Mr. Park** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many single persons under and over 26 years and how many married couples *(a)* with children and *(b)* without children respectively, in Coventry, are in receipt of board and lodging payments.

**Mr. Lyell:** I regret that the information requested is not collected by individual local offices and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Weetch** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how many single persons under and over 26 years and how many married couples *(a)* with children and *(b)* without children, in Ipswich, are in receipt of board and lodging payments;

(2) how many single persons under and over 26 years and how many married couples *(a)* with children and *(b)* without children, in Colchester, are in receipt of board and lodging payments;

(3) how much his Department is paying to persons living in Colchester for board and lodging.

**Mr. Lyell:** I regret that the information requested is not collected by individual local offices and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### NHS (Thames Regions)

**Mr. Galley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many *(a)* in-patients and *(b)* out-patients received National Health Service treatment in the four Thames health authority regions in 1978 and in the latest year for which figures are available.

**Mrs. Currie:** The information requested is given in the table.

*National Health Service hospitals*

| *Regional Health Authority*[1] | *1978 thousands* | *1985 thousands* |
|---|---|---|
| *In-patient cases treated* | | |
| North West Thames | 399·5 | 418·8 |
| North East Thames | 458·1 | 541·1 |
| South East Thames | 436·3 | 501·6 |
| South West Thames | 314·3 | 344·4 |
| ALL THAMES RHAs | 1,608·2 | 1,805·9 |
| *Total out-patient attendances* | | |
| North West Thames | 2,803·3 | 2,734·8 |
| North East Thames | 3,452·2 | 3,725·6 |
| South East Thames | 3,156·7 | 3,307·4 |
| South West Thames | 2,042·0 | 2,084·3 |
| ALL THAMES RHAs | 11,454·2 | 11,852·1 |

[1] Due to National Health Service restructuring and resultant boundary changes in 1982 the figures are not strictly comparable. Details are as follows:

1. Hammersmith and Acton Hospital formerly in North West Thames region became Hammersmith SHA (now Hammersmith and Queen Charlottes).
2. Middlesex Hospital; Athlone House, London N6, Hospital for Women, London W1; Marlborough Day Hospital and St. Luke's (Woodside) Hospital, North West Thames region, now North East Thames region.
3. Ashford Hospital, Middlesex, South West Thames region, now North West Thames region.
4. Royal National ENT, Shaftesbury, St. Peters, St. Pauls, St. Philips and Royal National Orthopaedic Hospitals formerly Board of Governors administered, now North East Thames region.
5. St. Johns Hospital for Diseases of the Skin formerly Board of Governors administered, now South East Thames region.

## Drugs and Medicines

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to increase the conspicuousness of warning labels on those drugs which, when taken in combination with alcohol, increase the risks of driving a motor vehicle.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if Generics (UK) Limited, has a manufacturing licence to produce medicinal products within the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Newton:** Generics (UK) Limited has a licence under the Medicines Act 1968 and 1971 to manufacture and assemble within the United Kingdom products of the description or general classification specified in the licence.

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department has inspected all the overseas manufacturing sites of products supplied to the National Health Service by Generics (UK) Limited.

**Mr. Newton:** The principal overseas manufacturing sites for products for which Generics (UK) Limited holds United Kingdom product licences have all been inspected as part of the Department's regular inspection programme. One further site remains to be visited and this is scheduled for early next month.

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether his Department has received any information from the Australian Department of Health in respect of a generic medicine, glibenclamide, supplied by Alphapharm (PTY) Limited; and whether, in view of Alphapharm's links with Generics (UK) Limited, he is satisfied that no supplies of this particular preparation have reached the United Kingdom market;

(2) if his Department has received any information from the Australian Department of Health with regard to some 20 generic medicines tested in a South African quality control laboratory, which are being investigated by the Australian regulatory authorities; and whether he is satisfied that bioavailability data generated in the same South African quality control laboratory has not been used to support product licence applications to the United Kingdom licensing authority on behalf of Generics (UK) Limited or any other importers.

**Mr. Newton:** We are aware of the allegations made in Australia and are in touch with the authorities there. We have no evidence of any hazard affecting patients in the United Kingdom but we are keeping the matter under close review and will take appropriate action should it be needed to safeguard the health of patients. On the questions about particular data, all information provided to the licensing authority in support of applications made under the Medicines Act 1968 is treated as confidential under that Act.

## Childhood Leukaemia

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the information his Department holds on the incidence of childhood leukaemia in different areas of England.

**Mrs. Currie:** The numbers of registrations of newly diagnosed cases of all forms of leukaemia by age groups under age 20 years for regional health authority of usual residence for 1983, the latest available year, are shown in the table. These data are held in postcoded form, so that it is possible to produce analyses for a number of different groupings by geographical location.

*Number of registrations of newly diagnosed cases of all forms of leukaemia (ICD(9)[1] 204-208) by age group under age 20 years and Regional Health Authority of usual residence, England 1983*

| | | *Age group* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area of usual residence* | | *Under 1* | *1-4* | *5-9* | *10-14* | *15-19* |
| Northern Regional Health Authority | Males | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| | Females | — | 6 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Yorkshire Regional Health Authority | Males | — | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | Females | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |

| | | *Age group* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area of usual residence* | | *Under 1* | *1-4* | *5-9* | *10-14* | *15-19* |
| Trent Regional Health Authority | Males | 1 | 11 | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| | Females | — | 8 | — | 3 | 3 |
| East Anglian Regional Health Authority | Males | — | 4 | — | 2 | 1 |
| | Females | 1 | 4 | 5 | 1 | — |
| North West Thames Regional Health Authority | Males | 2 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 3 |
| | Females | — | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| North East Thames Regional Health Authority | Males | 1 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| | Females | 2 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 1 |
| South East Thames Regional Health Authority | Males | 1 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| | Females | — | 6 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| South West Thames Regional Health Authority | Males | — | 1 | 4 | 2 | 9 |
| | Females | — | 8 | 1 | 1 | — |
| Wessex Regional Health Authority | Males | — | 7 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| | Females | 1 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 5 |
| Oxford Regional Health Authority | Males | — | 11 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| | Females | — | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| South Western Regional Health Authority | Males | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| | Females | 1 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| West Midlands Regional Health Authority | Males | 1 | 16 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| | Females | — | 8 | 3 | 6 | 5 |
| Mersey Regional Health Authority | Males | — | 1 | 2 | 6 | — |
| | Females | — | 3 | 2 | — | 1 |
| North Western Regional Health Authority | Males | — | 14 | 9 | 2 | 3 |
| | Females | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

[1] International Classification of Diseases 9th revision.

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Lyell:** The Department obtains pre-printed letterheads and notepads through Her Majesty's Stationery Office which secures the most appropriate materials at the best possible price. Recycled paper does not meet this criterion for use in letterheads and notepads and is not, therefore, purchased for the Department.

### Unemployment and Health

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of research projects funded by his Department on the relationship between youth unemployment and health;

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of research projects funded by his Department on the relationship between unemployment and health.

**Mrs. Currie:** The Department is not currently supporting any research specifically on the relationship between unemployment and health in any age group but the following projects were completed in 1986:

(i) Study of the relationship between unemployment and health (Professor W. W. Holland, United Medical Schools of Guy's and St. Thomas' hospital).

(ii) 1971 census circumstances and changes 1971-81 according to economic position in 1981 census (Professor A. J. Fox, the City University, London). This project formed a small part of City university's analyses of the longitudinal study census sample, some of which have focused on the association between unemployment and mortality.

### Heart Disease

**Mrs. McCurley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, when planning his Department's forthcoming Look After Your Heart campaign, he will take account of the conclusions reached by the sugars task force of the United States Food and Drug Administration concerning the atherosclerosis and heart disease.

**Mrs. Currie:** Planning for the Look After Your Heart campaign is taking account of all relevant scientific evidence.

### Disabled People

**Mr. Alfred Morris** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what consultations he has now undertaken with representatives of voluntary organisations and of the local authority associations on the implementation of sections 5 and 6 of the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation Act) 1986; if he will bring sections 5(1) and 5(2) into force immediately so that disabled people leaving further education in 1991 may be identified at the age of 14 years and not risk losing their rights under the Act; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Major:** Officials from the Department met officers of the Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities on 19 December to discuss the implementation of the Act and, in particular, the possible resource implications of sections 5 and 6 (including sections 5(1) and 5(2).) I am hoping to meet the Associations myself at the earliest practicable date to continue these discussions. I have also agreed to meet representatives of the main voluntary organisations with an interest in the act at an appropriate stage to discuss its implementation. No decision can be taken on the timing of the implementation of sections 5 and 6, or any part of them, until the issue of the possible resource implications of these sections has been resolved.

**Mr. Alfred Morris** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to make an inquiry under section 36 of the National Assistance Act 1948 of any local authorities which publish a nil budget estimate for any service for which they have a duty to assess the needs of disabled people under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled persons Act 1970; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Major:** I shall let the right hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Organ Transplant

**Mr. Alfred Morris** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration his Department has given to the bid for Wythenshawe hospital to be recognised as a fourth heart transplant centre; what action he will be taking; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** The bid has been passed, with those from other health authorities, to the Supra Regional Services Advisory Group. A decision on the location of the fourth centre will be taken when the Group's advice to the Secretary of State has been received and considered.

### Hip Replacement Operations

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has conveniently available figures for the total number of hip replacement operations performed under the National Health Service in *(a)* 1979 and *(b)* 1984.

**Mrs. Currie:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my predecessor to my hon. Friend the Member for Eastleigh (Sir David Price) on 3 June 1986 at column *533*.

### Mrs. M. Godley

**Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he hopes to give a definitive answer with regard to the retirement and superannuation position of Mrs. M. Godley, formerly of 38 Mount Pleasant, Brixham, Devon, following letters from the hon. Member for South Hams to him on 14 August, on 28 August and on 15 December 1986.

**Mr. Lyell:** My noble Friend wrote to my hon. Friend on 21 January 1987.

### Hypothermia

**Mr. Mudd** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state, in respect of each of the years 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985 *(a)* how many men reached the age of 65 years, *(b)* how many women reached the age of 60 years, *(c)* how many pensioners were admitted to hospital with hypothermia-related illnesses and *(d)* how many pensioners died during each of the stated years with hypothermia or hypothermia-related illnesses recorded as the primary cause of death.

**Mrs. Currie:** It is not possible to give precise figures for the number of people reaching a certain age in any given year. However, annual population estimates give the number of people of any particular age at 30 June of the year in question. Table *(a)* shows the estimated number of men aged 65 years and women aged 60 years for the mid-years 1980-85 for England and Wales, and for England.

Table *(b)* gives the estimated number of hospital admissions of persons of pensionable age (men aged 65 years and over, and women aged 60 years and over) with a main or subsidiary diagnosis of hypothermia. The figures are estimated from the hospital in-patient inquiry, which is based upon a one in 10 sample of in-patient records from National Health Service non-psychiatric hospitals. Figures for 1980 and 1981 are for England and Wales, but for 1982 to 1984 are for hospitals in England only. Data for Wales from 1982 are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales. Statistics for 1985 are not yet available.

Table *(c)* shows the available data on the number of deaths to persons of pensionable age with any mention of hypothermia on the death certificate, irrespective of whether it did or did not appear as the underlying cause of death. The figures relate to deaths registered in England and Wales, and of these, the number usually resident in England.

*Table (a)*

| | *England* | *England and Wales* |
|---|---|---|
| *Estimated number of males aged 65 at each mid-year* | | |
| 1980 | 228,100 | 242,300 |
| 1981 | 213,200 | 226,500 |
| 1982 | 195,400 | 208,000 |
| 1983 | 172,200 | 183,700 |
| 1984 | 179,300 | 191,400 |
| 1985 | 266,900 | 283,100 |
| *Estimated number of females aged 60 at each mid-year* | | |
| 1980 | 327,200 | 348,300 |
| 1981 | 310,600 | 330,100 |
| 1982 | 292,700 | 311,200 |
| 1983 | 275,200 | 292,400 |
| 1984 | 269,100 | 286,300 |
| 1985 | 263,300 | 280,300 |

*Table (b)*

*Estimated number of hospital admissions with hypothermia; females aged 60 years and over and males aged 65 years and over. England and Wales 1980-1981, England 1982-84.*

| *Year* | *England* | *England and Wales* |
|---|---|---|
| 1980 | — | 2,170 |
| 1981 | — | 2,360 |
| 1982 | 2,660 | — |
| 1983 | 2,360 | — |
| 1984 | 2,010 | — |

*Source:* hospital in-patient inquiry — not applicable.

*Table (c)*

*Number of deaths registered with any mention of hypothermia on the death certificate to females aged 60 years and over and males aged 65 years and over: England, England and Wales 1980-1985.*

| *Year* | *Usual Residents of England* | *Registrations in England and Wales* |
|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 469 | 506 |
| 1981 | 535 | 586 |
| 1982 | 509 | 549 |

| *Year* | *Usual Residents of England* | *Registrations in England and Wales* |
|---|---|---|
| 1983 | 438 | 463 |
| 1984 | 445 | 477 |
| 1985 | 665 | 722 |

## Breast and Cervical Cancer

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will initiate a uniform national screen programme for the prevention of breast cancer for women over 50 years of age using oblique mammography in England; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether he has received the final report of the Forrest committee on breast cancer.

**Mr. Harry Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has yet received the final report of the Forrest committee on breast cancer.

**Mrs. Currie:** A report by Professor Sir Patrick Forrest's United Kingdom working group on breast cancer screening has been received and sent for printing. The Government are urgently considering their response and an announcement will be made as soon as possible.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on his Department's initiatives in promoting the early detection and prevention of *(a)* breast cancer and *(b)* cervical cancer and its future plans.

**Mrs. Currie:** Concerning breast cancer screening, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him and the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) today.

The Government have already taken a number of urgent steps to reduce deaths from cervical cancer by improving the effectiveness of health authorities' screening programmes. All health authorities have been required to give priority to making improvements, including implementing computerised call and recall systems and ensuring that laboratories avoid backlogs of cervical smears. Our detailed guidance to health authorities is currently under review, and a fuller announcement will be made as soon as possible.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many specialist staff are employed by each of the district health authorities in England in the detection of *(a)* breast and *(b)* cervical cancer.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many women died of *(a)* breast cancer and *(b)* cervical cancer in England in 1986; and what are the figures for each year since 1979.

**Mrs. Currie:** The available information is shown in the table. Figures for the whole of 1986 are expected by the middle of 1987.

*Number of deaths registered[1] with underlying cause as (a) malignant neoplasm of female breast and (b) malignant neoplasm of cervix uteri*
*Usual residents of England*
*1979 to June 1986*

| *Year* | *Malignant neoplasm of female breast ICD(9)[2] 174* | *Malignant neoplasm of cervix uteri ICD(9)[2] 180* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 11,367 | 1,944 |
| 1980 | 11,417 | 1,939 |
| 1981 | 11,741 | 1,877 |
| 1982 | 11,628 | 1,804 |
| 1983 | 11,879 | 1,815 |
| 1984 | 12,471 | 1,779 |
| 1985 | 12,710 | 1,814 |
| 1986[3] | 6,506 | 909 |

[1] Registered in England and Wales.
[2] International Classification of Diseases 9th revision.
[3] January to June.

## Child Deaths

**Mr. Franks** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many children died in hospitals outside the South Cumbria health authority area, where they had been transferred by the authority for treatment for each of the past five years; and what plans he has to enable the families of deceased children to recover the costs of returning the body for burial within the authority.

**Mrs. Currie:** Information on the numbers of children normally resident in South Cumbria who have died in hospitals outside the health authority's area is not available in precisely the form requested, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. My hon. Friend may wish to write for information to the chairman of South Cumbria health authority.

Health authorities already can pay for the transport of a body where the death occurs in a hospital some distance from home if the relatives wish the burial to be in their home area but are unable to meet the costs of transport. Each case is considered on its merits by the health authority involved, but general guidance is contained in HM(72)41, a copy of which is in the Library.

## Occupational Health

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys will publish its first analysis of the new death certificate which includes a coding for possible occupational causes of death.

**Mrs. Currie:** The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys expects to publish in 1988 annual volumes with data from the new death certificate and covering the response to the new question on whether death might have been due to or contributed to by the employment followed at some time by the deceased.

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is taking to ensure that the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys has adequate funding to carry out its work on occupational health, using its available statistics.

**Mrs. Currie:** The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys work on occupational health is funded from the

OPCS vote and is proceeding as normal. Future work programmes are, of course, reviewed in conjunction with decisions on public expenditure provision.

### Abortions

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many abortions have been performed under the Abortion Act 1967 in each of the last three years on pregnancies of *(a)* under 20 weeks, *(b)* 20 weeks, *(c)* 21 weeks, *(d)* 22 weeks, *(e)* 23 weeks and *(f)* 24 weeks or more; and how many of the abortions in each case were performed under (i) ground 1 and (ii) ground 5 of the Act.

**Mr. Newton:** The information is given in the table.

*Number of notifications of abortions carried out under the Abortion Act 1967 by period of gestation and statutory grounds 1 and 5*
*Residents and non-residents*
*England and Wales 1983 to 1985*

| *Year and gestation weeks* | *Total* | *Ground-1* | *Ground 5* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *1983* | | | |
| Total | 162,161 | 549 | 3 |
| Under 20 | 158,186 | 514 | 2 |
| 20 | 1,322 | 9 | — |
| 21 | 651 | 8 | — |
| 22 | 936 | 2 | — |
| 23 | 451 | 1 | — |
| 24 and over | 505 | 11 | 1 |
| Unknown | 110 | 4 | — |
| *1984* | | | |
| Total | 169,993 | 596 | 9 |
| Under 20 | 165,563 | 586 | 6 |
| 20 | 1,550 | 2 | 1 |
| 21 | 695 | 1 | — |
| 22 | 938 | 3 | — |
| 23 | 619 | — | — |
| 24 and over | 532 | 4 | 1 |
| Unknown | 96 | — | — |
| *1985* | | | |
| Total | 171,873 | 534 | 5 |
| Under 20 | 167,413 | 520 | 3 |
| 20 | 1,475 | 1 | 1 |
| 21 | 835 | 2 | — |
| 22 | 904 | 3 | 1 |
| 23 | 724 | 3 | — |
| 24 and over | 494 | 5 | — |
| Unknown | 28 | — | — |

Grounds as listed in schedule 2 of the Abortion Regulations 1968:
1 Risk of life to woman
5 In emergency—to save life of woman

The full definition of statutory grounds appears in the introduction to the OPCS annual publication "Abortion Statistics".

**Mr. Nicholas Winterton** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many abortions have been performed under the Abortion Act 1967 in pregnancies of 24 or more weeks gestation in each of the last three years for which figures are available; and what percentage of total abortions this figure represents in each of those years.

**Mr. Newton:** The information is given in the table.

*Number of notifications of abortions carried out under the Abortion Act 1967 at gestation 24 weeks and over; percentage of all abortions. Residents and non-residents*
*England and Wales 1983-85*

| *Year* | *Number at gestation 24 weeks and over* | *Percentage of all abortions* |
|---|---|---|
| 1983 | 505 | 0·3 |
| 1984 | 532 | 0·3 |
| 1985 | 494 | 0·3 |

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Lyell:** Over each of the years in question the Department has laid approximately 100 to 145 statutory instruments. A number of amendments have been required in relation to these. The circumstances relating to the years preceding 1979 were broadly similar. I regret that the information necessary to identify each of the occasions requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### NHS Regulations

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services under what circumstances a health authority may legitimately refuse treatment for a National Health Service patient on the basis that it does not have a reciprocal arrangement with the authority within whose boundaries the patient lives.

**Mr. Newton:** The decision on whether or not to accept a patient lies with the consultant to whom he is referred, not with the health authority. However, consultants may agree with health authorities, as part of the planning process, that they will normally take patients only from a limited area, particularly in specialties where it is important for the patient that hospital, community and social services should work closely together.

### Adjudication Officers

**Mrs. Beckett** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will place in the Library a copy of the Chief Adjudication Officer's guidance on the full extent normal rule.

**Mr. Lyell:** The Chief Adjudication Officer's guidance on the full extent normal rule is contained in the Insurance Officers' Guide (IOG) part 2, Unemployment Benefit, paragraphs 2189 to 2243. A copy of the Insurance Officers' Guide is already in the Library.

**Mrs. Beckett** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what changes he intends to make in the grades of officials appointed as adjudication officers, as a result of the provisions of the Social Security Act 1986.

**Mr. Lyell:** None. Under the present instrument of appointment for adjudication officers, officials of clerical officer or local officer grade II rank or above can be appointed to act as adjudication officers.

### Social Fund

**Mrs. Beckett** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on ministerial responsibility for the proposed social fund inspectors.

**Mr. Major:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Crewe District Health Authority

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, in the light of the correspondence between his Department and the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich, he has anything to add to the answers of 5 November 1986, *Official Report,* column *473,* on the funding of the Crewe district health authority.

**Mrs. Currie:** I assume the hon. Member is referring to my letter of 20 January 1987, which explained that the correct figures for the net revenue expenditure of Crewe health authority as a percentage of the net revenue expenditure of the Mersey region are:

| | *Per cent.* |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | 6·9 |
| 1983-84 | 7·0 |
| 1984-85 | 7·0 |
| 1985-86 | 7·0 |

I have nothing further to add.

### National Insurance Contributions

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what would be the cost of abolishing employers' national insurance contributions in all assisted regions.

**Mr. Major:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

### Vehicle Loans

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he is satisfied that all persons in receipt of vehicle loans in the West Cumberland health district as of 1 August 1986 are complying with Whitley conditions in relation to those loans.

**Mrs. Currie:** Yes.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how the facility to National Health Service staff of vehicle loans under the Whitley conditions is funded.

**Mrs. Currie:** Vehicle loans to National Health Service staff required to use a car on official business are provided from health authorities' normal financial allocations and are repayable, with interest, over a maximum of five years.

### Patient Care

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each district the expenditure on contractural arrangements for patient care in 1985-86.

**Mr. Newton** [*pursuant to his reply,* 24 November 1986 col. *130*]: Following are the figures recorded in the annual accounts of district health authorities for 1985-86. The table also includes the final audited figures for 1984-85, which supersede the provisional figures given in my predecessor's reply to the hon. Member on 25 November 1985 at columns *493-497.*

*PQ 221/1986-87*

*Expenditure on contractual arrangements for patient care*

| *District Health Authorities* | *1984-85* £ | *1985-86* £ |
|---|---|---|
| *Northern Region* | | |
| Hartlepool | — | — |
| North Tees | — | — |
| South Tees | 6,170 | 6,932 |
| East Cumbria | 269,200 | 279,450 |
| South Cumbria | 19,375 | 43,800 |
| West Cumbria | — | — |
| Darlington | 604,215 | 635,013 |
| Durham | 6,863 | 4,238 |
| North West Durham | — | — |
| South West Durham | — | — |
| Northumberland | 407,606 | 428,277 |
| Gateshead | 5,215 | — |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 92,000 | 95,069 |
| North Tyneside | — | — |
| South Tyneside | — | — |
| Sunderland | — | — |
| Total | 1,410,644 | 1,492,779 |
| *Yorkshire Region* | | |
| Hull | 5,410 | 4,593 |
| East Yorks | — | — |
| Grimsby | — | — |
| Scunthorpe | 69,276 | 151,794 |
| Northallerton | 1,308,575 | 1,359,892 |
| York | — | — |
| Scarborough | — | — |
| Harrogate | — | — |
| Bradford | 28,700 | 29,600 |
| Airedale | 35,000 | 36,112 |
| Calderdale | 44,655 | 56,556 |
| Huddersfield | 53,796 | 55,093 |
| Dewsbury | 19,911 | 22,711 |
| Leeds Western | 105,881 | 85,223 |
| Leeds Eastern | 31,092 | 32,846 |
| Wakefield | — | — |
| Pontefract | — | — |
| Total | 1,702,296 | 1,834,420 |
| *Trent Region* | | |
| North Derbyshire | — | — |
| South Derbyshire | — | — |
| Leicestershire | 38,085 | 76,363 |
| North Lincolnshire | — | — |
| South Lincolnshire | — | — |
| Bassetlaw | — | — |
| Central Nottinghamshire | 630 | 52,954 |
| Nottingham | — | 1,500 |
| Barnsley | 40,125 | 64,582 |
| Doncaster | — | 12,350 |
| Rotherham | 87,249 | 47,083 |
| Sheffield | 524,739 | 631,671 |
| Total | 690,828 | 886,503 |
| *East Anglian Region* | | |
| Cambridge | 1,566,059 | 1,730,046 |
| Peterborough | 31,679 | 24,076 |
| West Suffolk | 192,181 | 169,522 |
| East Suffolk | 105,120 | 118,757 |
| Norwich | 95,568 | 113,583 |
| Great Yarmouth | — | — |

| *District Health Authorities* | *1984-85* £ | *1985-86* £ |
|---|---|---|
| West Norfolk and Wisbech | — | — |
| Huntingdon | 32,850 | 25,697 |
| Total | 2,023,457 | 2,181,681 |
| *North West Thames Region* | | |
| North Bedfordshire | 16,000 | 16,800 |
| South Bedfordshire | 16,460 | 40,540 |
| North Hertfordshire | 96,623 | 108,120 |
| East Hertfordshire | 720,740 | 722,376 |
| North West Hertfordshire | 27,364 | 24,563 |
| South West Hertfordshire | 116,772 | 109,338 |
| Barnet | 58,134 | 37,655 |
| Harrow | — | 2,345 |
| Hillingdon | 1,701,571 | 1,714,610 |
| Hounslow and Spelthorne | 150,997 | 151,744 |
| Ealing | 6,803 | 10,392 |
| Brent | 86,088 | — |
| Paddington | 181,757 | 191,725 |
| Riverside | 350,188 | 272,386 |
| Total | 3,529,497 | 3,402,594 |
| *North East Thames Region* | | |
| Basildon and Thurrock | 7,689 | 7,544 |
| Mid Essex | 288,314 | 309,666 |
| North East Essex | 452,028 | 587,565 |
| West Essex | — | — |
| Southend | 41,683 | 52,598 |
| Barking, Havering and Brentwood | 582,856 | 672,720 |
| Hampstead | 243,615 | 95,292 |
| Bloomsbury | 502,524 | 559,481 |
| Islington | 48,485 | 111,762 |
| City and Hackney | 1,351,138 | 1,529,655 |
| Newham | 66,211 | 128,217 |
| Tower Hamlets | 57,157 | 144,436 |
| Enfield | 732,549 | 786,603 |
| Haringey | 352,068 | 376,801 |
| Redbridge | 76,114 | 133,525 |
| Waltham Forest | 127,447 | 134,595 |
| Total | 4,929,878 | 5,630,460 |
| *South East Thames Region* | | |
| Brighton | 313,595 | 314,161 |
| Eastbourne | 241,508 | 338,515 |
| Hastings | 19,031 | 50,302 |
| South East Kent | 67,987 | 55,122 |
| Canterbury & Thanet | 68,092 | 101,272 |
| Dartford & Gravesham | — | — |
| Maidstone | 11,794 | 11,799 |
| Medway | 34,573 | 49,025 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 109,664 | 168,563 |
| Bexley | 23,253 | 67,308 |
| Greenwich | 115,874 | 148,768 |
| Bromley | 433,801 | 499,315 |
| West Lambeth | 73,080 | 51,856 |
| Camberwell | 34,515 | 64,430 |
| Lewisham & North Southwark | 349,068 | 387,996 |
| Total | 1,895,835 | 2,308,432 |
| *South West Thames Region* | | |
| North West Surrey | 211,452 | 215,186 |
| West Surrey & North East Hampshire | 306,752 | 382,110 |
| South West Surrey | 1,155,584 | 1,012,182 |
| Mid Surrey | 188,580 | 190,972 |
| East Surrey | 159,620 | 137,968 |
| Chichester | 1,014,779 | 1,024,215 |
| Mid Downs | 410,865 | 490,275 |
| Worthing | 693,498 | 558,464 |
| Croydon | 113,501 | 127,360 |
| Kingston & Esher | 159,587 | 146,044 |
| Richmond, Twickenham & Roehampton | 714,211 | 704,751 |
| Wandsworth | 555,513 | 602,386 |
| Merton & Sutton | 337,265 | 371,957 |
| Total | 6,021,207 | 5,963,870 |
| *Wessex Region* | | |
| East Dorest | 450,744 | 570,529 |
| West Dorset | 11,373 | — |
| Portsmouth & South East Hampshire | 656,737 | 492,296 |
| Southampton & South West Hampshire | 104,584 | 79,981 |
| Winchester | 133,423 | 143,413 |
| Basingstoke & North Hampshire | 133,737 | 153,468 |
| Salisbury | 17,992 | 37,456 |
| Swindon | 6,051 | 3,237 |
| Bath | 401,655 | 394,674 |
| Isle of Wight | — | — |
| Total | 1,916,296 | 1,875,054 |
| *Oxford Region* | | |
| East Berkshire | 166,614 | 154,474 |
| West Berkshire | — | — |
| Aylesbury | 35,228 | 65,385 |
| Wycombe | 41,724 | 46,364 |
| Milton Keynes | 58,718 | 29,368 |
| Kettering | 4,887 | 16,213 |
| Northampton | 445,914 | 526,944 |
| Oxford | 252,866 | 249,807 |
| Total | 1,005,951 | 1,088,555 |
| *South Western Region* | | |
| Bristol and Weston | 88,012 | 82,578 |
| Frenchay | 61,691 | 67,801 |
| Southmead | 46,562 | 30,669 |
| Cornwall | 1,769,252 | 2,201,663 |
| Exeter | — | — |
| North Devon | 651 | 2,034 |
| Plymouth | 188,157 | 200,363 |
| Torbay | 157,061 | 220,426 |
| Cheltenham | 31,138 | 41,884 |
| Gloucester | 82,889 | 109,700 |
| Somerset | 4,784 | 4,200 |
| Total | 2,430,197 | 2,961,318 |
| *West Midlands Region* | | |
| Bromsgrove and Redditch | 1,424 | — |
| Hereford | — | — |
| Kidderminster | 16,259 | 22,878 |
| Worcester | 18,996 | 62,442 |
| Shropshire | 85,877 | 110,789 |
| Mid Staffordshire | 100,100 | 81,713 |
| North Staffordshire | 218,490 | 230,899 |
| South East Staffordshire | 96,467 | 114,827 |
| Rugby | 21,305 | 51,939 |
| North Warwickshire | 737,469 | 800,564 |
| South Warwickshire | 568,000 | 555,231 |
| Central Birmingham | 4,028 | 2,517 |
| East Birmingham | 83,899 | 25,000 |
| North Birmingham | 13,771 | 15,579 |
| South Birmingham | 25,000 | — |
| West Birmingham | — | — |
| Coventry | 112,800 | 119,878 |
| Dudley | 110,069 | 116,494 |
| Sandwell | 50,115 | 68,221 |
| Solihull | — | — |
| Walsall | 61,485 | 64,602 |

| *District Health Authorities* | *1984-85* £ | *1985-86* £ |
|---|---|---|
| Wolverhampton | 150,376 | 177,975 |
| Total | 2,275,930 | 2,621,548 |
| *Mersey Region* | | |
| Chester | — | — |
| Crewe | — | — |
| Halton | — | — |
| Macclesfield | 471 | 120 |
| Warrington | — | — |
| Liverpool | 1,511,903 | 1,735,153 |
| St. Helens and Knowsley | — | — |
| Southport and Formby | 646,699 | 520,274 |
| South Sefton | 1,200 | 31,938 |
| Wirral | — | — |
| Total | 2,160,273 | 2,287,485 |
| *North Western Region* | | |
| Lancaster | 367,307 | 312,849 |
| Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde | 236,325 | 588,584 |
| Preston | 894,054 | 1,042,094 |
| Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley | — | — |
| Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale | — | — |
| West Lancashire | — | — |
| Chorley and South Ribble | 739,648 | 815,491 |
| Bolton | — | — |
| Bury | — | — |
| North Manchester | 831,521 | 834,359 |
| Central Manchester | — | — |
| South Manchester | 690,402 | 722,529 |
| Oldham | — | — |
| Rochdale | — | — |
| Salford | 389,831 | 513,850 |
| Stockport | — | — |
| Tameside and Glossop | 94,702 | 97,100 |
| Trafford | 20,925 | — |
| Wigan | 102,000 | 79,000 |
| Total | 4,366,715 | 5,005,856 |

### Nurses

**Mr. McCrindle** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate how many qualified nurses leave the profession each year; how this compares with the number of nurses qualifying each year; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton** [*pursuant to his reply,* 11 December 1986, c. *295*]: I regret that information of this nature is not collected centrally. However, we are aware of some work undertaken by the Institute of Manpower Studies which suggests that about 10 per cent. of qualified nurses and midwives leave the National Health Service each year. This figure will include retirements, those leaving to undertake further post-basic training and other nursing employment. They are not therefore all lost to the profession. On that basis some 23,000 in wholetime equivalent terms left the NHS in England in the last year.

Information supplied by the English National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting shows that 27,000 learners completed training during the year ended 31 March 1986. This figure includes about 23,000 completing basic nurse training courses and 4,000 completing midwifery, health visitor and district nurse training. Newly qualified staff are not the only source of recruitment. A significant proportion are those returning after a break in service.

### Influenza Vaccine

**Mr. Pavitt** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the effect on the voluntary price regulation scheme of doctors who buy 'flu vaccine at a 20 per cent. discount which is not shown on the invoices to be reimbursed by his Department.

**Mr. Newton** [*pursuant to his reply,* 13 January 1987, c. *179*]: General medical practitioners who administer 'flu vaccine to patients on their lists are reimbursed for the cost of the vaccine at standard rates, not on the basis of invoiced charges for individual supplies. The Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme operates by controlling the aggregate costs and profits of pharmaceutical companies supplying medicines to the National Health Service. It does not seek to control the prices of individual products or the cost of particular transactions.

### Local Offices

**Mr. Frank Field** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the number of benefit offices which have closed for *(a)* the whole and *(b)* part of this past week due to the severe weather conditions.

**Mr. Lyell** [*pursuant to his reply,* 20 January 1987, c. *540*]: One local office reported that it was closed to the public for the whole of the week beginning Monday, 12 January, and 140 local offices have reported that they were closed to the public for part of the week due to severe weather conditions.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Private Members' Bills

**Mr. Hargreaves** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will publish in the *Official Report* a consolidated list of private Members' Bills which received extra parliamentary time from the Government, the dates such time was given, the sponsors of each Bill and what stages received such time; and whether the Bill received the Royal Assent for each session since 1956.

**Mr. Biffen:** The information requested is given in the table:

| *Session* | *Bill* | *Stages* | *Date* | *Sponsors* | *Royal Assent received* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1954-55 | Public Libraries (Scotland) | Report<br>Third Reading | 27 April 1955<br>27 April 1955 | Sir William Darling, Sir Ian Hutchison, Major McCallum, Mr. Rankin, Mr. Malcolm MacMillan, Sir David Robertson, Mr. Oswald | Yes |

| *Session* | *Bill* | *Stages* | *Date* | *Sponsors* | *Royal Assent received* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Service Vehicles (Travel Concessions) | Report<br>Third Reading | 26 April 1955<br>26 April 1955 | Mr. Short, Mr. David Jones, Mr. Popplewell, Mr. Blenkinsop, Mr. Wheeldon, Mr. Ernest Davies, Mr. Willey, Mr. Lee, Mr. Mitchison, Mr. Champion, Mr. Callaghan, Mr. Gibson | Yes |
| 1955-56 | Death Penalty (Abolition) | Second Reading<br>Committee<br><br>Report<br>Third Reading | 12 March 1956<br>25 April 1956<br>16 May 1956<br>28 June 1956<br>28 June 1956 | Mr. Sydney Silverman, Mr. Ede, Mr. Clement Davies, Mr. Bevan, Mr. Hyde, Mr. Paton, Mr. Daines, Dr. Stross, Mr. Wedgewood Benn, Mr. Paget, Sir Beverly Baxter, Mr. Wade | No |
| | Hotel Proprietors | Lords Amendments | 18 July 1956 | Mr. O'Neill, Sir Charles Taylor, Mr. Eden, Mr. Renton, Sir Peter Macdonald | Yes |
| | Marriage (Scotland) | Lords Amendments | 30 July 1956 | Mr. Bence, Mr. Grimond, Mr. John MacLeod, Mr. Malcolm Macmillan, Mrs. Mann, Mr. Timmons, Lady Tweedsmuir | Yes |
| | Sanitary Inspectors (Change of Designation) | Report<br>Third Reading | 18 July 1956<br>18 July 1956 | Sir Wavell Wakefield, Mr. Albu, Dr. Bennett, Mr. Beswick, Wing Commander Grant-Ferris, Mr. Ian Harvey, Mr. Philips Price, Dame Irene Ward, Mr. William Wells | Yes |
| 1956-57 | Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Special Provisions) | Lords Amendments | 26 July 1957 | Mr. Dudley Williams, Sir Harold Roper, Mr. du Cann, Mr. Robinson, Miss Vickers, Mr. Lucas, Sir Beverley Baxter, Viscount Hinchingbrooke, Mr. Beswick, Commander Maitland | Yes |
| 1957-58 | Divorce (Insanity and Desertion) | Lords Amendments | 18 July 1958 | Mr. Deedes, Mrs. White, Mr. John Rodgers, Mr. Kaberry, Mr. John Peyton, Mr. Reader Harris, Mr. Blenkinsop, Mr. Michael Stewart, Mr. Robinson | Yes |
| | Licensing of Bulls and Boars (Lords) | Second Reading | 18 July 1958 | Sir Archer Baldwin | No |
| | Merchant Shipping (Liability of Ship Owners and others) | Lords Amendments | 23 July 1958 | Mr. Forrest, Sir David Campbell, Mr. Armstrong, Mr. Chichester-Clark, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Currie, Mr. Godman Irvine, Mrs. McLaughlin, Captain Orr, Mr. Sumner, Mr. O'Neill | Yes |
| | Variation of Trusts | Lords Amendments | 18 July 1958 | Mr. Crowder, Sir Lionel Heald, Major Hicks-Beach, Mr. Gower, Mr. Hay, Mr. Elwyn Jones, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Black, Sir William Anstruther-Gray, Mr. Doughty, Sir Hugh Lucas-Tooth | Yes |
| 1958-59 | Fatal Accidents | Lords Amendments | 22 July 1959 | Mr. Robert Cooke, Sir Lionel Heald, Mr. Deedes, Mr. Holt, Mrs. Emmet, Mr. John Hobson, Mr. MacDermot, Mr. Bingham, Mr. Madden, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Body, Mr. Elwyn Jones | Yes |
| | Landlord and Tenant (Furniture and Fittings) | Lords Amendments | 22 July 1959 | Mr. Mawby, Mr. Page, Mr. Gurden, Mr. Maurice Macmillan, Mr. Farey-Jones, Mr. Freeth, Mr. Henry Price | Yes |
| | Legitimacy | Lords Amendments | 28 July 1959 | Mr. Parker, Sir Robert Cary, Mr. Issacs, Miss Vickers, Dr. Stross, Mr. Shepherd, Mr. de Freitas, Mr. Royle | Yes |
| | Obscene Publications | Lords Amendments | 22 July 1959 | Mr. Roy Jenkins, Viscount Lambton, Mr. Ede, Mr. Maurice Macmillan, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Hugh Fraser, Sir Leslie Plummer | Yes |
| 1959-60 | Adoption | Committee<br>Report<br>Third Reading | 1 July 1960<br>1 July 1960<br>1 July 1986. | Mr. Parker | Yes |
| | Clean Rivers (Estuaries and Tidal Waters) | Lords Amendments | 21 July 1960 | Mr. Ramsden, Mr. Ede, Sir Lionel Heald, Mr. Ronald Bell, Mr. Deedes, Mr. Green, Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Jeger, Mr. Mellish, Mr. Morrison, Dame Irene Ward, Mr. Willey | Yes |
| | Noise Abatement | Lords Amendments | 25 October 1960 | Mr. Speir, Mr. Ronald Bell, Mr. Ede, Mr. Eden, Vice-Admiral Hughes Hallett, Mr. Reader Harris, Dame Irene Ward, Mrs. White, Mr. Houghton, Mr. Hirst, Wing Commander Bullus, Mr. Cledwyn Hughes | Yes |
| | Offices | Lords Amendments | 8 July 1960 | Mr. Marsh, Mr. Redhead, Mr. Mulley, Dr. Summerskill, Mr. Wade, Mr. Creech Jones, Mrs. Castle, Mr. Victor Yates, Mr. Charles Pannell, Mr. Darling, Mr. Frederick Lee, Mr. Padley | Yes |

| *Session* | *Bill* | *Stages* | *Date* | *Sponsors* | *Royal Assent received* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) | Lords Amendments | 25 October 1960 | Mrs. Thatcher, Sir Lionel Heald, Sir Robert Grimston, Mr. Corfield, Mr. Bishop, Mr. Kirk, Wing Commander Grant-Ferris, Mr. Robson, Mr. Gurden, Sir Peter Agnew | Yes |
| | Road Traffic (Driving of Motor Cycles) | Lords Amendments | 25 October 1960 | Vice-Admiral Huges-Hallett, Mr. Gresham Cooke, Mr. Deedes, Mr. Arthur Lewis, Mr. Charles Pannell, Mr. Geoffrey Wilson, Mr. Russell, Mr. Frederick Harris, Mr. Prentice, Mr. Victor Yates, Mr. Norman Pannell | Yes |
| 1960-61 | Credit-Sale Agreements (Scotland) | Report<br>Third Reading | 4 July 1961<br>4 July 1961 | Sir James Henderson-Stewart, Sir James Duncan, Mr. John MacLeod, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. Stodart, Commander Donaldson | Yes |
| | Highways (Miscellaneous Provisions) | Lords Amendments | 24 July 1961 | Mr. Aitken, Mr. Bell, Mrs. Emmet, Mr. Hobson, Mr. Gooch, Dr. King, Mr. McLaren, Lt. Cmdr. Maydon, Mr. Kimball, Mr. Foster, Mr. Woodnut | Yes |
| | Police Federation | Lords Amendments | 24 July 1961 | Mr. Thomas Jones, Lord Balniel, Mr. Gallaghan, Mr. Dingle Foot, Lady Megan Lloyd George, Mr. Cledwyn Hughes, Mr. Idwal Jones, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Goronwy Roberts, Mr. George Thomas, Sir Lynn Ungoed-Thomas, Mr. Watkins | Yes |
| | Rivers (Prevention of Pollution) | Lords Amendments | 24 July 1961 | Mr. Temple, Colonel Beamish, Mr. Corfield, Mr. de Ferranti, Mr. Gurden, Sir Lionel Heald, Mr. Jack Jones, Sir Hugh Lucas-Tooth, Lt. Cmdr. Maydon, Mr. Goronwy Roberts, Mr. Short, Dame Irene Ward | Yes |
| 1961-62 | Local Government (Records) | Lords Amendments | 26 July 1962 | Mr. Ridley, Dr. Stross, Mr. Aitken, Sir Hamilton Kerr, Mr. Snow, Mr. Temple, Mr. Bell, Mr. Channon, Mr. Dugdale Mr. Fletcher, Sir Richard Nugent | Yes |
| | Lotteries and Gaming | Lords Amendments | 26 July 1962 | Mr. Bidgood, Sir Harmar Nicholls, Cmdr. Donaldson, Mr. Farey-Jones, Mr. Dennis Howel, Mr. Lagden, Mr. Lipton, Mr. McAdden, Mr. Norman Pannell, Mr. Albert Roberts, Sir Eric Errington, Mr. Eric Johnson | Yes |
| 1962-63 | Animal Boarding Establishment | Lords Amendments | 26 July 1963 | Mr. Frederick Bennett, Sir Roland Robinson, Wg. Cmdr. Bullus, Mr. Hayman, Mr. Russell, Mr. Skeffington, Mrs. Emmet, Mr. David Griffith, Lady Gammands, Mr. Beaney, Mr. William Clark, Mr. Hooson | Yes |
| | Dog Racing (Betting Days) | Lords Amendments | 26 July 1963 | Mr. Rees-Davies, Miss Bacon, Mr. Lagden, Mr. Mellish, Brigadier Clarke | Yes |
| | Limitation | Lords Amendments | 26 July 1963 | Mr. Buck, Sir Lionel Heald, Mr. Arthur Irvine, Mr. Finch, Mr. Charles Royle, Mr. Walder, Mr. van Straubenzee, Mr. Taverne, Mr. Hooson, Mr. Brewis | Yes |
| | Local Government (Financial Provisions) | Lords Amendments | 29 July 1963 | Mr. Speir, Wg Comdr Bullus, Sir Gerald Wills, Mr. Stephen Davies, Sir Herbert Butcher, Mr. Mellish Mr. Digby, Mr. Temple, Mr. Ainsley Mr. Slater, Mr. Probert | Yes |
| | Matrimonial Clauses | Lords Amendments | 26 July 1963 | Mr. Abse, Miss Vickers, Mr. Hooson, Mr. Weitzman, Mr. Llywelyn Williams, Mr. Morris, Mr. Foster, Mr. Parker, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Michael Foot, Mr. Taverne | Yes |
| | Performers (Protection) (Lords) | Third Reading | 26 July 1963 | Mr. Ronald Bell | Yes |
| | Wills | Lords Amendments | 29 July 1963 | Mr. Hutchison, Mr. John Henderson, Mr. Hendry, Mr. Oswald, Mr. Wolrige-Gordon, Mr. Woodburn, Mr. Brewis | Yes |
| 1963-64 | Betting Gaming and Lotteries | Lords Amendments | 24 July 1964 | Lord John Hope, Mr. Buck Sir Lionel Heald | Yes |

| *Session* | *Bill* | *Stages* | *Date* | *Sponsors* | *Royal Assent received* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Divorce (Scotland) (Lords) | Report | 21 July 1964 | Mr. Forbes Hendry | Yes |
| | | Third Reading | 21 July 1964 | | |
| | Episcopal Church (Scotland) | Second Reading | 18 February 1964 | Sir John Arbuthnot | Yes |
| | | Committee | 26 February 1964 | | |
| | | Third Reading | 26 February 1964 | | |
| | Hairdressers Registration | Lords Amendments | 27 July 1964 | Mr. Partridge, Mr. Barter, Lady Gammans, Mrs. Hill, Dame Patricia Hornsby-Smith, Sir Barnett Janner | Yes |
| | Local Government (Pecuniary Interests) | Lords Amendments | 24 July 1964 | Sir Hubert Ashton, Mr. Arbuthnot, Mr. Bourne-Arton, Mr. Lagden, Sir Richard Nugent, Sir Hendrie Oakshott, Mr. Pargiter, Mr. Parkin, Sir Kenneth Pickthorn, Mr. Temple, Mr. Skeffington | Yes |
| | New Forest (Lords) | Second Reading | 7 May 1964 | Colonel Sir Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre | Yes |
| | | Committee | 20 July 1964 | | |
| | | Third Reading | 20 July 1964 | | |
| | Scrap Metal Dealers | Lords Amendments | 20 July 1964 | Sir Donald Kaberry, Mr. Gresham Cooke, Mr. Tiley, Dame Edith Pitt, Mr. Wall, Mr. Biggs-Davison, Mr. Steward, Mr. John Howard, Mr. Frederick Bennett, Mr. Hollingworth, Mr. Farey-Jones, Mr. Proudfoot | Yes |
| | Riding Establishments | Lords Amendments | 20 July 1964 | Sir Jocelyn Lucas, Mr. Morrison, Sir John Gilmour, Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Kimball, Sir Walter Bromley-Davenport, Mr. Lubbock, Sir Thomas Moore, Mr. Leavey, Mr. Moyle, Mr. Hayman, Mr. Burden | Yes |
| | Trading Stamps | Lords Amendments | 20 July 1964 | Mr. Osborn, Sir Cyril Osborne, Sir Charles Taylor, Mr. Proudfoot, Mr. Longbottom, Mr. Buck, Mr. John Howard, Mr. Hirst, Mr. Stonehouse, Mr. Wedgwood Benn, Mr. Francis Noel-Baker, Mr. Holt | Yes |
| 1964-65 | Murder (Abolition of Death Penalty) | Second Reading | 21 December 1964 | Mr. Sydney Silverman, Mr. Berkeley, Mrs. Braddock, Mr. Chataway, Mr. Foot, Sir Geoffrey de Freitas, Mr. Hale, Mr. Newens, Mr. Paget, Mr. Shinwell, Mr. Thorpe, Mrs. Williams | Yes |
| | | Committee | 24 March 1965<br>31 March 1965<br>7 April 1965<br>14 April 1965<br>28 April 1965<br>5 May 1965<br>12 May 1965<br>19 May 1965<br>26 May 1965 | | |
| | | Report | 25 June 1965<br>13 July 1965 | | |
| | | Third Reading | 13 July 1965 | | |
| | | Lords Amendments | 28 October 1965 | | |
| | Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Lords) | Third Reading | 4 August 1965 | Colonel Sir Tufton Beamish | Yes |
| | Criminal Procedure (Attendance of Witnesses) | Lords Amendments | 4 August 1965 | Mr. McLaren | Yes |
| 1965-66 | Nil | | | | |
| 1966-67 | Live Hare Coursing (Abolition) | Second Reading | 1 May 1967 | Mr. Heffer, Mr. Pounder, Mr. William Price, Dr. Winstanley, Mr. Yates, Miss Lestor, Captain Kerby, Mr. Bessell, Mr. Ensor, Mr. Ellis, Mr. MacNamara | No |
| | National Health Service (Family Planning) | Third Reading | 8 May 1967 | Mr. Brooks, Mr. Abse, Sir Clive Bossom, Mr. Dunwoody, Mr. Fisher, Dame Joan Vickers, Dr. Winstanley | Yes |
| | Sexual Offences (No. 2) | Report | 23 June 1967<br>3 July 1967 | Mr. Abse, Mr. Grimond, Mr. Wood, Mr. Pannell, Mr. Strauss, Sir Peter Rawlinson, Mr. Foot, Mr. Hugh Fraser, Mr. Varley, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. St. John Stevas, Mr. Horner | Yes |
| | | Third Reading | 3 July 1967 | | |
| | Abortion | Report | 29 June 1967<br>13 July 1967 | Mr. David Steel, Dr. Winstanley, Dr. Kerr, Dame Joan Vickers, Mrs. Short, Mr. Digby, Mr. Eadie, | Yes |

| *Session* | *Bill* | *Stages* | *Date* | *Sponsors* | *Royal Assent received* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Third Reading<br>Lords Amendments | 13 July 1967<br>25 October 1967 | Viscount Lambton | |
| | Civic Amenities | Lords Amendments | 21 July 1967 | Mr. Sandys, Mr. Strauss, Mr. Grimond, Mr. Deedes, Mr. Blenkinsop | Yes |
| | Road Traffic (Amendment) | Lords Amendments | 21 July 1967 | Mr. Randall, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Symonds, Mr. Ronald Lewis, Mr. Dobson, Mr. Cordle, Mr. Edwin Wainwright, Mrs. Spriggs, Mr. Weitzman, Mr. Fisher | Yes |
| | Matrimonial Homes (Lords) | Report<br>Third Reading | 21 July 1967<br>31 July 1967 | Mr. Robert Edwards | Yes |
| | Road Traffic (Driving Instruction) | Lords Amendments | 26 July 1967 | Mr. Owen, Colonel Sir Harwood Harrison, Mr. Molloy, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Floud, Mr. Gresham Cooke, Mr. Ogden, Dame Joan Vickers, Mr. George Rogers | Yes |
| | Vessels Protection | Report<br>Third Reading | 26 July 1967<br>26 July 1967 | Mr. Gresham Cooke, Dr. Bennett, Sir John Langford-Holt, Sir Harwood Harrison, Mr. Edward Mallalieu, Mr. Paget, Mr. Grant-Ferris, Mr. Cronin, Mr. Parker, Dr. Owen, Mr. Costain, Mr. Jenkin | Yes |
| 1967-68 | Adoption | Lords Amendments | 25 July 1968 | Mr. Alldritt, Mrs Braddock, Mr. Crawshaw, Mr. Dunn, Mr. van Straubenzee, Mr. Ogden, Mr. Simon Manon, Mr. Oakes, Mr. Fortescue | Yes |
| | Caravan Sites | Lords Amendments | 25 July 1968 | Mr. Lubbock, Mr. Macdonald, Sir Lionel Heald, Mr. Deedes, Mr. Wellbeloved, Mr. Pardoe | Yes |
| | Clean Air | Lords Amendments | 15 October 1968 | Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Robert Edwards, Mr. Allaun, Mr. Rhodes, Mr. Dan Jones, Sir Gerald Nabarro, Mr. Lubbock, Mr. Deedes, Mr. Sandys | Yes |
| | Design Copyright | Report<br>Third Reading | 25 July 1968<br>25 July 1968 | Mrs. Knight, Mr. Weatherill, Mr. Humphrey Atkins, Mr. Ensor, Mr. Gurden, Mr. Eyre | Yes |
| | Domestic and Appellate Proceedings (Restriction of Publicity) | Lords Amendments | 15 October 1968 | Sir Lionel Heald, Sir David Renton, Mr. Goodhart, Mr. Buck, Mr. Rossi | Yes |
| | Friendly & Industrial & Provident Societies | Lords Amendments | 25 July 1968 | Mr. Paget | Yes |
| | Hearing Aid Council | Lords Amendments | 25 July 1968 | Mr. Pavitt, Mr. Turton, Dr. Winstanley Mr. William Williams, Dame Joan Vickers, Mr. Alistair Mackenzie, Dr. Dunwoody, Mr. Gardner | Yes |
| | Highlands & Islands Development (Scotland) | Lords Amendments | 25 July 1968 | Mr. Maclennan, Mr. Dewar, Mr. Gregor Mackenzie, Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Malcolm MacMillan | Yes |
| | Maintenance Orders | Lords Amendments | 21 June 1968 | Mr. Hogg, Mr. Pannell, Dame Joan Vickers, Mr. Lubbock, Mr. Abse, Mr. Gresham Cooke, Mr. Grant | Yes |
| | Theatres | Lords Amendments | 25 July 1968 | Mr. Strauss, Sir David Renton, Mr. St. John-Stevas, Mr. Hooson, Mr. William Wilson, Mr. Faulds, Mr. Foot, Mr. Hugh Jenkins | Yes |
| 1968-69 | Divorce Reform | Second Reading<br>Report<br>Third Reading<br>Lords Amendments | 16 December 1968<br>12 June 1969<br>12 June 1969<br>17 October 1969 | Mr. Alec Jones, Mr. Abse, Mr. Awdry, Dame Joan Vickers, Mrs. Jeger, Mr. Hooson, Mr. Ridley, Mr. Peter Jackson, Mr. Boyle, Mr. Gilmour, Mr. Lyons, Mr. William Wilson | Yes |
| | Employers' Liability (Defective Equipment) | Lords Amendments | 3 July 1969 | Mr. Hugh Brown, Mr. Cronin, Mr. Archer, Mr. David Watkins, Mr. Huckfield, Mr. Molloy, Mr. Lawson, Mr. James Hamilton | Yes |
| | Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) | Report<br>Third Reading<br>Lords Amendments | 11 July 1969<br>11 July 1969<br>17 October 1969 | Mr. David Watkins, Mr. Archer, Mr. Bishop, Mrs. Braddock, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Craddock, Mr. Ellis, Mr. James Hamilton, Mr. Kerr, Mr. Orme, Mr. Edwin Wainwright, Mr. Lyon | Yes |
| | Auctions (Bidding Agreements) | Lords Amendments | 17 October 1969 | Mr. Costain, Sir John Vaughan-Morgan, Mr. Chichester-Clark, Mr. Royle, | Yes |

| *Session* | *Bill* | *Stages* | *Date* | *Sponsors* | *Royal Assent received* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Mr. Strauss, Mr. Iremonger,<br>Colonel Sir Tufton Beamish | |
| 1969-70 | Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons | Lords Amendments | 27 May 1970 | Mr. Alfred Morris, Mr. Jack Ashley,<br>Dr. Shirley Summerskill, Mr. Neil Marten,<br>Dr. Winstanley, Mr. Will Griffiths,<br>Mr. John Astor, Mrs. Lena Jeger,<br>Mr. George Darling, Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones,<br>Sir Clive Bossom, Mr. Laurence Pavitt | Yes |
| | Indecent Advertisements (Amendment) (Lords) | Second Reading<br>Committee<br>Third Reading | 28 May 1970<br>28 May 1970<br>28 May 1970 | Sir Eric Errington | Yes |
| | Trees | Lords Amendments | 27 May 1970 | Mr. Sandys, Colonel Sir Tufton Beamish,<br>Mr. Arthur Blenkinsop, Mr. Deedes,<br>Mr. Michael Foot, Mr. David Gibson-Watt,<br>Miss Harvie Anderson, Mr. Douglas Houghton,<br>Mr. Carol Johnson, Mr. Angus Maude,<br>Sir G. R. Strauss, Mr. Jeremy Thorpe | Yes |
| 1970-71 | Nil | | | | |
| 1971-72 | National Health Service (Family Planning) Amendment | Lords Amendments | 23 October 1972 | Mr. Philip Whitehead, Mr. Richard Crossman,<br>Mr. Douglas Houghton, Dr. Tom Stuttaford,<br>Dr. David Owen, Dr. Shirley Summerskill,<br>Mr. John Hunt, Mr. Jack Dormand,<br>Sir George Sinclair, Mr. John Pardoe,<br>Mr. Laurie Pavitt | Yes |
| 1972-73 | Nil | | | | |
| 1973-74 | Nil | | | | |
| 1974 | Nil | | | | |
| 1974-75 | Nil | | | | |
| 1975-76 | Sexual Offences (Amendment) | Report<br>Third Reading | 15 October 1976<br>18 November 1976 | Mr. Robin Corbett, Mrs. Helene Hayman,<br>Mr. Jack Ashley, Miss Jo Richardson,<br>Mr. Philip Whitehead, Mr. Robert Kilroy-Silk,<br>Mr. A. J. Beith, Mrs. Ann Taylor,<br>Mr. Bruce Grocott, Sir George Young,<br>Mr. Brian Gould, Mr. Ken Weetch | Yes |
| 1976-77 | Housing (Homeless Persons) | Lords Amendments | 27 July 1977 | Mr. Stephen Ross, Mr. David Steel,<br>Mr. Peter Walker, Mr. Bruce Douglas-Mann,<br>Mr. Andrew Welsh, Mr. Dafydd Wigley,<br>Mr. David Knox, Mr. John Cartwright,<br>Mr. Nicholas Scott, Mrs. Millie Miller,<br>Mr. Fred Evans, Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody | Yes |
| | Unfair Contract Terms | Lords Amendments | 22 July 1977<br>28 July 1977 | Mr. Michael Ward, Mr. Arthur Bottomley,<br>Mr. John Cartwright, Mr. Robin Corbett,<br>Miss Janet Fookes, Mr. Arthur Latham,<br>Mr. Richard Luce, Mrs. Millie Miller,<br>Mr. Stephen Ross, Mr. Ken Weetch,<br>Mr. Alan Lee Williams | Yes |
| 1977-78 | Nil | | | | |
| 1978-79 | Nil | | | | |
| 1979-80 | Nil | | | | |
| 1980-81 | Nil | | | | |
| 1981-82 | Nil | | | | |
| 1982-83 | Road Traffic (Driving Licences) | Committee<br>Third Reading | 11 May 1983<br>11 May 1983 | Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson, Mr. Nick Budgen,<br>Mr. Tony Marlow, Mr. Matthew Parris,<br>Sir John Biggs-Davison, Mr. William Ross | Yes |
| | National Audit | Report<br>Third Reading | 11 May 1983<br>11 May 1983 | Mr. Norman St. John Stevas, Mr. Joel Barnett,<br>Mr. Edward du Cann, Mr. Richard Wainwright,<br>Mr. John Roper, Mr. Terence L. Higgins,<br>Sir John Biggs-Davison, Mrs. Renee Short,<br>Mr. Peter Tapsell, Mr. John Garrett,<br>Mr. Peter Hordern, Mr. Robert Maclennan | Yes |
| | Broadcasting of Parliament (Annual Review) | Committee<br>Third Reading | 11 May 1983<br>11 May 1983 | Dr. Edmund Marshall, Mr. Jack Dormand,<br>Mr. A. J. Beith, Mr. Stephen Hastings,<br>Mr. James Molyneaux, Mr. Tim Rathbone,<br>Mr. Norman St. John Stevas,<br>Mr. Philip Whitehead | No |

| *Session* | *Bill* | *Stages* | *Date* | *Sponsors* | *Royal Assent received* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1983-84 | Nil | | | | |
| 1984-85 | Nil | | | | |
| 1985-86 | Nil | | | | |
| 1986-87 (to date) | Nil | | | | |

*Note:* (1) References to Committee are to Committee of the whole House.
(2) The name given in respect of Bills from the House of Lords is that of the Member who took up the Bill in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Hargreaves** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will list those private Members' Bills which received the Royal Assent in each Session since 1960; and what percentage this represents of total private Members' Bills introduced.

**Mr. Biffen:** The information requested is as follows:

*Private Members' Bills*

| *Session* | *Number Introduced* | *Number Receiving Royal Assent* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1959-60 | 42 | 19 | 45 |
| 1960-61 | 55 | 20 | 36 |
| 1961-62 | 53 | 20 | 38 |
| 1962-63 | 50 | 18 | 36 |
| 1963-64 | 86 | 34 | 40 |
| 1964-65 | 80 | 17 | 21 |
| 1965-66 | 38 | 0 | — |
| 1966-67 | 107 | 24 | 22 |
| 1967-68 | 77 | 13 | 17 |
| 1968-69 | 94 | 12 | 13 |
| 1969-70 | 81 | 15 | 19 |
| 1970-71 | 67 | 12 | 18 |
| 1971-72 | 82 | 17 | 21 |
| 1972-73 | 85 | 15 | 18 |
| 1973-74 | 42 | 0 | — |
| 1974 | 39 | 7 | 18 |
| 1974-75 | 86 | 10 | 12 |
| 1975-76 | 85 | 16 | 19 |
| 1976-77 | 89 | 11 | 12 |
| 1977-78 | 89 | 11 | 12 |
| 1978-79 | 58 | 3 | 5 |
| 1979-80 | 125 | 10 | 8 |
| 1980-81 | 80 | 14 | 18 |
| 1981-82 | 93 | 10 | 11 |
| 1982-83 | 81 | 10 | 12 |
| 1983-84 | 118 | 13 | 11 |
| 1984-85 | 98 | 21 | 21 |
| 1985-86 | 114 | 21 | 18 |

*Private Members' Bills Receiving the Royal Assent*

*1959-60*
Abandonment of Animals
Adoption
Bromley College and other charities
Chipping Sodbury Town Trust
Clean Rivers (Estuaries and Tidal Waters)
Corporate Bodies Contracts
First Offenders (Scotland)
Game Laws (Amendment)
House of Commons Members Fund
Marriage (Enabling)
Noise Abatement
Offices
Oil Burners (Standards)
Pawnbrokers
Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings)
Road Traffic (Amendment)
Road Traffic (Driving of Motor Cycles)
United Charities of Nathaniel Waterhouse and other charities (Halifax)
Wages Arrestment Limitation (Amendment) (Scotland)

*1960-61*
Barristers (Qualification for Office)
Carriage by Air
Companies (Floating Charges) (Scotland)
Consumer Protection
Court of Chancery of Lancaster (Amendment)
Credit-Sale Agreements (Scotland)
Highways (Miscellaneous Provisions)
Home Safety
Industrial and Provident Societies
Mock Auctions
Nurses (Amendment)
Oaths Act 1888 (Amendment)
Police Federation
Printer's Imprint
Private Street Works
Public Authorities (Allowances)
Restriction on Offensive Weapons Act 1959 (Amendment)
Rivers (Prevention of Pollution)
Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage
Small Estates (Representation)

*1961-62*
Agricultural and Forestry Associations
Air Guns and Shot Guns etc.
Animals (Cruel Poisons)
British Museum
Carriage by Air (Supplementary Provisions)
Coal Consumers' Councils (Northern Irish Interests)
Drainage Rates
House of Commons Members' Fund
Landlord and Tenant
Law Reform (Damages and Solatium) (Scotland)
Law Reform (Husband and Wife)
Local Authorities (Historic Buildings)
Local Government (Records)
Lotteries and Gaming
Marriage (Wales and Monmouthshire)
National Assistance Act 1948 (Amendment)
Penalties for Drunkeness
Police Federations
Recorded Delivery Service
Shops (Airports)

*1962-63*
Animal Boarding Establishments
Corn Rents
Deer
Dog Racing (Appointed Days) Changed to (Betting Days)
Drainage Rates
Forestry (Sale of Land) (Scotland)
Limitation
Local Authorities (Land)
Local Government (Financial Provisions)
Matrimonial Causes and Reconciliation
Nursing Homes
Oaths and Evidence (Overseas Authorities) and Countries
Oil in Navigable Waters
Performers' Protection
Public Lavatories (Turnstiles)
Sheriff Courts (Civil Jurisdiction and Procedure) (Scotland)
Stock Transfer
Wills

*1963-64*
Adoption
Animals (Restriction of Importation)
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amusements with Prizes)
British Nationality (No. 2)
Burgh Police (Amendment) (Scotland)
Criminal Procedure (Right of Reply)
Dangerous Drugs
Divorce (Scotland)
Elections (Welsh Forms)
Episcopal Church (Scotland)
Films
Fireworks
Hairdressers (Registration)
Law of Property (Joint Tenants)
Local Government (Development and Finance) (Scotland)
Local Government (Pecuniary Interest
Married Women's Property
Merchant Shipping
National Health Service (Hospital Boards)
New Forest
New Towns (No. 2)
Nurses
Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment)
Protection of Animals (Anaesthetics)
Protection of Birds Act 1954 (Amendment)
Riding Establishments
Road Traffic
Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1923 (Amendment)
Scrap Metal Dealers
Trade Union (Amalgamations, etc.)
Trading Stamps
Trustee Savings Banks
Universities and College Estates
Young Persons (Employment)

*1964-65*
Administration of Estates (Small Payments)
British Nationality
Carriage of Goods by Road
Criminal Justice
Criminal Procedure (Attendance of Witnesses)
Criminal Procedure (Scotland)
Highways (Amendment)
Justices of the Peace
Local Government (Scotland) Act 1947 (Amendment) (No. 2)
Lost Property (Scotland)
Merchant Shipping
Murder (Abolition of Death Penalty)
Public Health (Notification of Births)
Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries
Shops (Early Closing Days)
Solicitors
Solicitors (Scotland)

*1965-66*
None

*1966-67*
Abortion (No. 2) see Medical Termination of Pregnancy
Antarctic Treaty
Civic Amenities
Deer (Amendment) (Scotland)
Farm and Garden Chemicals
Industrial and Provident Societies
Land Registration
Licensing (Amendment)
Licensing (Certificates in Suspense) (Scotland)
Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod
Matrimonial Homes
Medical Termination of Pregnancy
Merchant Shipping
National Health Service (Family Planning)
National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) (Amendment)
Private Places of Entertainment (Licensing)
Protection of Birds
Refreshment Houses
Road Traffic (Amendment)
Road Traffic (Driving Instruction)
Sexual Offences (No. 2)
Slaughter of Poultry
Teachers of Nursing
Tokyo Convention
Vessels Protection

*1967-68*
Adoption
Caravan Sites
Clean Air
Design Copyright
Domestic and Appellate Proceedings (Restriction of Publicity)
Friendly and Industrial and Provident Societies
Hearing Aid Council
Highlands and Islands Development (Scotland)
Local Authorities' Mutual Investment Trust
Maintenance Orders
Sale of Venison (Scotland) (No. 2)
Theatres
Wills

*1968-69*
Architects Registration (Amendment)
Auctions (Bidding Agreements)
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment)
Divorce Reform
Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance)
Employers' Liability (Defective Equipment)
Licensing (Scotland)
National Mod (Scotland)
Ponies
Public Health (Recurring Nuisances)
Sharing of Church Buildings
Tattooing of Minors

*1969-70*
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons
Conservation of Seals
Education (School Milk)
Food and Drugs (Milk)
Game
Indecent Advertisements (Amendment)
Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions)
Local Government (Footpaths and Open Spaces) (Scotland)
Marriage (Registrar General's Licence)
New Forest
Parish Councils and Burial Authorities (Miscellaneous Authorities)
Proceedings against Estates
Riding Establishments
Road Traffic (Disqualification)
Trees

*1970-71*
Administration of Estates
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment)
Carriage of Goods by Sea
Consumer Protection
Dangerous Litter
Interest on Damages (Scotland)
Law Reform Miscellaneous Provisions
Motor Vehicles (Passenger Insurance)
Nullity of Marriage
Powers of Attorney
Unsolicited Goods and Services
Welsh National Opera Company

*1971-72*
Affiliation Proceedings (Amendment) (No. 2)
Carriage by Railway
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Scotland)
Civil Evidence
Defective Premises
Harbours, Piers and Ferries (Scotland)
Matrimonial Proceedings (Polygamous Marriages)
National Health Service (Family Planning) Amendment
National Insurance (Amendment)
Performers' Protection
Police

Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries
Social Work (Scotland)
Sunday Cinema
Sunday Theatre (No. 2)
Trade Descriptions
Trading Representations (Disabled Persons) (Amendment)

*1972-73*
Badgers
Breeding of Dogs
Dentists (Amendment)
Domicile and Matrimonial Proceedings
Employment Agencies
Employment of Children
Gaming (Amendment)
Hallmarking
Heavy Commercial Vehicle (Controls and Regulations)
Law Reform (Diligence) (Scotland)
London Cab
Protection of Wrecks
Rate Rebate
Sea Fisheries (Shellfish)
Succession (Scotland)

*1973-74*
None

*1974*
Carriage of Passengers by Road
Education (Mentally Handicapped Children) (Scotland)
Mines (Working Facilities and Support)
Parks Regulation (Amendment)
Rehabilitation of Offenders
Town and Country Amenities
Lord Chancellor (Tenure of Office and Discharge of Ecclesiastical Functions)

*1974-75*
Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants (previously Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Protection)
Evidence (Proceedings in Other Jurisdictions)
Farriers (Registration)
Guard Dogs
Hearing Aid Council (Extension)
International Road Haulage Permits
Litigants in Person (Costs and Expenses)
Mental Health (Amendment)
Mobile Homes
Unsolicited Goods and Services (Amendment)

*1975-76*
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Amendment) (No. 2)
Congenital Disabilities (Civil Liability)
Dangerous Wild Animals
Divorce (Scotland) (No. 2)
Domestic Violence and Matrimonial Proceedings
Explosives (Age of Purchase &c)
Food and Drugs (Control of Food Premises)
Industrial Common Ownership
Licensing (Amendment)
Motor-Cycle Crash Helmets (Religious Exemption)
Protection of Birds (Amendment)
Representation of the People (Armed Forces)
Sexual Offences (Amendment)
Solicitors (Scotland)
Stock Exchange (Completion of Bargains)
Theatres Trust

*1976-77*
Control of Food Premises (Scotland)
Farriers Registration (Amendment)
Housing (Homeless Persons)
Insurance Brokers (Registration)
Licensing (Amendment)
Minibus
Presumption of Death (Scotland)
Rentcharges
Roe Deer (Close Seasons)
Town and Country Planning (Amendment)
Unfair Contract Terms

*1977-78*
Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland)
Civil Liability (Contribution)
Consumer Safety
Education (Northern Ireland)
Import of Live Fish (Scotland)
Industrial and Provident Societies
Internationally Protected Persons
Local Government [formerly Local Government Act 1974 (Amendment)]
Protection of Children
Rating (Disabled Persons)
Theatres Trust (Scotland)

*1978-79*
Confirmation to Small Estates (Scotland)
Criminal Evidence
Films

*1979-80*
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment)
Concessionary Travel for Handicapped Persons (Scotland)
Coroners
Deer
Gaming (Amendment)
Import of Live Fish (England and Wales)
Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons)
Licensing (Amendment)
Married Women's Policies of Assurance (Scotland)
Representation of the People

*1980-81*
Countryside (Scotland)
Disabled Persons (No. 2)
Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment)
Food and Drugs (Amendment)
Forgery and Counterfeiting
Horserace Betting Levy
Indecent Displays (Control)
Industrial Diseases (Notification)
Licensing (Alcohol Education and Research)
Licensing (Amendment)
Local Government and Planning (Amendment)
Matrimonial Homes and Property
Transport Act 1962 (Amendment)
Zoo Licensing (No. 2)

*1981-82*
Children's Homes
Cinematograph (Amendment)
Copyright Act 1956 (Amendment)
Deer (Amendment) (Scotland)
Firearms
Food and Drugs (Amendment)
Forfeiture [formerly known as Relief from Forfeiture]
Gaming (Amendment)
Planning Inquiries (Attendance of Public)
Supply of Goods and Services

*1982-83*
British Nationality (Falkland Islands) [formerly British Nationality (Falkland Islands) Amendment]
Copyright (Amendment)
Coroners' Juries
Diseases of Fish
Level Crossings
Licensing (Occasional Permissions)
National Audit
Pet Animals Act 1951 (Amendment)
Road Traffic (Driving Licences)
Solvent Abuse (Scotland)

*1983-84*
Agriculture (Amendment)
Anatomy
Betting, Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment) (No. 2)
Child Abduction
Cycle Tracks
Education (Amendment) (Scotland)
Juries (Disqualification)
Law Reform (Husband and Wife) (Scotland)

Lotteries (Amendment)
Prescription and Limitation (Scotland)
Road Traffic (Driving Instruction)
Trade Marks (Amendment)
Video Recordings

*1984-85*
Agricultural Training Board
Betting Gaming and Lotteries (Amendment)
Charities
Charter Trustees
Controlled Drug (Penalties)
Copyright (Computer Software) (Amendment)
Dangerous Vessels
Gaming (Bingo)
Hill Farming
Hospitals Complaints Procedure
Intoxicating Substances (Supply)
Licensing (Amendment)
Local Government (Access to Information)
Motor-Cycle Crash Helmets (Restriction of Liability)
Prohibition of Female Circumcision
Rent (Amendment)
Road Traffic (Production of Documents)
Sexual Offences
Town and Country Planning (Amendment) (*changed from* Town and Country Planning (Protection of Trees and Woodlands) (Amendment))
Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment)
Wildlife and Countryside (Service of Notices)

*1985-86*
Children and Young Persons (Amendment)
Civil Protection in Peacetime
Consumer Safety (Amendment)
Corneal Tissue
Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation)
Drainage Rates (Disabled Persons)
Forestry
Gaming (Amendment)
Health Service Joint Consultative Committees (Access to Information) (*changed from* Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (Extension))
Highways (Amendment)
Horticultural Produce
Incest and Related Offences (Scotland)
Industrial Training
Law Reform (Parent and Child) (Scotland)
Marriage (Prohibited Degrees of Relationship)
Marriage (Wales)
Prevention of Oil Pollution
Protection of Children (Tobacco) (*changed from* Tobacco Products (Sales Restriction))
Protection of Military Remains
Road Traffic Regulation (Parking)
Safety at Sea

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Jopling:** My Department, which obtains its supplies of stationery through Her Majesty's Stationery Office, does not use letterhead stationery and notepads made from recycled paper for reasons of financial economy. Recycled paper is significantly more expensive than paper of comparable quality made from new material.

### Livestock Exports

**Mr. Hardy** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what checks are made on the movement of farm livestock exported for slaughter; if he is satisfied that the conditions laid down are not significantly breached; and what action he has taken in respect of any such breach during the last three years.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply today to his other question on this subject.

### Crabs

**Mr. Steen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he expects to seek to amend regulation EEC 3094/86 with regard to the landing of detached crab claws by foreign vessels on British soil.

**Mr. Gummer:** EC conservation regulation No. 3094/86, which revised Community fisheries conservation rules, came into operation only on 1 January this year. It was not possible to secure Community agreement to the inclusion of a measure dealing with the landing of detached crab claws in this regulation, but we shall be seeking to raise the matter again when the Community next considers a general revision to the regulation. I am afraid this is unlikely to be in the near future.

**Mr. Steen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will take steps to amend the Undersized Crabs Order 1986 and the Crab Claws Prohibition and Landing Order 1986 in order that foreign vessels removing claws from undersized crabs would be subject to the same penalties in this country as British vessel owners engaged in similar practices; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** Under Community law an individual member state may not apply its national fishery laws to nationals and vessels of other member states and this was made plain to the fishing industry during the consultation process on the preparation of these Orders.

**Mr. Steen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how many prosecutions there have been over the last 12 months of British registered vessels for landing claws of under-sized crabs caught within British territorial waters.

**Mr. Gummer:** There have been no prosecutions so far under the Crab Claws (Prohibition of Landing) Order 1986, which came into operation on 4 April 1986

### Mackerel Transhipment

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to the reply of 19 January, *Official Report*, columns *409-10*, regarding the decision to grant a limited trans-shipment operation to Eastern bloc vessels in Falmouth Bay, how many licences were granted and on what dates; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** Following close consultation with the Ministry of Defence and with Scottish industry, my Department has approved six eastern bloc vessels to receive trans-shipped fish at Falmouth; of these two made application for licence on 22 January and licences for these vessels were issued on 23 January.

### Woodland (Felling)

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will provide estimates of the area of woodland felled in each month in England for the past 36 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** This information is not available in the form requested.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Jopling:** The following is the information requested:

(1) Section 12 of the Agriculture Act 1986 validated the Apple and Pear Development Council Order 1980 and the Apple and Pear Development Council (Amendment) Order 1980 so as to remove any doubts about its application to Wales.

(2) The Importation of Milk (Amendment) Regulations 1985 amended the Importation of Milk Regulations 1983 so as to remove the condition that milk and cream had to be imported in a closed container in which it had to be supplied to the ultimate consumer or to a catering establishment. There was legal doubt about this condition.

(3) On 8 March the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments reported that it had doubts about the vires of the Medicines (Animal Feeding Stuffs) (Enforcement) Regulations 1983 (Session 1982-83 HL 107 HC 29-XIX). Opportunity was taken to clarify the enabling powers (section 117 of the Medicines Act 1968) in the Animal Health and Welfare Act 1984, section 15. Subsequently the 1983 Regulations were re-enacted in the Medicines (Animal Feeding Stuffs) (Enforcement) Regulations 1985.

It should be noted that although the clarifying primary legislation was enacted in 1984 the 1983 Regulations re-enacted almost verbatim the Medicines (Animal Feeding Stuffs) (Enforcement) Regulations 1976.

### Beef

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the present extent of overhang of beef intervention stocks; how this compares with the situation at this time in 1986; and what are the prospects for 1987.

**Mr. Gummer** [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 January 1987]: At end-December 1986 the total amount of beef in public intervention stores in the Community was about 447,000 tonnes compared with 653,000 tonnes at end 1985. Following the agreement on reform of the beef regime reached in December, intervention will from April this year play a less prominent role in market support.

### Livestock Exports

**Mr. Hardy** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if, following the recent transport of sheep to Spain in breach of his Department's conditions, he will prohibit the export of farm animals for slaughter.

**Mr. Donald Thompson** [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 January 1987]: Animals exported for slaughter must, immediately before the journey, be rested for at least 10 hours and offered food and water at any officially approved lairage. They may be exported only if they have been certified as fit to travel by one of my verterinary staff. Two-tier vehicles used for these exports are subject to approval by my Department, and the animals must be loaded in the presence of an official inspector. Licences are not issued for export of live food animals to Spain because that country has not yet implemented Community welfare safeguards.

As regards breaches of the conditions, I am aware that the RSPCA has recently successfully prosecuted a lairage manager for non-observance of the 10-hour rule. Detailed investigations following complaints have not revealed significant breaches of other requirements. Nevertheless, in the light of recent reports about exports of sheep the Government have imposed further conditions before export licences are issued. Exporters now have to supply written proof from the importer of the final destination and proposed feeding and watering arrangements on longer journeys, and undertake to provide confirmation from the importer after the journey of the time at which such feeding and watering took place and at which the animals arrived at their final destination.

A ban on the export of farm animals for slaughter would almost certainly contravene the treaty of Rome and the Government have no plans to introduce one.

## DEFENCE

### Nuclear Cargoes (Road Accidents)

**Mr. Alex Carlile** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to change the emergency procedures for accidents on roads involving vehicles with a nuclear cargo; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Stanley:** It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment on the methods used, or the procedures applied to the movement of nuclear weapons.

### Service Men (Accommodation)

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans for improving the management of the homes owned by Her Majesty's Government for the use of service men.

**Mr. Freeman:** The management of service housing is a complex matter and the Ministry of Defence is always looking for improvements in performance. The turnover of occupants is very high and requirements for houses are affected by changes in the roles and locations of establishments to meet the ever evolving needs of defence.

Management of the housing stock is undertaken by the single services, in line with the way that defence as a whole is managed; there are no proposals to change this position. However, policy issues are resolved centrally and progress and performance are monitored similarly and targets set accordingly.

A recent tri-service study on accommodation, which took advice from the private sector, made a number of useful recommendations which are being followed up, but no fundamental changes were proposed.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (i) how many homes for the use of service men Her Majesty's Government own in the United Kingdom, (ii) how many of these homes are currently vacant and (iii) what proportion of the homes for the use of service men they own have been vacant on 1 December in each of the last five years.

**Mr. Freeman:** The stock of houses owned by the Ministry of Defence for use by service men in the United Kingdom as at 30 November 1986 totalled 82,062, of which 14,994 were vacant.

The proportion of houses vacant as at the dates shown below (see note) during the previous five years, were:

| *Year* | *Number* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| 15 January 1982 | 13,600 | 15·6 |
| 15 January 1983 | 14,152 | 16·4 |
| 15 January 1984 | 14,316 | 16·7 |
| 15 January 1985 | 14,249 | 16·8 |
| 30 November 1985 | 14,012 | 16·7 |

Note: Up to July 1985, statistics were gathered based on the positions as at 15 January and 15 July: they are now collected using base dates 31 March, 31 July and 30 November.

Since 15 January 1982 the stock level has fallen by 5,188 and further disposals are programmed over the next three years. However, these reductions have not been reflected in the vacancy levels, largely because more and more service men have been choosing to become home owners.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether Her Majesty's Government have any plans to make available to local authorities, on a short-term basis, any of the homes which they own, for the use of service men, which are currently vacant.

**Mr. Freeman:** Where circumstances permit, it is Ministry of Defence policy to offer houses which are likely to be vacant for periods of at least six months to local authorities on the condition that the authority undertakes to return the properties with vacant possession at the end of the term of letting.

## DROPS

**Sir Ian Gilmour** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the right hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham will receive substantive answers to the 23 questions to which a holding answer was given on 16 December, *Official Report*, column *504-5*.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Substantive replies were provided on 15 January, at columns 308 to 317 inclusive.

## Stores and Clothing Research and Development Establishment

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he is conducting concerning possible contracting out of the Stores and Clothing Research and Development Establishment.

**Mr. Freeman:** A study is being carried out into the functions and activities of the Stores and Clothing Research and Development Establishment which includes an examination of the scope for contracting out. The Department would follow its normal consultation procedure on any proposals for contracting out resulting from the study.

## Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The Ministry of Defence buys all its United Kingdom paper and most of its overseas requirements through Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The paper purchased by MOD for letterheads contains up to 20 per cent. recycled material as specified in Her Majesty's Stationery Office contracts. The Ministry was offered, and sampled, British-made paper with 100 per cent. recycled waste content, but rejected it primarily because it was up to 125 per cent. dearer than the current product. The bulk of notepads used in the Ministry come from surplus computer paper or printing off-cuts which would otherwise be disposed of as waste-paper. The Ministry will continue to test new Her Majesty's Stationery Office products in the paper-card ranges.

## Sleeping Bags

**Mr. Mudd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state, in respect of each of the years 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985 *(a)* how many sleeping bags surplus to the needs of Her Majesty's armed services were disposed of by tender or public auction and *(b)* the sums realised from the disposal of these articles in each stated year.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The Department's records of quantities of surplus stores sold and details of receipts obtained are not in a form that would enable it to provide the information requested without incurring disproportionate expense.

## Service Children's Schools

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received about the impact of the fall in the value of the £ sterling on the living standards of *(a)* teachers and *(b)* other United Kingdom based civilian staff employed by the service children's schools in the Federal German Republic; and what reply he has given.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I have received a number of representations on behalf of MOD civil servants serving in Germany, the majority from teachers employed at service children's schools. It is clear from these representations that many of the complainants do not fully understand the terms of the formal foreign service allowance agreement with the Council of Civil Service Unions which forms a part of their conditions of service. The agreement provides for the payment of a supplement to pay to enable staff at the overseas station to maintain a standard of living at least equivalent to that enjoyed by civil servants in the United Kingdom and provides for reviews of the Allowance to compensate for local price and exchange rate variations at certain formally defined trigger points. I am satisfied that during the period in which the value of the pound has been declining reviews of the allowance have been carried out in accordance with the terms of the agreement. My replies have conveyed these points.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* other United Kingdom based civilian staff are currently employed by the service children's schools in the Federal German Republic; and how many vacancies remained unfilled at the most recent convenient date.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** At 6 January 1987 the numbers of teachers and United Kindom based civilian staff employed by the service children's schools in the Federal Republic of Germany, and the number of unfilled vacancies, was as follows:

| *Grade* | *In post* | *Vacancies* |
|---|---|---|
| United Kingdom based teacher | 1,024 | [1]Nil |
| Locally entered and directly employed teachers | 300 | Nil |
| Other than teachers | 48 | 2 |

[1] One PE teacher post filled by Army PT Instructor.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will extend the system of local overseas allowance now paid to service men in the Federal German Republic to cover United Kingdom based civilian staff employed by his Department.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** No. The basis for calculating and reviewing foreign service allowance is contained in a formal agreement reached between the official side and the trades union side of the Civil Service National Whitley Council. It is an agreement of longstanding and applies to all overseas stations where United Kingdom based civil servants are employed. The local overseas allowance paid to service men is an integral part of their overall conditions of service while serving overseas and reflects their totally different terms which have existed and developed over a very long period. It is not possible to isolate local overseas allowance as one particular aspect of those conditions and apply it to civil servants.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the extent of industrial action currently being taken by teachers employed by the service children's schools in the Federal Republic of Germany as a result of the fall in the local value of their salaries.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Some teachers employed in service children's schools in the Federal Republic of Germany are working to rule and withdrawing lunchtime supervision.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what compensation is payable to teachers and other staff of the service children's schools in the Federal German Republic to take account of reductions in pay caused by falls in the value of the £ sterling against the German mark.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** United Kingdom civil servants serving in Germany, including teachers, receive a supplement to salary known as foreign service allowance. They also receive London weighting. Under the terms of the FSA agreement with Civil Service trade unions special reviews take place when there is evidence that the local living costs of the overseas station which are affected by a combination of prices and exchange rates, have changed by 10 per cent. since the last review or by 7·5 per cent. if sustained for a period of four months. In addition, the FSA budget contains an inbuilt uplift to cushion against the effects of living cost increases which are insufficient to "trigger" a review. Over the past year two special reviews have been carried out in Germany, in February and November, and have resulted in FSA increases. The current level of FSA is £2,295 for a married accompanied official living in rent-free accommodation with free utilities and £865 for single personnel living in mess.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when the foreign service allowance paid to teachers and staff of the service children's schools in the Federal German Republic was last reviewed; and with what result.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The last review for Germany was undertaken in November 1986. This resulted in increases to foreign service allowance effective from 1 December 1986 to £545 per annum for married accompanied United Kingdom-based civilians living in rent-free official accommodation with free utilities and £325 per annum for single personnel living in mess.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his estimate in the fall in actual pay suffered by teachers and staff employed by service children's schools in the Federal German Republic as a result of the reduction in the value of the £ sterling against the German mark over the past 12 months.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Under the long-standing foreign service allowance agreement with the Council of Civil Service Unions only a proportion of the salary of a civil servant serving overseas is assessed, or needed, in terms of local currency. The remainder of salary is needed to meet sterling United Kingdom commitments, including tax and national insurance. This agreed local currency element for teachers working in service childre'ss schools in Germany, who are civil servants on period contract appointments, has been fully maintained under the terms of that agreement to take account of local price and exchange rate variations since January 1985, the date of implementation of the last full review of allowances in Germany.

## Honduras (US Exercises)

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what United Kingdom participation there will be in the United States exercises in Honduras Big Pine 87.

**Mr. Stanley:** There will be no participation by British armed forces in the United States-Honduran Exercise Big Pine 87.

## Caribbean (Naval Visits)

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what visits are planned by United Kingdom naval vessels to Caribbean countries in the next six months.

**Mr. Stanley:** Royal Navy vessels will be visiting a number of Caribbean countries during the next six months. Visits to Barbados, Antigua, Bermuda and Guadeloupe have been approved and others are in the process of being arranged. It is not our practice to provide specific details of the future movements of RN ships.

## Industrial Programme (Expenditure)

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what undertaking his Department has given to the Committee of Public Accounts as to the proposed level of expenditure on an industrial programme which necessitates information about such a project being provided to the Committee; how many programmes have been commenced, completed or are still in progress, whose minimum projected or actual cost amounted to less than £50 million, £50 to £100 million, £100 to £150 million, £150 to £200 million and £200 to £250 million, respectively.

**Mr. Younger:** In July 1982, following a request from the Committee of Public Accounts to be provided each year with summarised information on the progress and costs of major defence projects, my Department sent to the Committee a table listing 24 defence equipment projects with authorised expenditure in excess of £200 million, and showing cost information in respect of each, and also a separate table relating to nuclear projects. In November 1982 the then Chairman of the Committee wrote to ask, inter alia, for

"a supplementary annual list of projects where project definition costs have exceeded, say, £10M; or alternative proposals designed to give the Committee early warning of projects during project definition which are likely to exceed the £200 million limit".

In reply, my Department undertook to see what could be done in the 1983 statements to identify projects which might involve substantial expenditure before they had reached the point at which they entered the table. In 1986 the Committee agreed that the threshold for inclusion should be increased from £200 million to £250 million.

The information sought in the second part of the question could not be supplied without disproportionate cost.

### British Army Equipment Exhibition

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if, pursuant to the reply to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Hodge Hill (Mr. Davis), on 12 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *268*, relating to visits of Indonesian officials, it is now his policy to answer questions relating to visits of foreign delegations to the British Army equipment exhibition.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** It is not policy to release details on visits of foreign delegations to the British Army equipment exhibition.

### Royal Ordnance Factories

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the companies seeking to buy the royal ordnance factories; and what guarantees he has obtained on the pension rights of the royal ordnance factories' work force.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The companies are in alphabetical order): British Aerospace, Ferranti, GKN and Trafalgar House. The sale of the Government's 100 per cent. shareholding in royal ordnance plc will not affect the operation of the royal ordnance (Crown Service) Pesion Scheme, which the Government are satisfied is comparable to the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme and provides a secure basis for the payment of fully indexed linked pensions.

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what new arrangements Her Majesty's Government are making to protect the long-term interests of the work force of the royal ordnance factories in relation to pensions, sickness benefits, and involuntary redundancies.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The terms and conditions of service of former royal ordnance factories employees were protected by arrangements made at the time of incorporation which ensured that taken as a whole they transferred to Royal Ordnance plc without detriment. The sale of the Government's 100 per cent. shareholding in the company will not change the legal identity of the employer of the work force and no new arrangements are therefore needed.

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what formula has been used by his Department to calculate the value of the royal ordnance factory at Radway Green.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** In accordance with plans announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 24 July 1986, the Ministry of Defence is negotiating to sell royal ordnance plc as a whole. It follows that discrete valuations of individual parts of the business are not envisaged.

### Boeing AWACS

**Mr. Stephen Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what procedures will be laid down to ensure promised offsets to British subcontractors under the Boeing AWACS purchase are fully honoured.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The Boeing Aerospace Company will be contractually committed to meet in full the offset arrangements, whereby it spends £130 on work for British companies for every £100 we spend on the E-3A. Although there is no doubt that this commitment will be honoured, the build-up of Boeing's business with United Kingdom firms will be monitored in accordance with normal practice, which involves continuous liaison with the firm and regular reporting on progress.

### L/Cpl. S. J. Cockton

**Mr. Raison** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to receive the results of the inquiry into the death of L/Cpl. S. J. Cockton on 6 June 1982; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Stanley:** I shall answer shortly.

### Zircon Satellite

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the purposes and costs of the proposed communications satellite, project Zircon.

**Mr. Younger:** In accordance with the practice of successive Governments, I am not prepared to give details of intelligence matters.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Defence *(a)* when he first learned of the existence of the series of programmes on the Secret Society and *(b)* the programme on the Zircon satellite system.

**Mr. Younger:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister earlier today.

### Mr. Trafford Boughton

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if any attempt was made by his Department to solicit from Mr. Trafford Boughton a letter dissociating himself and his company from the British Broadcasting Corporation "Panorama" programme of 7 July 1986 on the awarding of the DROPS contract;

(2) if it was with ministerial authority that Major-General Stevan Stopford telephoned Mr. Trafford Boughton on 30 June 1986 requesting him to send a letter immediately to the Department dissociating himself and his company from the British Broadcasting Corporation "Panorama" programme of 7 July 1986 on the awarding of the DROPS contract;

(3) if it was with ministerial authority that officials of his Department *(a)* spoke on the telephone to Mr. Trafford Boughton in April and May 1986 and *(b)* spoke to him in person at the British Army equipment exhibition concerning a proposed television programme on the awarding of the DROPS contract;

(4) if his Department keeps any record of *(a)* telephone conversations and *(b)* informal discussions between officials and defence contractors or potential defence contractors.

(5) on what authority General Stopford was asked to ascertain directly from Mr. Trafford Boughton his attitude to the BBC "Panorama" programme on the DROPS contract;

(6) on what dates General Stopford sought to ascertain directly from Mr. Trafford Boughton his attitude to the DROPS contract;

(7) what was the source of his information that Mr. Trafford Boughton's conversation with General Stopford accorded exactly with the line volunteered on a separate occasion at the British Army equipment exhibition to the Chief of Defence Procurement and Brigadier Last;

(8) whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a report of the conversation between Mr. Trafford Boughton, the Chief of Defence Procurement and Brigadier Last at the British Army equipment exhibition;

(9) on what authority Brigadier Last and the Chief of Defence Procurement sought at the British Army equipment exhibition to ascertain Mr. Trafford Boughton's attitude to the "Panorama" programme on the DROPS contract.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton** [*pursuant to his replies*, 12 January 1987, c. *98*, and 23 January 1987]: As I informed the hon. Member on 13 January, at column *232*, the telephone conversation between Major-General Stopford and Mr. Boughton was prompted by the need to confirm the extent to which Boughton's was involved in the criticisms of the DROPS procurement in the proposed "Panorama" programme. Boughton's is an established and respected defence contractor of long standing and it was important, given the normal rules of commercial confidentiality underlying the Department's relationship with its contractors, that the Department should be quite sure of the company's position before deciding on what it might itself say publicly in response to the "Panorama" criticisms. There are no contemporary records of either the telephone conversation with Major-General Stopford or of the conversation with senior defence officials at the British Army equipment exhibition at which Mr. Boughton volunteered similar statements to those expressed in his letter. Ministers were not involved on either occasion. The conversation at BAEE was, however, initiated by Mr. Boughton himself and he did not subsequently refer to either event when invited by my noble Friend the Minister of State for Defence Procurement to detail his concerns over the DROPS procurement at their meeting on 20 November. No pressure was put on Mr. Boughton to write his letter of 30 June and Mr. Boughton has not made any such representation directly to the responsible Ministers or senior officials.

## "The Secret Society"

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Defence by what means he first obtained knowledge of the content of Duncan Campbell's film for BBC Scotland, "The Secret Society".

**Mr. Younger** [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 January 1987]: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in answering a question from the hon. Member for Workington (Mr. Campbell-Savours) earlier today.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Tuesday 27 January 1987*

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Telephone Calls

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Lord Privy Seal how many times during the last two years access has been given to persons wishing to inspect the log of telephone calls from the Palace of Westminster; and if he will specify in each case the date and the name of the person or organisation granted access.

**Mr. Biffen:** The facility enabling calls made from the Palace of Westminster telephone extensions to be logged has been available only since 9 September 1985 when the new telephone exchange was installed.

I assume that the hon. Member is referring to printouts from the logging equipment. Apart from the test printouts which were obtained during September 1985 when the equipment became operational, access has been granted on only two occasions. On 17 October 1986 and on 19 November 1986 the communications manager obtained printouts at the request of the Serjeant at Arms Department.

### Committees (Servicing Costs)

**Mr. Prescott** asked the Lord Privy Seal what has been the cost of servicing *(a)* Select and *(b)* Standing Committees of the House for each year since 1979.

**Mr. Biffen:** As was made clear by the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) in a reply to the right hon. Member for Barnsley, Central (Mr. Mason) on 23 January 1985 at column *458*, the cost of servicing Select Committees is not readily identifiable. Costs, other than salary costs, which are clearly attributable to Select Committees have been given in the Select Committee return since 1979.

The cost of servicing Standing Committees is also not readily identifiable.

## EMPLOYMENT

### "Building Businesses . . . Not Barriers"

**Mr. Prescott** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the progress which has been made on implementing the White Paper "Building Businesses . . . Not Barriers" (Cmnd. 9794); and what plans he has to achieve the objectives set out in the White Paper.

**Mr. Trippier:** We have made considerable progress in carrying out the proposals to reduce administrative burdens on businesses which were set out in the White Paper " Building Businesses . . . Not Barriers", which represent a balanced programme of action to remove unnecessary obstacles to enterprise and job creation while retaining essential protection.

The White Paper included proposals for a number of reviews of present regulations and consultation on new measures which are still in progress; other items await suitable legislative opportunities.

We have given particular emphasis to improving communications between Government and business through better access to information and improving the quality of publications. The mechanisms for evaluating regulatory proposals are working well. The enterprise and deregulation unit has so far received more than 150 preliminary compliance cost assessments from different Departments which show the implications of new regulatory proposals. The unit is also involved in a wide range of current issues on enterprise and employment. Progress has been made in the European Community with the setting up of a small and medium-sized enterprise task force and a system of assessing the impact of Commission proposals. By these means we hope to ensure both better regulation of business and better enforcement of regulations.

As indicated at paragraph 11.5 of the White Paper, the Government will report further on progress during 1987.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Parry** asked the Paymaster General how many jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector since 1979 *(a)* on Merseyside and *(b)* in Liverpool at the latest available date.

**Mr. Trippier:** The precise information requested is not available. The Department's statistics for counties and smaller areas monitor only net changes in employment between census dates.

No census was taken in 1979, but between June 1978 and September 1981, the latest date for which figures are available, there was a net loss of 45,600 employees employed in manufacturing industries in the county of Merseyside and of 19,900 in the local authority district of Liverpool. The September 1984 census estimates for counties and smaller areas are not yet available. Between censuses, employment statistics are based on small-scale sample inquiries which cannot produce reliable results for areas smaller than the standard economic regions.

**Mr. Dormand** asked the Paymaster General what was the percentage of people unemployed in the northern region at May 1979 and the latest available date, respectively.

**Mr. Trippier:** On 11 December 1986, seasonally adjusted unemployment in the northern region represented 15·9 per cent. of the working population. The corresponding figure for May 1979 was 6·9 per cent.

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about unemployment figures for the north-west.

**Mr. Trippier:** On 11 December 1986, the number of unemployed claimants in the north-west region was 436,784.

**Mr. Amess** asked the Paymaster General if he will state the number of those people registered as unemployed in the constituency of Basildon in January 1983, January 1984, January 1985, January 1986 and January 1987.

**Mr. Trippier:** Following is the available information. The table shows the numbers of unemployed claimants in the parliamentary constituency of Basildon in January of each year since 1984. Statistics of unemployment for parliamentary constituencies are derived from the ward-based system and are available only from June 1983. The January 1987 unemployment figures will be available on 12 February.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| January 1984 | 6,834 |
| January 1985 | 7,273 |
| January 1986 | 6,793 |

**Mr. Holt** asked the Paymaster General what are the unemployment figures, broken down by male, female and under 25, 25-50 years of age, and over 50 years of age, for each of the past four years in the parliamentary division of Langbaurgh.

**Mr. Trippier:** The following information is in the Library. The table gives the number of unemployed male and female claimants in the age groups requested for October of each year since 1983 in the Langbaurgh parliamentary constituency. The comparison is affected by the change in the compilation of unemployment statistics in March 1986. Statistics of unemployment for parliamentary constituencies are derived from the ward-based system and are available only from June 1983.

*Unemployment by age analysis—Langbaurgh Parliamentary Constituency*

| | *October 1983* | | *October 1984* | | *October 1985* | | *October 1986* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Males* | *Females* | *Males* | *Females* | *Males* | *Females* | *Males* | *Females* |
| Under 25 years | 2,040 | 1,259 | 2,014 | 1,324 | 1,906 | 1,178 | 1,764 | 1,045 |
| 25-49 years | 2,583 | 710 | 2,897 | 777 | 2,784 | 851 | 2,745 | 867 |
| Over 50 years | 1,416 | 200 | 1,260 | 243 | 1,182 | 237 | 1,102 | 271 |
| Total unemployed | 6,039 | 2,169 | 6,171 | 2,344 | 5,872 | 2,266 | 5,611 | 2,183 |

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General what were the unemployment totals for each parliamentary constituency on *(a)* 10 May 1979 and *(b)* 9 June 1983; and how many unemployed claimants aged (i) under 18 years and (ii) 18 to 25 years there were in each constituency at the most recent date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Trippier:** Following is the available information, which is also available from the Library. Statistics of unemployment for parliamentary constituencies are derived from the word-based system and are available only from June 1983. The tables show the number of unemployed claimants in each parliamentary constituency in Great Britain on 9 June 1983, and the numbers of unemployed claimants aged under 18 years and aged 18 to 24 years in each constituency at 9 October 1986.

*June 1983—All*

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Luton South | 6,334 |
| Mid Bedfordshire | 2,754 |
| North Bedfordshire | 4,903 |
| North Luton | 4,374 |
| South West Bedfordshire | 3,956 |
| East Berkshire | 2,987 |
| Newbury | 2,394 |
| Reading East | 3,585 |
| Reading West | 2,997 |
| Slough | 4,850 |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | 2,378 |
| Wokingham | 1,794 |
| Aylesbury | 2,867 |
| Beaconsfield | 1,627 |
| Buckingham | 2,454 |
| Chesham and Amersham | 1,569 |
| Milton Keynes | 6,424 |
| Wycombe | 2,807 |
| Bexhill and Battle | 1,705 |
| Brighton Kemptown | 4,450 |
| Brighton Pavilion | 4,152 |
| Eastbourne | 2,622 |
| Hastings and Rye | 4,006 |
| Hove | 3,717 |
| Lewes | 2,281 |
| Wealden | 1,633 |
| Basildon | 6,217 |
| Billericay | 3,754 |
| Braintree | 3,113 |
| Brentwood and Ongar | 2,230 |
| Castle Point | 3,105 |
| Chelmsford | 2,638 |
| Epping Forest | 2,588 |
| Harlow | 4,711 |
| Harwich | 3,679 |
| North Colchester | 3,774 |
| Rochford | 2,471 |
| Saffron Walden | 2,263 |
| South Colchester and Maldon | 3,881 |
| Southend East | 4,198 |
| Southend West | 3,253 |
| Thurrock | 6,002 |
| Aldershot | 2,890 |
| Basingstoke | 3,091 |
| East Hampshire | 2,328 |
| Eastleigh | 3,282 |
| Fareham | 2,859 |
| Gosport | 3,399 |
| Havant | 4,600 |
| Isle of Wight | 4,840 |
| New Forest | 2,256 |
| North West Hampshire | 2,135 |
| Portsmouth North | 4,055 |
| Portsmouth South | 5,877 |
| Romsey and Waterside | 2,875 |
| Southampton Itchen | 5,493 |
| Southampton Test | 4,969 |
| Winchester | 1,935 |
| Broxbourne | 2,395 |
| Hertford and Stortford | 1,952 |
| Hertsmere | 2,149 |
| North Hertfordshire | 3,525 |
| South West Hertfordshire | 2,242 |
| St. Albans | 3,127 |
| Stevenage | 4,112 |
| Watford | 2,575 |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 2,821 |
| West Hertfordshire | 3,621 |
| Ashford | 3,196 |
| Canterbury | 3,361 |
| Dartford | 3,200 |
| Dover | 3,459 |
| Faversham | 5,056 |
| Folkestone and Hythe | 3,518 |

| Constituency | Number |
|---|---|
| Gillingham | 4,667 |
| Gravesham | 4,846 |
| Maidstone | 3,083 |
| Medway | 5,201 |
| Mid Kent | 4,138 |
| North Thanet | 4,309 |
| Sevenoaks | 2,184 |
| South Thanet | 3,957 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 2,615 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 2,425 |
| Banbury | 3,234 |
| Henley | 1,925 |
| Oxford East | 3,980 |
| Oxford West and Abingdon | 2,864 |
| Wantage | 2,203 |
| Witney | 2,358 |
| Chertsey and Walton | 2,113 |
| East Surrey | 1,338 |
| Epsom and Ewell | 1,653 |
| Esher | 1,301 |
| Guildford | 1,933 |
| Mole Valley | 1,531 |
| North West Surrey | 2,215 |
| Reigate | 1,929 |
| South West Surrey | 1,595 |
| Spelthorne | 2,319 |
| Woking | 2,274 |
| Arundel | 2,752 |
| Chichester | 2,094 |
| Crawley | 2,605 |
| Horsham | 2,093 |
| Mid Sussex | 1,739 |
| Shoreham | 2,037 |
| Worthing | 2,524 |
| Cambridge | 3,037 |
| Huntington | 3,482 |
| North East Cambridgeshire | 4,343 |
| Peterborough | 7,572 |
| South East Cambridgeshire | 1,870 |
| South West Cambridgeshire | 2,534 |
| Great Yarmouth | 4,455 |
| Mid Norfolk | 2,832 |
| North Norfolk | 2,997 |
| North West Norfolk | 4,788 |
| Norwich, North | 3,419 |
| Norwich, South | 5,075 |
| South Norfolk | 2,666 |
| South West Norfolk | 4,007 |
| Bury St. Edmunds | 2,970 |
| Central Suffolk | 3,005 |
| Ipswich | 4,343 |
| South Suffolk | 3,220 |
| Suffolk Coastal | 2,630 |
| Waveney | 4,666 |
| Barking | 3,901 |
| Battersea | 5,897 |
| Beckenham | 2,801 |
| Bethnal Green and Stepney | 7,583 |
| Bexley Heath | 2,025 |
| Bow and Poplar | 7,647 |
| Brent, East | 5,731 |
| Brent, North | 2,756 |
| Brent, South | 6,147 |
| Brentford and Isleworth | 3,752 |
| Carshalton and Wallington | 2,491 |
| Chelsea | 3,526 |
| Chingford | 2,369 |
| Chipping Barnet | 1,894 |
| Chislehurst | 1,984 |
| Croydon, Central | 3,366 |
| Croydon, North East | 3,215 |
| Croydon, North West | 3,603 |
| Croydon, South | 1,639 |
| Dagenham | 4,282 |
| Dulwich | 4,161 |
| Ealing, North | 3,563 |
| Ealing, Acton | 4,058 |
| Ealing, Southall | 5,812 |
| Edmonton | 3,599 |
| Eltham | 3,319 |
| Enfield, North | 3,240 |
| Enfield, Southgate | 2,467 |
| Erith and Crayford | 3,664 |
| Feltham and Heston | 4,708 |
| Finchley | 2,537 |
| Fulham | 4,553 |
| Greenwich | 3,976 |
| Hackney, North and Stoke Newington | 8,493 |
| Hackney, South and Shoreditch | 9,596 |
| Hammersmith | 5,546 |
| Hampstead and Highgate | 5,384 |
| Harrow, East | 3,204 |
| Harrow, West | 2,470 |
| Hayes and Harlington | 2,867 |
| Hendon, North | 2,552 |
| Hendon, South | 2,494 |
| Holborn and St. Pancras | 7,166 |
| Hornchurch | 2,999 |
| Hornsey and Wood Green | 6,183 |
| Ilford, North | 2,527 |
| Ilford, South | 3,564 |
| Islington, North | 7,709 |
| Islington, South and Finsbury | 6,187 |
| Kensington | 4,502 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 2,111 |
| Lewisham, East | 3,899 |
| Lewisham West | 4,086 |
| Lewisham Deptford | 6,540 |
| Leyton | 4,739 |
| Mitcham and Morden | 3,001 |
| Newham North East | 4,956 |
| Newham North West | 5,031 |
| Newham South | 5,239 |
| Norwood | 7,146 |
| Old Bexley and Sidcup | 1,555 |
| Orpington | 1,762 |
| Peckham | 7,278 |
| Putney | 3,486 |
| Ravensbourne | 1,620 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames and Barnes | 2,408 |
| Romford | 2,746 |
| Ruislip-Northwood | 1,647 |
| Southwark and Bermondsey | 5,870 |
| Streatham | 5,624 |
| Surbiton | 1,391 |
| Sutton and Cheam | 1,672 |
| The City of London and Westminster South | 4,313 |
| Tooting | 5,037 |
| Tottenham | 8,289 |
| Twickenham | 2,110 |
| Upminster | 3,009 |
| Uxbridge | 2,604 |
| Vauxhall | 9,028 |
| Walthamstow | 3,596 |
| Wanstead and Woodford | 1,860 |
| Westminster North | 7,526 |
| Wimbledon | 2,339 |
| Woolwich | 5,254 |
| Bath | 3,602 |
| Bristol East | 4,387 |
| Bristol North West | 4,768 |
| Bristol South | 7,147 |
| Bristol West | 6,169 |
| Kingswood | 3,651 |
| Northavon | 3,169 |
| Wansdyke | 2,736 |
| Weston-super-Mare | 3,428 |
| Woodspring | 2,491 |
| Falmouth and Camborne | 5,040 |
| North Cornwall | 3,756 |
| South East Cornwall | 3,173 |
| St. Ives | 4,086 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Truro | 3,464 |
| Exeter | 4,103 |
| Honiton | 2,496 |
| North Devon | 3,124 |
| Plymouth Devonport | 4,939 |
| Plymouth Drake | 5,151 |
| Plymouth Sutton | 3,367 |
| South Hams | 3,180 |
| Teignbridge | 3,244 |
| Tiverton | 2,534 |
| Torbay | 4,505 |
| Torridge and West Devon | 3,101 |
| Bournemouth East | 4,189 |
| Bournemouth West | 3,712 |
| Christchurch | 2,006 |
| North Dorset | 1,932 |
| Poole | 3,499 |
| South Dorset | 3,063 |
| West Dorset | 1,939 |
| Cheltenham | 3,861 |
| Cirencester and Tewkesbury | 2,735 |
| Gloucester | 4,537 |
| Stroud | 3,509 |
| West Gloucestershire | 4,729 |
| Bridgwater | 3,261 |
| Somerton and Frome | 2,372 |
| Taunton | 3,208 |
| Wells | 2,536 |
| Yeovil | 2,825 |
| Devizes | 3,448 |
| North Wiltshire | 3,293 |
| Salisbury | 2,944 |
| Swindon | 6,153 |
| Westbury | 3,291 |
| Bromsgrove | 4,171 |
| Hereford | 3,832 |
| Leominster | 2,867 |
| Mid Worcestershire | 6,608 |
| South Worcestershire | 3,066 |
| Worcester | 4,872 |
| Wyre Forest | 5,265 |
| Ludlow | 3,418 |
| North Shropshire | 3,897 |
| Shrewsbury and Atcham | 3,715 |
| The Wrekin | 9,413 |
| Burton | 4,321 |
| Cannock and Burntwood | 5,277 |
| Mid Staffordshire | 4,057 |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 4,110 |
| South East Staffordshire | 5,815 |
| South Staffordshire | 5,082 |
| Stafford | 4,014 |
| Staffordshire Moorlands | 3,530 |
| Stoke-on-Trent Central | 6,251 |
| Stoke-on-Trent North | 6,101 |
| Stoke-on-Trent South | 5,229 |
| North Warwickshire | 5,382 |
| Nuneaton | 5,533 |
| Rugby and Kenilworth | 4,268 |
| Stratford-on-Avon | 3,327 |
| Warwick and Leamington | 4,342 |
| Aldridge-Brownhills | 4,514 |
| Birmingham Edgbaston | 5,153 |
| Birmingham Erdington | 8,813 |
| Birmingham Hall Green | 5,896 |
| Birmingham Hodge Hill | 8,125 |
| Birmingham Ladywood | 10,319 |
| Birmingham Northfield | 8,975 |
| Birmingham Perry Barr | 8,701 |
| Birmingham Small Heath | 10,680 |
| Birmingham Sparkbrook | 9,813 |
| Birmingham Yardley | 5,722 |
| Birmingham Selly Oak | 6,435 |
| Coventry North East | 9,126 |
| Coventry North West | 5,203 |
| Coventry South East | 6,886 |
| Coventry South West | 4,889 |
| Dudley East | 8,454 |
| Dudley West | 6,832 |
| Halesowen and Stourbridge | 5,019 |
| Meriden | 7,492 |
| Solihull | 3,860 |
| Sutton Coldfield | 3,535 |
| Walsall North | 8,345 |
| Walsall South | 7,395 |
| Warley East | 7,394 |
| Warley West | 6,099 |
| West Bromwich East | 6,657 |
| West Bromwich West | 7,235 |
| Wolverhampton North East | 8,698 |
| Wolverhampton South East | 6,989 |
| Wolverhampton South West | 6,266 |
| Amber Valley | 3,460 |
| Bolsover | 3,847 |
| Chesterfield | 4,926 |
| Erewash | 4,725 |
| Derby North | 4,949 |
| Derby South | 7,070 |
| High Peak | 3,745 |
| North East Derbyshire | 4,437 |
| South Derbyshire | 3,357 |
| West Derbyshire | 2,352 |
| Blaby | 2,825 |
| Bosworth | 3,801 |
| Harborough | 2,422 |
| Leicester East | 5,789 |
| Leicester South | 7,368 |
| Leicester West | 6,989 |
| Loughborough | 3,475 |
| North West Leicestershire | 3,410 |
| Rutland and Melton | 3,162 |
| East Lindsey | 3,909 |
| Gainsborough and Horncastle | 3,597 |
| Grantham | 3,919 |
| Holland with Boston | 3,748 |
| Lincoln | 5,870 |
| Stamford and Spalding | 3,289 |
| Corby | 6,637 |
| Daventry | 2,651 |
| Kettering | 3,422 |
| Northampton North | 4,569 |
| Northampton South | 3,694 |
| Wellingborough | 3,971 |
| Ashfield | 4,131 |
| Bassetlaw | 4,336 |
| Broxtowe | 3,448 |
| Gedling | 3,212 |
| Mansfield | 4,129 |
| Newark | 3,710 |
| Nottingham East | 8,581 |
| Nottingham North | 6,478 |
| Nottingham South | 5,608 |
| Rushcliffe | 3,175 |
| Sherwood | 3,360 |
| Beverley | 3,121 |
| Booth Ferry | 3,744 |
| Bridlington | 3,906 |
| Brigg and Cleethorpes | 5,829 |
| Glanford and Scunthorpe | 7,450 |
| Great Grimsby | 6,245 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull East | 7,730 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull North | 7,768 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull West | 6,899 |
| Harrogate | 2,561 |
| Richmond | 3,299 |
| Ryedale | 2,101 |
| Scarborough | 3,919 |
| Selby | 2,448 |
| Skipton and Ripon | 2,075 |
| York | 4,157 |
| Barnsley Central | 4,603 |
| Barnsley East | 4,394 |
| Barnsley West and Penistone | 3,956 |
| Don Valley | 5,003 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Doncaster Central | 6,898 |
| Doncaster North | 7,242 |
| Rother Valley | 5,003 |
| Rotherham | 6,661 |
| Sheffield Central | 9,709 |
| Sheffield Attercliffe | 5,376 |
| Sheffield Brightside | 7,343 |
| Sheffield Hallam | 3,851 |
| Sheffield Heeley | 6,036 |
| Sheffield Hillsborough | 5,212 |
| Wentworth | 5,670 |
| Batley and Spen | 4,888 |
| Bradford North | 7,498 |
| Bradford South | 6,097 |
| Bradford West | 8,625 |
| Calder Valley | 3,389 |
| Colne Valley | 4,022 |
| Dewsbury | 4,927 |
| Elmet | 3,032 |
| Halifax | 7,162 |
| Hemsworth | 4,182 |
| Huddersfield | 5,787 |
| Keighley | 3,977 |
| Leeds Central | 7,211 |
| Leeds East | 7,218 |
| Leeds North East | 4,683 |
| Leeds North West | 3,952 |
| Leeds West | 5,671 |
| Morley and Leeds South | 4,599 |
| Normanton | 3,139 |
| Pontefract and Castleford | 4,834 |
| Pudsey | 3,195 |
| Shipley | 3,610 |
| Wakefield | 4,153 |
| City of Chester | 5,106 |
| Congleton | 2,920 |
| Crewe and Nantwich | 4,582 |
| Eddisbury | 4,685 |
| Ellesmere Port and Neston | 6,306 |
| Halton | 7,819 |
| Macclesfield | 3,212 |
| Tatton | 3,369 |
| Warrington North | 6,483 |
| Warrington South | 6,103 |
| Altrincham and Sale | 3,035 |
| Ashton-under-Lyne | 4,742 |
| Bolton North East | 5,330 |
| Bolton South East | 6,505 |
| Bolton West | 4,610 |
| Bury North | 4,286 |
| Bury South | 4,731 |
| Cheadle | 2,456 |
| Davyhulme | 4,611 |
| Denton and Reddish | 5,661 |
| Eccles | 5,479 |
| Hazel Grove | 3,369 |
| Heywood and Middleton | 5,897 |
| Leigh | 5,614 |
| Littleborough and Saddleworth | 3,739 |
| Makerfield | 5,807 |
| Machester Central | 11,179 |
| Manchester Blackley | 6,106 |
| Manchester Gorton | 6,500 |
| Manchester Withington | 6,204 |
| Manchester Wythenshawe | 6,522 |
| Oldham Central and Royton | 6,085 |
| Oldham West | 4,253 |
| Rochdale | 6,810 |
| Salford East | 8,520 |
| Stalybridge and Hyde | 5,761 |
| Stockport | 4,647 |
| Stretford | 8,570 |
| Wigan | 6,343 |
| Worsley | 5,694 |
| Blackburn | 7,517 |
| Blackpool North | 4,591 |
| Blackpool South | 4,357 |
| Burnley | 6,080 |
| Chorley | 4,417 |
| Fylde | 2,273 |
| Hyndburn | 4,319 |
| Lancaster | 3,233 |
| Morecombe and Lunesdale | 2,981 |
| Pendle | 4,617 |
| Preston | 7,551 |
| Ribble Valley | 1,675 |
| Rossendale and Darwen | 4,831 |
| South Ribble | 4,266 |
| West Lancashire | 6,700 |
| Wyre | 3,687 |
| Birkenhead | 8,726 |
| Bootle | 10,764 |
| Crosby | 5,181 |
| Knowsley North | 10,250 |
| Knowsley South | 9,822 |
| Liverpool Broadgreen | 7,342 |
| Liverpool Garston | 8,004 |
| Liverpool Mossley Hill | 6,453 |
| Liverpool Riverside | 11,997 |
| Liverpool Walton | 9,697 |
| Liverpool West Derby | 9,725 |
| Southport | 4,262 |
| St. Helens North | 6,659 |
| St. Helens South | 7,276 |
| Wallasey | 6,924 |
| Wirral South | 3,655 |
| Wirral West | 4,249 |
| Barrow and Furness | 4,011 |
| Carlisle | 3,633 |
| Copeland | 3,899 |
| Penrith and the Borders | 2,759 |
| Westmorland and Lonsdale | 1,848 |
| Workington | 4,900 |
| Hartlepool | 9,637 |
| Langbaurgh | 7,976 |
| Middlesbrough | 10,251 |
| Redcar | 8,448 |
| Stockton North | 8,654 |
| Stockton South | 6,593 |
| Bishop Auckland | 6,544 |
| City of Durham | 3,966 |
| Darlington | 5,852 |
| Easington | 5,522 |
| North Durham | 6,774 |
| North West Durham | 6,277 |
| Sedgefield | 4,723 |
| Berwick-upon-Tweed | 2,790 |
| Blyth Valley | 4,240 |
| Hexham | 2,061 |
| Wansbeck | 3,989 |
| Blaydon | 5,102 |
| Gateshead East | 6,992 |
| Houghton and Washington | 7,186 |
| Jarrow | 7,231 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central | 5,453 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne East | 6,620 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne North | 6,101 |
| South Shields | 6,938 |
| Sunderland North | 10,577 |
| Sunderland South | 7,890 |
| Tyne Bridge | 8,942 |
| Tynemouth | 5,929 |
| Wallsend | 7,364 |
| Alyn and Deeside | 4,742 |
| Clwyd North West | 4,018 |
| Clwyd South West | 3,471 |
| Delyn | 5,060 |
| Wrexham | 5,060 |
| Carmarthen | 2,994 |
| Ceredigion and Pembroke North | 2,900 |
| Llanelli | 4,795 |
| Pembroke | 5,898 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 5,826 |
| Islwyn | 3,607 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Monmouth | 3,310 |
| Newport East | 4,925 |
| Newport West | 4,923 |
| Torfaen | 5,365 |
| Caernarfon | 3,069 |
| Conwy | 2,932 |
| Meirionnydd nant Conwy | 1,493 |
| Ynys Mon | 4,086 |
| Bridgend | 3,829 |
| Caerphilly | 5,396 |
| Cynon Valley | 3,945 |
| Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney | 5,489 |
| Ogmore | 4,435 |
| Pontypridd | 4,357 |
| Rhondda | 5,100 |
| Brecon and Radnor | 2,004 |
| Montgomery | 1,903 |
| Cardiff Central | 5,284 |
| Cardiff North | 2,380 |
| Cardiff South and Penarth | 5,737 |
| Cardiff West | 5,603 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 4,521 |
| Aberavon | 5,211 |
| Gower | 3,408 |
| Neath | 3;967 |
| Swensea East | 6,047 |
| Swansea West | 5,314 |
| Roxburgh ad Berwickshire | 2,042 |
| Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale | 1,607 |
| Clackmannan | 4,207 |
| Falkirk East | 4,901 |
| Falkirk West | 4,337 |
| Stirling | 3,505 |
| Dumfries | 3,694 |
| Galloway and Upper Nithsdale | 3,431 |
| Central Fife | 4,982 |
| Dunfermline East | 3,538 |
| Dunfermline West | 3,001 |
| Kirkcaldy | 3,826 |
| North East Fife | 2,144 |
| Aberdeen North | 3,429 |
| Aberdeen South | 2,624 |
| Banff and Buchan | 3,398 |
| Gordon | 1,732 |
| Kincardine and Deeside | 1,552 |
| Moray | 3,310 |
| Caithness and Sutherland | 1,929 |
| Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber | 4,346 |
| Ross, Cromarty and Skye | 3,143 |
| East Lothian | 3,621 |
| Edinburgh Central | 4,003 |
| Edinburgh East | 4,432 |
| Edinburgh Leith | 5,660 |
| Edinburgh Pentlands | 3,317 |
| Edinburgh South | 3,691 |
| Edinburgh West | 2,295 |
| Linlithgow | 5,590 |
| Livingston | 5,199 |
| Midlothian | 3,825 |
| Argyll and Bute | 2,918 |
| Ayr | 4,711 |
| Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley | 5,547 |
| Clydebank and Milngavie | 4,192 |
| Clydesdale | 4,535 |
| Cumbernauld and Kilsyth | 4,335 |
| Cunninghame North | 5,072 |
| Cunninghame South | 6,320 |
| Dumbarton | 5,787 |
| East Kilbride | 5,175 |
| Eastwood | 3,074 |
| Glasgow Cathcart | 4,167 |
| Glasgow Central | 6,708 |
| Glasgow Garscadden | 6,166 |
| Glasgow Govan | 5,926 |
| Glasgow Hillhead | 4,678 |
| Glasgow Maryhill | 7,206 |
| Glasgow Pollock | 7,329 |
| Glasgow Provan | 9,590 |
| Glasgow Rutherglen | 7,051 |
| Glasgow Shettleston | 6,606 |
| Glasgow Springburn | 8,300 |
| Greenock and Port Glasgow | 6,760 |
| Hamilton | 6,524 |
| Kilmarnock and Loudoun | 5,302 |
| Monklands East | 5,739 |
| Monklands West | 4,866 |
| Motherwell North | 6,250 |
| Motherwell South | 5,463 |
| Paisley North | 5,601 |
| Paisley South | 5,570 |
| Renfrew West and Inverclyde | 3,472 |
| Strathkelvin and Bearsden | 3,374 |
| Angus East | 3,702 |
| Dundee East | 7,945 |
| Dundee West | 6,861 |
| North Tayside | 2,518 |
| Perth and Kinross | 3,222 |
| Orkney and Shetland | 1,473 |
| Western Isles | 1,712 |
| Column Totals | 2,870,510 |

*October 1986—Age under18 years*

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Luton South | 367 |
| Mid Bedfordshire | 142 |
| North Bedfordshire | 297 |
| North Luton | 251 |
| South West Bedfordshire | 187 |
| East Berkshire | 162 |
| Newbury | 132 |
| Reading East | 200 |
| Reading West | 167 |
| Slough | 184 |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | 81 |
| Wokingham | 74 |
| Aylesbury | 128 |
| Beaconsfield | 65 |
| Buckingham | 123 |
| Chesham and Amersham | 45 |
| Milton Keynes | 363 |
| Wycombe | 152 |
| Bexhill and Battle | 81 |
| Brighton Kemptown | 283 |
| Brighton Pavilion | 132 |
| Eastbourne | 119 |
| Hastings and Rye | 245 |
| Hove | 119 |
| Lewes | 71 |
| Wealden | 65 |
| Basildon | 317 |
| Billericay | 195 |
| Braintree | 179 |
| Brentwood and Ongar | 114 |
| Castle Point | 152 |
| Chelmsford | 167 |
| Epping Forest | 159 |
| Harlow | 250 |
| Harwich | 278 |
| North Colchester | 277 |
| Rochford | 118 |
| Saffron Walden | 102 |
| South Colchester and Maldon | 264 |
| Southend East | 207 |
| Southend West | 163 |
| Thurrock | 302 |
| Aldershot | 139 |
| Basingstoke | 169 |
| East Hampshire | 128 |
| Eastleigh | 206 |
| Fareham | 164 |
| Gosport | 208 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Havant | 304 |
| Isle of Wight | 388 |
| New Forest | 99 |
| North West Hampshire | 177 |
| Portsmouth North | 328 |
| Portsmouth South | 377 |
| Romsey and Waterside | 178 |
| Southampton Itchen | 337 |
| Southampton Test | 336 |
| Winchester | 102 |
| Broxbourne | 120 |
| Hertford and Stortford | 87 |
| Hertsmere | 119 |
| North Hertfordshire | 171 |
| South West Hertfordshire | 98 |
| St. Albans | 104 |
| Stevenage | 301 |
| Watford | 119 |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 133 |
| West Hertfordshire | 175 |
| Ashford | 244 |
| Canterbury | 235 |
| Dartford | 172 |
| Dover | 200 |
| Faversham | 371 |
| Folkestone and Hythe | 250 |
| Gillingham | 316 |
| Gravesham | 311 |
| Maidstone | 207 |
| Medway | 321 |
| Mid Kent | 318 |
| North Thanet | 299 |
| Sevenoaks | 104 |
| South Thanet | 271 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 159 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 107 |
| Banbury | 173 |
| Henley | 77 |
| Oxford East | 200 |
| Oxford West and Abingdon | 97 |
| Wantage | 92 |
| Witney | 120 |
| Chertsey and Walton | 55 |
| East Surrey | 59 |
| Epsom and Ewell | 61 |
| Esher | 45 |
| Guildford | 70 |
| Mole Valley | 58 |
| North West Surrey | 93 |
| Reigate | 67 |
| South West Surrey | 60 |
| Spelthorne | 89 |
| Woking | 77 |
| Arundel | 155 |
| Chichester | 108 |
| Crawley | 109 |
| Horsham | 78 |
| Mid Sussex | 73 |
| Shoreham | 90 |
| Worthing | 95 |
| Cambridge | 150 |
| Huntingdon | 200 |
| North East Cambridgeshire | 227 |
| Peterborough | 582 |
| South East Cambridgeshire | 89 |
| South West Cambridgeshire | 111 |
| Great Yarmouth | 430 |
| Mid Norfolk | 166 |
| North Norfolk | 160 |
| North West Norfolk | 228 |
| Norwich North | 234 |
| Norwich South | 337 |
| South Norfolk | 162 |
| South West Norfolk | 217 |
| Bury St. Edmunds | 186 |
| Central Suffolk | 158 |
| Ipswich | 266 |
| South Suffolk | 178 |
| Suffolk Coastal | 155 |
| Waveney | 262 |
| Barking | 211 |
| Battersea | 217 |
| Beckenham | 149 |
| Bethnal Green and Stepney | 330 |
| Bexley Heath | 140 |
| Bow and Poplar | 416 |
| Brent East | 176 |
| Brent North | 93 |
| Brent South | 204 |
| Brentford and Isleworth | 123 |
| Carshalton and Wallington | 119 |
| Chelsea | 51 |
| Chingford | 144 |
| Chipping Barnet | 94 |
| Chislehurst | 126 |
| Croydon Central | 216 |
| Croydon North East | 147 |
| Croydon North West | 158 |
| Croydon South | 79 |
| Dagenham | 236 |
| Dulwich | 214 |
| Ealing North | 133 |
| Ealing Acton | 109 |
| Ealing Southall | 204 |
| Edmonton | 173 |
| Eltham | 253 |
| Enfield North | 155 |
| Enfield Southgate | 80 |
| Erith and Crayford | 237 |
| Feltham and Heston | 224 |
| Finchley | 77 |
| Fulham | 157 |
| Greenwich | 255 |
| Hackney North and Stoke Newington | 295 |
| Hackney South and Shoreditch | 440 |
| Hammersmith | 193 |
| Hampstead and Highgate | 113 |
| Harrow East | 94 |
| Harrow West | 67 |
| Hayes and Harlington | 127 |
| Hendon North | 114 |
| Hendon South | 56 |
| Holborn and St. Pancras | 244 |
| Hornchurch | 125 |
| Hornsey and Wood Green | 204 |
| Ilford North | 130 |
| Ilford South | 189 |
| Islington North | 302 |
| Islington South and Finsbury | 271 |
| Kensington | 115 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 86 |
| Lewisham East | 284 |
| Lewisham West | 308 |
| Lewisham Deptford | 399 |
| Leyton | 248 |
| Mitcham and Morden | 151 |
| Newham North East | 312 |
| Newham North West | 332 |
| Newham South | 388 |
| Norwood | 303 |
| Old Bexley and Sidcup | 115 |
| Orpington | 137 |
| Peckham | 385 |
| Putney | 137 |
| Ravensbourne | 106 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames and Barnes | 68 |
| Romford | 160 |
| Ruislip-Northwood | 49 |
| Southwark and Bermondsey | 302 |
| Streatham | 238 |
| Surbiton | 42 |
| Sutton and Cheam | 50 |
| The City of London and Westminster South | 101 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Tooting | 224 |
| Tottenham | 394 |
| Twickenham | 71 |
| Upminster | 151 |
| Uxbridge | 117 |
| Vauxhall | 403 |
| Walthamstow | 198 |
| Wanstead and Woodford | 67 |
| Westminster North | 195 |
| Wimbledon | 74 |
| Woolwich | 323 |
| Bath | 138 |
| Bristol East | 205 |
| Bristol North West | 215 |
| Bristol South | 305 |
| Bristol West | 157 |
| Kingswood | 170 |
| Northavon | 155 |
| Wansdyke | 122 |
| Weston-Super-Mare | 223 |
| Woodspring | 93 |
| Falmouth and Camborne | 306 |
| North Cornwall | 283 |
| South East Cornwall | 250 |
| St. Ives | 253 |
| Truro | 322 |
| Exeter | 226 |
| Honiton | 134 |
| North Devon | 194 |
| Plymouth Devonport | 392 |
| Plymouth Drake | 348 |
| Plymouth Sutton | 243 |
| South Hams | 133 |
| Teignbridge | 196 |
| Tiverton | 156 |
| Torbay | 242 |
| Torridge and West Devon | 226 |
| Bournemouth East | 187 |
| Bournemouth West | 178 |
| Christchurch | 90 |
| North Dorset | 107 |
| Poole | 188 |
| South Dorset | 247 |
| West Dorset | 96 |
| Cheltenham | 205 |
| Cirencester and Tewkesbury | 154 |
| Gloucester | 339 |
| Stroud | 205 |
| West Gloucestershire | 253 |
| Bridgwater | 226 |
| Somerton and Frome | 166 |
| Taunton | 182 |
| Wells | 137 |
| Yeovil | 156 |
| Devizes | 221 |
| North Wiltshire | 178 |
| Salisbury | 221 |
| Swindon | 307 |
| Westbury | 224 |
| Bromsgrove | 286 |
| Hereford | 279 |
| Leominster | 195 |
| Mid Worcestershire | 347 |
| South Worcestershire | 160 |
| Worcester | 225 |
| Wyre Forest | 329 |
| Ludlow | 156 |
| North Shropshire | 212 |
| Shrewsbury and Atcham | 232 |
| The Wrekin | 579 |
| Burton | 288 |
| Cannock and Burntwood | 384 |
| Mid Staffordshire | 310 |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 217 |
| South East Staffordshire | 316 |
| South Staffordshire | 327 |
| Stafford | 210 |
| Staffordshire Moorlands | 163 |
| Stoke-on-Trent Central | 293 |
| Stoke-on-Trent North | 330 |
| Stoke-on-Trent South | 267 |
| North Warwickshire | 273 |
| Nuneaton | 264 |
| Rugby and Kenilworth | 204 |
| Stratford-on-Avon | 140 |
| Warwick and Leamington | 170 |
| Aldridge-Brownhills | 237 |
| Birmingham Edgbaston | 322 |
| Birmingham Erdington | 511 |
| Birmingham Hall Green | 395 |
| Birmingham Hodge Hill | 593 |
| Birmingham Ladywood | 646 |
| Birmingham Northfield | 496 |
| Birmingham Perry Barr | 560 |
| Birmingham Small Heath | 785 |
| Birmingham Sparkbrook | 726 |
| Birmingham Yardley | 351 |
| Birmingham Selly Oak | 363 |
| Coventry North East | 497 |
| Coventry North West | 318 |
| Coventry South East | 379 |
| Coventry South West | 255 |
| Dudley East | 468 |
| Dudley West | 387 |
| Halesowen and Stourbridge | 275 |
| Meriden | 524 |
| Solihull | 140 |
| Sutton Coldfield | 172 |
| Walsall North | 427 |
| Walsall South | 410 |
| Warley East | 429 |
| Warley West | 332 |
| West Bromwich East | 396 |
| West Bromwich West | 441 |
| Wolverhampton North East | 549 |
| Wolverhampton South East | 520 |
| Wolverhampton South West | 346 |
| Amber Valley | 237 |
| Bolsover | 415 |
| Chesterfield | 408 |
| Erewash | 249 |
| Derby North | 344 |
| Derby South | 531 |
| High Peak | 217 |
| North East Derbyshire | 336 |
| South Derbyshire | 251 |
| West Derbyshire | 188 |
| Blaby | 134 |
| Bosworth | 143 |
| Harborough | 115 |
| Leicester East | 242 |
| Leicester South | 313 |
| Leicester West | 341 |
| Loughborough | 209 |
| North West Leicestershire | 175 |
| Rutland and Melton | 127 |
| East Lindsey | 301 |
| Gainsborough and Horncastle | 222 |
| Grantham | 247 |
| Holland with Boston | 197 |
| Lincoln | 413 |
| Stamford and Spalding | 175 |
| Corby | 261 |
| Daventry | 163 |
| Kettering | 128 |
| Northampton North | 272 |
| Northampton South | 221 |
| Wellingborough | 219 |
| Ashfield | 346 |
| Bassetlaw | 449 |
| Broxtowe | 201 |
| Gedling | 212 |
| Mansfield | 342 |
| Newark | 306 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Nottingham East | 542 |
| Nottingham North | 498 |
| Nottingham South | 318 |
| Rushcliffe | 177 |
| Sherwood | 326 |
| Beverley | 232 |
| Booth Ferry | 308 |
| Bridlington | 278 |
| Brigg and Cleethorpes | 408 |
| Glanford and Scunthorpe | 378 |
| Great Grimsby | 494 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull East | 517 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull North | 624 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull West | 494 |
| Harrogate | 147 |
| Richmond | 247 |
| Ryedale | 177 |
| Scarborough | 286 |
| Selby | 292 |
| Skipton and Ripon | 117 |
| York | 393 |
| Barnsley Central | 573 |
| Barnsley East | 641 |
| Barnsley West and Penistone | 563 |
| Don Valley | 493 |
| Doncaster Central | 581 |
| Doncaster North | 645 |
| Rother Valley | 530 |
| Rotherham | 541 |
| Sheffield Central | 800 |
| Sheffield Attercliffe | 581 |
| Sheffield Brightside | 794 |
| Sheffield Hallam | 315 |
| Sheffield Heeley | 545 |
| Sheffield Hillsborough | 552 |
| Wentworth | 501 |
| Batley and Spen | 327 |
| Bradford North | 537 |
| Bradford South | 467 |
| Bradford West | 653 |
| Calder Valley | 265 |
| Colne Valley | 304 |
| Dewsbury | 445 |
| Elmet | 297 |
| Halifax | 366 |
| Hemsworth | 471 |
| Huddersfield | 396 |
| Keighley | 215 |
| Leeds Central | 480 |
| Leeds East | 540 |
| Leeds North East | 287 |
| Leeds North West | 210 |
| Leeds West | 364 |
| Morley and Leeds South | 329 |
| Normanton | 287 |
| Pontefract and Castleford | 569 |
| Pudsey | 188 |
| Shipley | 206 |
| Wakefield | 323 |
| City of Chester | 333 |
| Congleton | 186 |
| Crewe and Nantwich | 302 |
| Eddisbury | 255 |
| Ellesmere Port and Neston | 436 |
| Halton | 523 |
| Macclesfield | 146 |
| Tatton | 190 |
| Warrington North | 392 |
| Warrington South | 411 |
| Altrincham and Sale | 155 |
| Ashton-under-Lyne | 288 |
| Bolton North East | 349 |
| Bolton South East | 442 |
| Bolton West | 338 |
| Bury North | 262 |
| Bury South | 256 |
| Cheadle | 131 |
| Davyhulme | 230 |
| Denton and Reddish | 340 |
| Eccles | 316 |
| Hazel Grove | 203 |
| Heywood and Middleton | 345 |
| Leigh | 549 |
| Littleborough and Saddleworth | 272 |
| Makerfield | 544 |
| Manchester Central | 722 |
| Manchester Blackley | 433 |
| Manchester Gorton | 416 |
| Manchester Withington | 368 |
| Manchester Wythenshawe | 475 |
| Oldham Central and Royton | 382 |
| Oldham West | 285 |
| Rochdale | 426 |
| Salford East | 456 |
| Stalybridge and Hyde | 332 |
| Stockport | 290 |
| Stretford | 472 |
| Wigan | 635 |
| Worsley | 381 |
| Blackburn | 518 |
| Blackpool North | 227 |
| Blackpool South | 267 |
| Burnley | 320 |
| Chorley | 235 |
| Fylde | 124 |
| Hyndburn | 215 |
| Lancaster | 175 |
| Morecambe and Lunesdale | 242 |
| Pendle | 180 |
| Preston | 445 |
| Ribble Valley | 120 |
| Rossendale and Darwen | 213 |
| South Ribble | 227 |
| West Lancashire | 414 |
| Wyre | 199 |
| Birkenhead | 491 |
| Bootle | 633 |
| Crosby | 256 |
| Knowsley North | 570 |
| Knowsley South | 576 |
| Liverpool Broadgreen | 470 |
| Liverpool Garston | 398 |
| Liverpool Mossley Hill | 422 |
| Liverpool Riverside | 648 |
| Liverpool Walton | 591 |
| Liverpool West Derby | 541 |
| Southport | 218 |
| St. Helens North | 362 |
| St. Helens South | 505 |
| Wallasey | 416 |
| Wirral South | 207 |
| Wirral West | 208 |
| Barrow and Furness | 362 |
| Carlisle | 345 |
| Copeland | 292 |
| Penrith and the Borders | 240 |
| Westmorland and Lonsdale | 113 |
| Workington | 293 |
| Hartlepool | 419 |
| Langbaurgh | 382 |
| Middlesbrough | 627 |
| Redcar | 461 |
| Stockton North | 427 |
| Stockton South | 399 |
| Bishop Auckland | 394 |
| City of Durham | 268 |
| Darlington | 321 |
| Easington | 426 |
| North Durham | 341 |
| North West Durham | 290 |
| Sedgefield | 359 |
| Berwick-upon-Tweed | 245 |
| Blyth Valley | 335 |
| Hexham | 128 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Wansbeck | 341 |
| Blaydon | 297 |
| Gateshead East | 392 |
| Houghton and Washington | 447 |
| Jarrow | 344 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central | 323 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne East | 435 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne North | 391 |
| South Shields | 450 |
| Sunderland North | 623 |
| Sunderland South | 522 |
| Tyne Bridge | 541 |
| Tynemouth | 377 |
| Wallsend | 424 |
| Alyn and Deeside | 291 |
| Clwyd North West | 389 |
| Clwyd South West | 293 |
| Delyn | 286 |
| Wrexham | 314 |
| Carmarthen | 267 |
| Ceredigion and Pembroke North | 213 |
| Llanelli | 296 |
| Pembroke | 334 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 382 |
| Islwyn | 240 |
| Monmouth | 188 |
| Newport East | 286 |
| Newport West | 357 |
| Torfaen | 329 |
| Caernarfon | 269 |
| Conwy | 253 |
| Meirionnydd nant Conwy | 126 |
| Ynys M[illegible] | 354 |
| Bridgend | 223 |
| Caerphilly | 395 |
| Cynon Valley | 173 |
| Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney | 333 |
| Ogmore | 268 |
| Pontypridd | 293 |
| Rhondda | 465 |
| Brecon and Radnor | 148 |
| Montgomery | 91 |
| Cardiff Central | 359 |
| Cardiff North | 149 |
| Cardiff South and Penarth | 335 |
| Cardiff West | 368 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 306 |
| Aberavon | 292 |
| Gower | 190 |
| Neath | 250 |
| Swansea East | 291 |
| Swansea West | 271 |
| Roxburgh and Berwickshire | 122 |
| Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale | 121 |
| Clackmannan | 341 |
| Falkirk East | 355 |
| Falkirk West | 386 |
| Stirling | 297 |
| Dumfries | 331 |
| Galloway and Upper Nithsdale | 283 |
| Central Fife | 379 |
| Dunfermline East | 381 |
| Dunfermline West | 274 |
| Kirkcaldy | 341 |
| North East Fife | 144 |
| Aberdeen North | 291 |
| Aberdeen South | 168 |
| Banff and Buchan | 221 |
| Gordon | 201 |
| Kincardine and Deeside | 164 |
| Moray | 250 |
| Caithness and Sutherland | 116 |
| Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber | 353 |
| Ross, Cromarty and Skye | 273 |
| East Lothian | 321 |
| Edinburgh Central | 244 |
| Edinburgh East | 331 |
| Edinburgh Leith | 469 |
| Edinburgh Pentlands | 268 |
| Edinburgh South | 276 |
| Edinburgh West | 161 |
| Linlithgow | 438 |
| Livingston | 489 |
| Midlothian | 315 |
| Argyll and Bute | 237 |
| Ayr | 364 |
| Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley | 586 |
| Clydebank and Milngavie | 340 |
| Cydesdale | 391 |
| Cumbernauld and Kilsyth | 502 |
| Cunninghame North | 489 |
| Cunninghame South | 507 |
| Dumbarton | 443 |
| East Kilbride | 358 |
| Eastwood | 321 |
| Glasgow Cathcart | 338 |
| Glasgow Central | 491 |
| Glasgow Garscadden | 564 |
| Glasgow Govan | 442 |
| Glasgow Hillhead | 344 |
| Glasgow Maryhill | 655 |
| Glasgow Pollock | 646 |
| Glasgow Provan | 989 |
| Glasgow Rutherglen | 544 |
| Glasgow Shettleston | 629 |
| Glasgow Springburn | 633 |
| Greenock and Port Glasgow | 554 |
| Hamilton | 635 |
| Kilmarnock and Loudoun | 480 |
| Monklands East | 628 |
| Monklands West | 555 |
| Motherwell North | 696 |
| Motherwell South | 519 |
| Paisley North | 380 |
| Paisley South | 441 |
| Renfrew West and Inverclyde | 321 |
| Strathkelvin and Bearsden | 336 |
| Angus East | 309 |
| Dundee East | 517 |
| Dundee West | 370 |
| North Tayside | 205 |
| Perth and Kinross | 297 |
| Orkney and Shetland | 82 |
| Western Isles | 126 |
| Totals | 180,580 |

*October 1986—Age 18 to 24 years*

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Luton South | 1,751 |
| Mid Bedfordshire | 772 |
| North Bedfordshire | 1,282 |
| North Luton | 1,263 |
| South West Bedfordshire | 1,036 |
| East Berkshire | 959 |
| Newbury | 619 |
| Reading East | 1,226 |
| Reading West | 1,003 |
| Slough | 1,109 |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | 631 |
| Wokingham | 488 |
| Aylesbury | 783 |
| Beaconsfield | 445 |
| Buckingham | 702 |
| Chesham and Amersham | 456 |
| Milton Keynes | 1,887 |
| Wycombe | 831 |
| Bexhill and Battle | 545 |
| Brighton Kemptown | 1,364 |
| Brighton Pavilion | 1,601 |
| Eastbourne | 859 |
| Hastings and Rye | 1,352 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Hove | 1,317 |
| Lewes | 625 |
| Wealden | 501 |
| Basildon | 1,626 |
| Billericay | 826 |
| Braintree | 867 |
| Brentwood and Ongar | 553 |
| Castle Point | 767 |
| Chelmsford | 800 |
| Epping Forest | 822 |
| Harlow | 1,206 |
| Harwich | 1,271 |
| North Colchester | 1,263 |
| Rochford | 635 |
| Saffron Walden | 588 |
| South Colchester and Maldon | 1,407 |
| Southend East | 1,275 |
| Southend West | 958 |
| Thurrock | 1,419 |
| Aldershort | 932 |
| Basingstoke | 822 |
| East Hampshire | 717 |
| Eastleigh | 1,184 |
| Fareham | 1,053 |
| Gosport | 1,352 |
| Havant | 1,560 |
| Isle of Wight | 2,112 |
| New Forest | 597 |
| North West Hampshire | 754 |
| Portsmouth North | 1,493 |
| Portsmouth South | 2,634 |
| Romsey and Waterside | 947 |
| Southampton Itchen | 2,012 |
| Southampton Test | 1,663 |
| Winchester | 611 |
| Broxbourne | 770 |
| Hertford and Stortford | 573 |
| Hertsmere | 672 |
| North Hertfordshire | 950 |
| South West Hertfordshire | 575 |
| St. Albans | 665 |
| Stevenage | 1,195 |
| Watford | 902 |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 837 |
| West Hertfordshire | 861 |
| Ashford | 1,056 |
| Canterbury | 1,160 |
| Dartford | 929 |
| Dover | 1,186 |
| Faversham | 1,523 |
| Folkestone and Hythe | 1,338 |
| Gillingham | 1,354 |
| Gravesham | 1,375 |
| Maidstone | 1,023 |
| Medway | 1,374 |
| Mid Kent | 1,287 |
| North Thanet | 1,398 |
| Sevenoaks | 649 |
| South Thanet | 1,196 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 812 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 700 |
| Banbury | 891 |
| Henley | 561 |
| Oxford East | 1,412 |
| Oxford West and Abingdon | 873 |
| Wantage | 580 |
| Witney | 727 |
| Chertsey and Walton | 492 |
| East Surrey | 447 |
| Epsom and Ewell | 493 |
| Esher | 384 |
| Guildford | 571 |
| Mole Valley | 325 |
| North West Surrey | 634 |
| Reigate | 587 |
| South West Surrey | 464 |
| Spelthorne | 600 |
| Woking | 579 |
| Arundel | 874 |
| Chichester | 684 |
| Crawley | 654 |
| Horsham | 556 |
| Mid Sussex | 500 |
| Shoreham | 548 |
| Worthing | 704 |
| Cambridge | 1,118 |
| Huntingdon | 1.069 |
| North East Cambridgeshire | 1,036 |
| Peterborough | 2,295 |
| South East Cambridgeshire | 523 |
| South West Cambridgeshire | 772 |
| Great Yarmouth | 1,935 |
| Mid Norfolk | 767 |
| North Norfolk | 914 |
| North West Norfolk | 1,148 |
| Norwich North | 1,201 |
| Norwich South | 1,941 |
| South Norfolk | 787 |
| South West Norfolk | 1,001 |
| Bury St. Edmunds | 899 |
| Central Suffolk | 899 |
| Ipswich | 1,252 |
| South Suffolk | 960 |
| Suffolk Coastal | 680 |
| Waveney | 1,507 |
| Barking | 1,000 |
| Battersea | 1,924 |
| Beckenham | 895 |
| Bethnal Green and Stepney | 1,810 |
| Bexley Heath | 599 |
| Bow and Poplar | 2,149 |
| Brent East | 2,351 |
| Brent North | 1,014 |
| Brent South | 2,150 |
| Brentford and Isleworth | 1,177 |
| Carshalton and Wallington | 796 |
| Chelsea | 1,046 |
| Chingford | 704 |
| Chipping Barnet | 578 |
| Chislehurst | 615 |
| Croydon Central | 1,039 |
| Croydon North East | 1,123 |
| Croydon North West | 1,187 |
| Croydon South | 560 |
| Dagenham | 1,027 |
| Dulwich | 1,488 |
| Ealing North | 1,012 |
| Ealing Acton | 1,341 |
| Ealing Southall | 1,718 |
| Edmonton | 1,166 |
| Eltham | 1,079 |
| Enfield North | 998 |
| Enfield Southgate | 960 |
| Erith and Crayford | 1,122 |
| Feltham and Heston | 1,315 |
| Finchley | 926 |
| Fulham | 1,623 |
| Greenwich | 1,485 |
| Hackney North and Stoke Newington | 3,261 |
| Hackney South and Shoreditch | 3,406 |
| Hammersmith | 2,039 |
| Hampstead and Highgate | 1,748 |
| Harrow East | 953 |
| Harrow West | 673 |
| Hayes and Harlington | 739 |
| Hendon North | 796 |
| Hendon South | 816 |
| Holborn and St. Pancras | 2,350 |
| Hornchurch | 698 |
| Hornsey and Wood Green | 2,635 |
| Ilford North | 801 |
| Ilford South | 1,231 |
| Islington North | 3,041 |
| Islington South and Finsbury | 2,086 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Kensington | 1,495 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 667 |
| Lewisham East | 1,615 |
| Lewisham West | 1,900 |
| Lewisham Deptford | 2,980 |
| Leyton | 1,680 |
| Mitcham and Morden | 1,086 |
| Newham North East | 1,758 |
| Newham North West | 1,940 |
| Newham South | 1,577 |
| Norwood | 2,903 |
| Old Bexley and Sidcup | 485 |
| Orpington | 646 |
| Peckham | 2,977 |
| Putney | 1,118 |
| Ravensbourne | 554 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames and Barnes | 645 |
| Romford | 712 |
| Ruislip-Northwood | 407 |
| Southwark and Bermondsey | 2,319 |
| Streatham | 2,102 |
| Surbiton | 470 |
| Sutton and Cheam | 570 |
| The City of London and Westminster, South | 1,189 |
| Tooting | 1,920 |
| Tottenham | 3,380 |
| Twickenham | 561 |
| Upminster | 670 |
| Uxbridge | 679 |
| Vauxhall | 3,613 |
| Walthamstow | 1,170 |
| Wanstead and Woodford | 624 |
| Westminster, North | 2,164 |
| Wimbledon | 770 |
| Woolwich | 1,906 |
| Bath | 1,200 |
| Bristol, East | 1,431 |
| Bristol, North West | 1,303 |
| Bristol, South | 1,940 |
| Bristol, West | 2,299 |
| Kingswood | 975 |
| Northavon | 975 |
| Wansdyke | 758 |
| Weston-Super-Mare | 1,287 |
| Woodspring | 679 |
| Falmouth and Camborne | 1,607 |
| North Cornwall | 1,655 |
| South East Cornwall | 1,131 |
| St. Ives | 1,557 |
| Truro | 1,434 |
| Exeter | 1,650 |
| Honiton | 835 |
| North Devon | 1,132 |
| Plymouth, Devonport | 1,557 |
| Plymouth, Drake | 2,148 |
| Plymouth, Sutton | 1,164 |
| South Hams | 1.001 |
| Teignbridge | 1,011 |
| Tiverton | 820 |
| Torbay | 1,736 |
| Torridge and West Devon | 1,058 |
| Bournemouth, East | 1,501 |
| Bournemouth, West | 1,174 |
| Christchurch | 479 |
| North Dorset | 616 |
| Poole | 1,047 |
| South Dorset | 1,208 |
| West Dorset | 567 |
| Cheltenham | 1,304 |
| Cirencester and Tewkesbury | 801 |
| Gloucester | 1,566 |
| Stroud | 1,012 |
| West Gloucestershire | 1,335 |
| Bridgwater | 1,191 |
| Somerton and Frome | 820 |
| Taunton | 1,124 |
| Wells | 862 |
| Yeovil | 871 |
| Devises | 1,041 |
| North Wiltshire | 918 |
| Salisbury | 1,062 |
| Swindon | 1,830 |
| Westbury | 1,104 |
| Bromsgrove | 1,205 |
| Hereford | 1,257 |
| Leominster | 865 |
| Mid Worcestershire | 1,567 |
| South Worcestershire | 1,068 |
| Worcester | 1,172 |
| Wyre Forest | 1,534 |
| Ludlow | 1,069 |
| North Shropshire | 1,179 |
| Shrewsbury and Atcham | 1,236 |
| The Wrekin | 2,624 |
| Burton | 1,377 |
| Cannock and Burntwood | 1,556 |
| Mid Staffordshire | 1,401 |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 1,139 |
| South East Staffordshire | 1,621 |
| South Staffordshire | 1,557 |
| Stafford | 1,387 |
| Staffordshire Moorlands | 929 |
| Stoke-on-Trent Central | 1,516 |
| Stoke-on-Trent North | 1,417 |
| Stoke-on-Trent South | 1,196 |
| North Warwickshire | 1,378 |
| Nuneaton | 1,471 |
| Rugby and Kenilworth | 1,385 |
| Stratford-on-Avon | 872 |
| Warwick and Leamington | 1,376 |
| Aldridge—Brownhills | 1,253 |
| Birmingham Edgbaston | 1,766 |
| Birmingham Erdington | 2,610 |
| Birmingham Hall Green | 1,780 |
| Birmingham Hodge Hill | 2,415 |
| Birmingham Ladywood | 3,293 |
| Birmingham Northfield | 2,527 |
| Birmingham Perry Barr | 2,488 |
| Birmingham Small Heath | 3,202 |
| Birmingham Sparkbrook | 2,794 |
| Birmingham Yardley | 1,520 |
| Birmingham Selly Oak | 2,156 |
| Coventry North East | 2,819 |
| Coventry North West | 1,617 |
| Coventry South East | 2,303 |
| Coventry South West | 1,437 |
| Dudley East | 2,247 |
| Dudley West | 1,808 |
| Halesowen and Stourbridge | 1,318 |
| Meriden | 2,179 |
| Solihull | 957 |
| Sutton Coldfield | 1,086 |
| Walsall North | 2,294 |
| Walsall South | 2,087 |
| Warley East | 2,316 |
| Warley West | 1,786 |
| West Bromwich East | 1,823 |
| West Bromwich West | 1,829 |
| Wolverhampton North East | 2,637 |
| Wolverhampton South East | 2,144 |
| Wolverhampton South West | 2,089 |
| Amber Valley | 1,006 |
| Bolsover | 1,428 |
| Chesterfield | 1,796 |
| Erewash | 1,458 |
| Derby North | 1,572 |
| Derby South | 2,552 |
| High Peak | 1,158 |
| North East Derbyshire | 1,512 |
| South Derbyshire | 1,082 |
| West Derbyshire | 784 |
| Blaby | 814 |
| Bosworth | 892 |
| Harborough | 687 |

| Constituency | Number |
|---|---|
| Leicester East | 1,570 |
| Leicester South | 2,282 |
| Leicester West | 2,096 |
| Loughborough | 1,005 |
| North West Leicestershire | 965 |
| Rutland and Melton | 861 |
| East Lindsey | 1,588 |
| Gainsborough and Horncastle | 1,189 |
| Grantham | 1261 |
| Holland with Boston | 958 |
| Lincoln | 2,179 |
| Stamford and Spalding | 896 |
| Corby | 1,287 |
| Daventry | 748 |
| Kettering | 830 |
| Northampton North | 1,352 |
| Northampton South | 1,158 |
| Wellingborough | 1,155 |
| Ashfield | 1,276 |
| Bassetlaw | 1,738 |
| Broxtowe | 1,054 |
| Gedling | 1,146 |
| Mansfield | 1,493 |
| Newark | 1,287 |
| Nottingham East | 2,913 |
| Nottingham North | 2,245 |
| Nottingham South | 1,930 |
| Rushcliffe | 1,083 |
| Sherwood | 1,285 |
| Beverley | 1,106 |
| Booth Ferry | 1,348 |
| Bridlington | 1,453 |
| Brigg and Cleethorpes | 1,999 |
| Glanford and Scunthorpe | 1,890 |
| Great Grimsby | 2,112 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull East | 2,398 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull North | 2,742 |
| Kingston-upon-Hull West | 2,495 |
| Harrogate | 1,016 |
| Richmond | 1,107 |
| Ryedale | 889 |
| Scarborough | 1,606 |
| Selby | 1,080 |
| Skipton and Ripon | 740 |
| York | 1,997 |
| Barnsley Central | 1,739 |
| Barnsley East | 1,621 |
| Barnsley West and Penistone | 1,558 |
| Don Valley | 2,134 |
| Doncaster Central | 2,383 |
| Doncaster North | 2,533 |
| Rother Valley | 1,697 |
| Rotherham | 2,006 |
| Sheffield Central | 3,546 |
| Sheffield Attercliffe | 1,795 |
| Sheffield Brightside | 2,539 |
| Sheffield Hallam | 1,930 |
| Sheffield Heeley | 2,427 |
| Sheffield Hillsborough | 1,850 |
| Wentworth | 1,786 |
| Batley and Spen | 1,525 |
| Bradford North | 2,130 |
| Bradford South | 1,737 |
| Bradford West | 2,497 |
| Calder Valley | 1,163 |
| Colne Valley | 1,187 |
| Dewsbury | 1,542 |
| Elmet | 986 |
| Halifax | 1,642 |
| Hemsworth | 1,493 |
| Huddersfield | 1,891 |
| Keighley | 1,024 |
| Leeds Central | 2,286 |
| Leeds East | 2,227 |
| Leeds North East | 1,518 |
| Leeds North West | 1,465 |
| Leeds West | 1,709 |
| Morley and Leeds South | 1,324 |
| Normanton | 1,020 |
| Pontefract and Castleford | 1,791 |
| Pudsey | 878 |
| Shipley | 912 |
| Wakefield | 1,559 |
| City of Chester | 1,812 |
| Congleton | 899 |
| Crewe and Nantwich | 1,454 |
| Eddisbury | 1,512 |
| Ellesmere Port and Neston | 1,989 |
| Halton | 2,651 |
| Macclesfield | 976 |
| Tatton | 1,073 |
| Warrington North | 2,123 |
| Warrington South | 2,095 |
| Altrincham and Sale | 916 |
| Ashton-under-Lyne | 1,418 |
| Bolton North East | 1,602 |
| Bolton South East | 2,048 |
| Bolton West | 1,557 |
| Bury North | 1,322 |
| Bury South | 1,396 |
| Cheadle | 845 |
| Davyhulme | 1,406 |
| Denton and Reddish | 1,643 |
| Eccles | 1,688 |
| Hazel Grove | 1,038 |
| Heywood and Middleton | 1,606 |
| Leigh | 1,982 |
| Littleborough and Saddleworth | 1,141 |
| Makerfield | 2,011 |
| Manchester Central | 3,668 |
| Manchester Blackley | 2,076 |
| Manchester Gorton | 2,254 |
| Manchester Withington | 2,515 |
| Manchester Wythenshawe | 2,180 |
| Oldham Central and Royton | 1,648 |
| Oldham West | 1,230 |
| Rochdale | 1,848 |
| Salford East | 2,537 |
| Stalybridge and Hyde | 1,669 |
| Stockport | 1,394 |
| Stretford | 3,164 |
| Wigan | 2,254 |
| Worsley | 1,746 |
| Blackburn | 2,276 |
| Blackpool North | 1,353 |
| Blackpool South | 1,376 |
| Burnley | 1,565 |
| Chorley | 1,329 |
| Fylde | 820 |
| Hyndburn | 1,138 |
| Lancaster | 1,050 |
| Morecambe and Lunesdale | 1,264 |
| Pendle | 1,109 |
| Preston | 2,081 |
| Ribble Valley | 642 |
| Rossendale and Darwen | 1,232 |
| South Ribble | 1,239 |
| West Lancashire | 2,257 |
| Wyre | 1,004 |
| Birkenhead | 2,723 |
| Bootle | 3,167 |
| Crosby | 1,721 |
| Knowsley North | 3,120 |
| Knowsley South | 3,232 |
| Liverpool Broadgreen | 2,702 |
| Liverpool Garston | 2,684 |
| Liverpool Mossley Hill | 2,397 |
| Liverpool Riverside | 3,551 |
| Liverpool Walton | 3,214 |
| Liverpool West Derby | 3,059 |
| Southport | 1,476 |
| St. Helens North | 2,162 |
| St. Helens South | 2,473 |
| Wallasey | 2,170 |

| *Constituency* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Wirral South | 1,155 |
| Wirral West | 1,287 |
| Barrow and Furness | 1,319 |
| Carlisle | 1,337 |
| Copeland | 1,216 |
| Penrith and the Borders | 987 |
| Westmoreland and Lonsdale | 698 |
| Workington | 1,134 |
| Hartlepool | 2,358 |
| Langbaurgh | 2,427 |
| Middlesbrough | 3,306 |
| Redcar | 2,656 |
| Stockton North | 2,363 |
| Stockton South | 2,227 |
| Bishop Auckland | 1,884 |
| City of Durham | 1,343 |
| Darlington | 1,672 |
| Easington | 1,704 |
| North Durham | 1,871 |
| North West Durham | 1,603 |
| Sedgefield | 1,376 |
| Berwick-upon-Tweed | 973 |
| Blyth Valley | 1,435 |
| Hexham | 726 |
| Wansbeck | 1,500 |
| Blaydon | 1,414 |
| Gateshead East | 1,995 |
| Houghton and Washington | 2,184 |
| Jarrow | 2,022 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central | 1,958 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne East | 2,076 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne North | 1,903 |
| South Shields | 2,034 |
| Sunderland North | 3,008 |
| Sunderland South | 2,501 |
| Tyne Bridge | 2,976 |
| Tynemouth | 1,992 |
| Wallsend | 2,303 |
| Alyn and Deeside | 1,201 |
| Clwyd North West | 1,674 |
| Clwyd South West | 1,126 |
| Delyn | 1,416 |
| Wrexham | 1,400 |
| Carmarthen | 1,213 |
| Ceredigion and Pembroke North | 1,152 |
| Llanelli | 1,471 |
| Pembroke | 1,642 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 1,712 |
| Islwyn | 1,125 |
| Monmouth | 1,010 |
| Newport East | 1,604 |
| Newport West | 1,718 |
| Torfaen | 1,613 |
| Caernarfon | 1,126 |
| Conwy | 1,198 |
| Meirionnydd Nant Conwy | 633 |
| Ynys Mon | 1,460 |
| Bridgend | 1,208 |
| Caerphilly | 1,873 |
| Cynon Valley | 1,355 |
| Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney | 1,687 |
| Ogmore | 1,401 |
| Pontypridd | 1,501 |
| Rhondda | 1,652 |
| Brecon and Radnor | 805 |
| Montgomery | 535 |
| Cardiff Central | 2,315 |
| Cardiff North | 777 |
| Cardiff South and Penarth | 1,715 |
| Cardiff West | 1,832 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 1,557 |
| Aberavon | 1,370 |
| Gower | 1,182 |
| Neath | 1,206 |
| Swansea East | 1,703 |
| Swansea West | 2,022 |
| Roxburgh and Berwickshire | 519 |
| Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale | 518 |
| Clackmannan | 1,406 |
| Falkirk East | 1,574 |
| Falkirk West | 1,459 |
| Stirling | 1,282 |
| Dumfries | 1,166 |
| Galloway and Upper Nithsdale | 1,170 |
| Central Fife | 1,633 |
| Dunfermline East | 1,560 |
| Dunfermline West | 1,166 |
| Kirkcaldy | 1,464 |
| North East Fife | 752 |
| Aberdeen North | 1,280 |
| Aberdeen South | 1,236 |
| Banff and Buchan | 1,020 |
| Gordon | 857 |
| Kincardine and Deeside | 780 |
| Moray | 1,225 |
| Caithness and Sutherland | 664 |
| Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber | 1,638 |
| Ross, Cromarty and Skye | 1,191 |
| East Lothian | 1,109 |
| Edinburgh Central | 2,024 |
| Edinburgh East | 1,454 |
| Edinburgh Leith | 2,245 |
| Edinburgh Pentlands | 1,054 |
| Edinburgh South | 1,604 |
| Edinburgh West | 844 |
| Linlithgow | 1,549 |
| Livingston | 1,524 |
| Midlothian | 1,207 |
| Argyll and Bute | 986 |
| Ayr | 1,413 |
| Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley | 1,838 |
| Clydebank and Milngavie | 1,453 |
| Clydesdale | 1,433 |
| Cumbernauld and Kilsyth | 1,466 |
| Cunninghame North | 1,505 |
| Cunninghame South | 1,713 |
| Dumbarton | 1,510 |
| East Kilbride | 1,616 |
| Eastwood | 988 |
| Glasgow Cathcart | 1,381 |
| Glasgow Central | 2,213 |
| Glasgow Garscadden | 1,978 |
| Glasgow Govan | 1,748 |
| Glasgow Hillhead | 1,970 |
| Glasgow Maryhill | 2,647 |
| Glasgow Pollock | 2,411 |
| Glasgow Provan | 2,841 |
| Glasgow Rutherglen | 2,026 |
| Glasgow Shettleston | 1,904 |
| Glasgow Springburn | 2,592 |
| Greenock and Port Glasgow | 2,440 |
| Hamilton | 2,002 |
| Kilmarnock and Loudoun | 1,575 |
| Monklands East | 1,993 |
| Monklands West | 1,573 |
| Motherwell North | 2,126 |
| Motherwell South | 1,721 |
| Paisley North | 1,536 |
| Paisley South | 1,630 |
| Renfrew West and Inverclyde | 1,102 |
| Strathkelvin and Bearsden | 1,111 |
| Angus East | 1,332 |
| Dundee East | 2,453 |
| Dundee West | 2,125 |
| North Tayside | 823 |
| Perth and Kinross | 1,178 |
| Orkney and Shetland | 438 |
| Western Isles | 442 |
| Column Totals | 915,599 |

### Community Programme

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General what were the numbers of entrants to the community programme in the 12 months to October 1986 and December 1986.

**Mr. Trippier:** In the 12 months to 31 October 1986 there were 301,791 entrants to the community programme, and 307,405 in the 12 months to 12 December 1986.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### City Investment Centres

**Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much time elapsed between the putting in of an inspector and the closure of the share shops of City Investment Centres; and if he will give reasons for the delay.

**Mr. Howard:** An officer was authorised on 28 July 1986, under the provisions of section 447 of the Companies Act 1985, to examine the books and records of City Investment Centres Limited.

On 7 November 1986 a petition for the compulsory winding-up of the company was presented under the provisions of section 440 of the Act and on the same day the Official Receiver was appointed provisional liquidator.

This action was taken as soon as sufficient information was available to support such a serious step. The winding-up order was made on 16 December 1986. There was no delay.

### Community Trade Mark Office

**Mr. Iain Mills** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received from the Community trade mark office committee set up to aid the United Kingdom's bid for the proposed Community trade mark office.

**Mr. Pattie:** The Community trade mark office committee has done much to support the Government's bid and has made representations explaining the advantages both to the United Kingdom and to the proposed Community trade mark system of locating the office in London. It has indicated that the particular site proposed by the Government, at St. Katharine-by-the-Tower, is very suitable. I am pleased that my hon. Friend, in his capacity as chairman of the Community trade mark office committee, has agreed to serve on an action group which I have recently set up to further the United Kingdom bid.

### Guinness plc

**Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his Department's inquiries into the affairs of Guinness Holdings.

**Mr. Howard:** The inspectors are getting on with their investigation of the affairs and membership of Guinness plc as quickly as possible. It would not be in the public interest to give details of their inquiries.

### Patent Office

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will publish the management report on the future of the Patent Office recently produced by a firm of management consultants.

**Mr. Pattie:** No, the report from PE Consulting Services will not be published. It was commissioned by the Patent Office for internal management purposes to assist in the preparation of plans for hiving-off the office from my Department.

### Non-ferrous Metal

**Sir Philip Holland** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the adoption by the Council of the European Communities of export arrangements for non-ferous metal waste and scrap.

**Mr. Pattie:** As requested by the House of Commons Select Committee on European Legislation, I wish to explain the agreement by the Government to the adoption of a Council regulation on export arrangements for certain types of non-ferrous metal waste and scrap before it was possible for the Select Committee to scrutinise it.

The regulation provides for the continuation in 1987 of Community controls under which the export of aluminium and lead waste and scrap to third countries is subject to the issue of surveillance licences, and quota restrictions 11-12 per cent. higher than in 1986 are maintained on exports of copper waste and scrap and copper ash and residues to third countries.

In order that the controls which were in force during 1986 governing the export of non-ferrous waste and scrap to non-EC countries and to Spain could be continued into 1987, it was necessary to reach agreement on the proposed regulation by 31 December 1986. The Council meeting on 22 December was the last in 1986. Had agreement not been reached, difficulties would have been experienced by United Kingdom industry. I regret that normal parliamentary procedures were not followed on this occasion but in the circumstances I hope that the House will understand why it was felt best in the overall United Kingdom interest to act in this way.

### Lloyd's

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reason he has not published the report of his inspectors' inquiry into the affair involving Ian Posgate, Lloyd's and Alexander Howden; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: The hon. Member refers to a substantial interim report by inspectors appointed under section 165(1)*(b)* of the Companies Act 1948 (now section 432(2) of the Companies Act 1985) to investigate and report on the affairs of Alexander Howden Group plc. The report cannot be published at this stage while police inquiries continue as its publication could impede the institution of criminal proceedings.

### Recycled Paper

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what use his Department makes of British made recycled paper for letterhead stationery and notepads.

**Mr. Butcher** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: None of the letterhead stationery or notepads used in my Department is made entirely of recycled material. The papers currently used offer better value for money, and a substantial proportion can contain recycled fibre if the supplying mills wish to use it. I chaired a conference on 22 January which explored the scope for extending the production, supply and use of United Kingdom printing and writing papers containing recycled fibre. One of the results of this conference was an agreement to examine the use of writing paper with a recycled content by public sector bodies. My Department will be part of this exercise, which will examine whether an increase in the use of such paper can be justified on economic grounds.

### Aircraft (Retrofitting)

**Mr. Eastham** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what representations he has received regading the contract for the retrofitting in the United States of America of British Aerospace aircraft belonging to British airlines; what estimate he has made of the employment effects of this contract on British engineering industries; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on the contract for the retrofitting of British aircraft in the United States of America with Rolls-Royce Tay engines; and if Rolls-Royce has given any financial guarantees in connection with this contract.

**Mr. Pattie** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: My Department has received a number of representations from Executive Jet Sales Limited of Newport Pagnell. A decision to re-engine BAe 1-11 aircraft with Rolls-Royce Tay engines is a commercial matter for British Aerospace and Rolls-Royce. It would be for the companies to take account of all the commercial implications, including effects on employment, as appropriate.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Drugs

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent meetings he has had with representatives from the Council of Europe and the European Economic Commission to discuss the potential for closer co-operation on anti-drug work; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** On 20-21 January I chaired a meeting of Ministers of the Council of Europe co-operation group to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking in drugs (the Pompidou group). The Commission of the European Communities was represented at the meeting by a vice-president. Against a background in which drug misuse continues to present the countries of western Europe with a major social problem, we all recognised the need for close co-operation not only amongst members of the Pompidou group but also between the group and other international organisations which are active in this field. We agreed upon a new plan of action to be pursued by the group covering:

*(i)* Practical measures for effective implementation of legislation to confiscate the proceeds of drug trafficking;
*(ii)* Mechanisms to improve co-ordination of controls in major ports and of maritime surveillance;
*(iii)* Role of the media in shaping attitudes to drug misuse;
*(iv)* Role of primary health care personnel and short-term crisis intervention in responding to the needs of drug misusers;
*(v)* Problems related to the operating and funding of treatment facilities;
*(vi)* Encouragement of co-operation and action by municipalities and local action groups;
*(vii)* Misuse of medically prescribed psychotropic drugs;
*(viii)* Review of drugs legislation in member states in order to compare solutions adopted to deal with similar problems;
*(ix)* Preparation of a handbook setting out the division of responsibilities for drug questions at national level;
*(x)* Detection and prevention of drug dependence in the armed forces;
*(xi)* Exchange of information on the role and effects of methadone in treatment.

Copies of a declaration agreed by Ministers in the course of the meeting have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

### Soviet Union (Students)

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many students from *(a)* Kiev and *(b)* the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are studying in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waddington:** Information held on the immigration and nationality department computer indicates that there are about 150 citizens of the USSR studying in the United Kingdom. The computer records do not include their place of residence in the USSR.

### Prisons (Strip Searches)

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (i) how many category A women prisoners there are in Her Majesty's prison Durham and (ii) how many strip searches have been made on category A prisoners in Her Majesty's prison Durham in the last six months of 1986 as an absolute figure and on a monthly basis, indicating *(a)* strip searches before and after consultation with legal advisers, *(b)* after visits and *(c)* after cell change, wing search and cell search.

**Mr. Mellor:** There are at present four women prisoners in Durham prison who are, or who are provisionally, in category A. During the last six months of 1986, the followimg numbers of strip searches of women prisoners who are, or who are provisionally, in category A were carried out in Durham prison.

| | *after legal visits* | *after other visits* | *at the time of cell changes; during wing searches and cell searches* | *Others* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| July | nil | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| August | nil | 5 | 6 | nil | 11 |
| September | 3 | 6 | 4 | nil | 13 |
| October | nil | 8 | 6 | nil | 14 |
| November | 1 | 10 | 8 | nil | 19 |
| December | 1 | 7 | 3 | nil | 11 |
| Totals | 5 | 38 | 28 | 3 | 74 |

## Ticket Touts

**Mr. Mason** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to the nuisance caused by the operations of theatre ticket touts in London selling tickets outside theatres; what evidence he has as to the extent to which these touts are organised; what evidence he has as to whether theatres and ticket agencies are involved; if he will consider an investigation into these activities; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The resale of tickets is not a criminal offence and, therefore, not a matter for the police. The police deal with any criminal matters which may arise, such as obstruction of the highway.

**Mr. Mason** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce legislation to control the activities of ticket touts.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have no plans to introduce legislation directed specifically at ticket touts. Their activities may, however, be subject in particular cases to provisions of the general criminal law (for example, on obstruction of the highway).

## News International Works

**Mr. Peter Shore** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police into whether TNT lorries leaving the News International printing works at Wapping are allowed not to observe speed limits in built-up areas; and whether they are allowed to disregard other features of the highway code, including the regulation by traffic lights.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Commissioner informs me that all vehicles leaving the News International plant are required to observe road traffic regulations.

## Toxteth Riots

**Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many claims for compensation following the Toxteth riots in 1981 are outstanding with the residuary body at the latest date;

(2) if he will make a statement on the claim for compensation by Mr. C. H. Woo still outstanding since the Toxteth riots in 1981.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Responsibility for receiving and considering claims under the Riot (Damages) Act 1986 rests with the local compensation authority, which for the Merseyside area is the Merseyside police authority. The Home Office is not involved and no central record of claims is kept.

## Computer Network (Data Transfers)

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department(1) in relation to the planned computer network proposed by Electronic Data Systems, what kind of data he proposes to obtain from or transfer to the Department of Health and Social Security; what is the anticipated number of such transfers; and for what purpose those tranfers will take place;

(2) in relation to the planned computer network proposed by Electronic Data Systems, what kind of data he proposes to obtain from or transfer to the Inland Revenue; what is the anticipated number of such transfers; and for what purpose those transfers will take place;

(3) in relation to the planned computer network proposed by Electronic Data Systems, what kind of data he proposes to obtain from or transfer to the Customs and Excise; what is the anticipated number of such transfers; and for what purpose those transfers will take place.

**Mr. Hurd** [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 January 1987 at col. *666*]: I regret that my earlier answer was incomplete. The full answer is as follows.

A Government data network is being considered as a means of minimising the data communications, development and running costs of Government Departments (initially up to four). Electronic Data Systems is one of several companies which responded to a request for information issued by the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency on behalf of Her Majesty's Government. No proposals have yet been received, and a consortium which includes Electronic Data Systems is only one of a number of consortia invited to submit proposals. There are at present no plans to use such a network, if it were established, for exchange of information between the Home Office and either the Inland Revenue or the Department of Health and Social Security. There are no plans for exchange of information between the Home Office and Her Majesty's Customs and Excise, other than the properly authorised transfer of data via existing networks which provide an inquiry-only service on the vehicle keepers index held on the police national computer unit. A formal decision has yet to be made as to whether the PNCU network would be transferred to the Government data network, if it were established.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Electricity Board

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to privatise the Northern Ireland Electricity Board.

**Mr. Viggers:** I have no plans to privatise Northern Ireland electricity.

### EC Vocational Training Regulations

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has regarding the legality within the European Economic Community of the vocational training regulations pertaining to general practice in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Needham:** The Medical Practitioners (Vocational Training) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1979 as amended do not contravene European Community law.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Isle of Dogs Enterprise Zone

**Mr. Mikardo** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether the London Docklands Development Corporation will be required to sell land to the Canary Wharf Consortium at the open market value for office land in the Isle of Dogs enterprise zone; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether the district valuer will set a price for the sale of land sold by the London Docklands Development Corporation to the Canary Wharf Consortium; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** No. But when the London Docklands Development Corporation sells land it is required to obtain a certificate from an independent valuer that the land price is not below current market value and, if that is unobtainable, it needs specific consent from my Department to the disposal of its land at a lower price. That valuation may be given by the district valuer. For Canary Wharf, however, it is our intention to obtain an independent, professional view that the terms of the agreement overall, and not simply the land price, are satisfactory.

**Mr. Mikardo** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what information he has as to the average price per acre of land for offices in the Isle of Dogs enterprise zone;

(2) what information he has as to the average price per acre of land zoned for housing on the Isle of Dogs.

**Mr. John Patten:** Individual prices vary widely for a number of reasons. But the price of land for both residential and office use appears to be about £1·5 million per acre.

### London Docklands Development Corporation

**Mr. Leighton** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many jobs there were in docklands in the London borough of Newham at the inception of the London Docklands Development Corporation; and how many there are now.

**Mr. John Patten:** The 1981 census of employment revealed that there were 12,400 jobs in the docklands area of the London borough of Newham. The LDDC's latest survey shows that in February 1985 the number of jobs in the same area was 9,746. Of these, 3,200 have been created since 1981.

### Housing (Basildon)

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many housing units the Basildon Development Corporation and New Town Commission have built since the town's inception and in each of the last five years;

(2) how many shared ownership housing units the Basildon Development Corporation and New Town Commission have built since the town's inception and in each of the last five years;

(3) how many houses the Basildon Development Corporation and New Town Commission have built since the town's inception; how many of those have been to purchase; and how many to rent.

**Mr. John Patten:** Since designation of Basildon new town in 1949, and in each of the last five years, Basildon Development Corporation and the Commission for the New Towns have built the following housing units at Basildon:

*(a) Housing for rent*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Total since 1949 | 24,553 |
| 1982-83 | 144 |
| 1983-84 | 58 |
| 1984-85 | 37 |
| 1985-86 | Nil |
| 1986-87 | Nil |

*(b) Housing for shared ownership*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Total since 1949 | 1,045 |
| 1982-83 | 237 |
| 1983-84 | 274 |
| 1984-85 | 153 |
| 1985-86 | 236 |
| 1986-87 | 64 |

*(c) Housing for purchase*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Total since 1949 | 4,564 |
| 1982-83 | 467 |
| 1983-84 | 352 |
| 1984-85 | 167 |
| 1985-86 | 248 |
| 1986-87 | 251 |

*Notes:*

1. Of the 24,553 dwellings built initially for rent, 10,085 have so far been sold to tenants.
2. The 1,045 shared ownership dwellings and the great majority of the 4,564 dwellings for purchase have been built by private developers in partnership with the new town corporation.
3. 1986-87 figures are taken to 31 December 1986.

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many sheltered housing units the Basildon Development Corporation and New Town Commission have built since the town's inception and in each of the last five years.

**Mr. John Patten:** The total number of sheltered housing units built by Basildon Development Corporation and the Commission for the New Towns in Basildon is 748. In each of the last five years, the figures are:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | 82 |
| 1983-84 | 27 |
| 1984-85 | 65 |
| 1985-86 | 71 |
| 1986-87 | 30 |

*Notes:*

1. The figures include sheltered dwellings built for sale by private developers in partnership with the new town corporation.
2. The 1986-87 figures are taken to 31 December 1986.

## Housing

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give central Government expenditure on housing per head of population in England, for each year since 1979-80.

**Mr. John Patten:** The figures are as follows, for public sector gross capital expenditure on housing per head of adult population:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 91 |
| 1980-81 | 84 |
| 1981-82 | 73 |
| 1982-83 | 94 |
| 1983-84 | 113 |
| 1984-85 | 111 |
| 1985-86 | 96 |

## Dacorum Borough Council

**Mr. Robert B. Jones** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all sites registered by Dacorum borough council under part X of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980.

**Mr. John Patten:** The land register contains no sites owned by Dacorum borough council. There are 15 registered sites within the district owned by other bodies. These are as follows.

| *Site Number* | *Area (Acres)* | *Location* |
|---|---|---|
| | | *British Railways Board* |
| BR1 | 1·434 | Berkhamsted: Land adjacent to Station Car Park |
| BR3 | 5·0 | Part of Hemel Hempstead to Harpenden closed branch line |
| | | *Hertfordshire County Council* |
| CC1 | 7·42 | Land in Chambersbury Lane, Leverstock Green, Hemel Hempstead |
| CC2 | 7·0 | Land at Caddington Hall, Markyate |
| CC3 | 0·676 | Land to the rear of Nos. 8-10 Manor Street, Berkhampsted |
| | | *Eastern Electricity* |
| EE1 | 1·39 | Flaunden Lane, Bovingdon |
| EE2 | 7·07 | Highwood Hall, Bunkers Lane, Apsley, Hemel Hempstead |
| | | *Commission for the new towns* |
| NT2 | 72·4 | Bryant and May Lane, Three Cherry Trees Lane |
| NT3 | 1·05 | Redbourn Road, Hemelite 'A', Hemel Hempstead |
| NT7 | 21·25 | Gadebridge Lane |
| NT8 | 3·13 | Baconsthorpe |
| NT9 | 22·0 | Paradise/St. Albans Road |
| NT12 | 2·6 | Breakspear Way |
| NT14 | 1·63 | East of Maxted Close |
| NT15 | 10·0 | Boundary Way |

## Local Government Expenditure

**Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the amount expended by each metropolitan district council per head of population living within their boundaries for each of the last six years for which figures are available.

**Mr. Chope:** The information is as follows.

In 1986-87, net current expenditure per head increased because of additional responsibilities taken over by metropolitan districts following the abolition of the metropolitan county councils.

*Net current expenditure per head—Metropolitan Districts*

£

| | *1981-82* £ | *1982-83* £ | *1983-84* £ | *1984-85* £ | *1985-86* £ | *1986-87* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Greater Manchester* | | | | | | |
| Bolton | 274 | 295 | 309 | 325 | 349 | 426 |
| Bury | 268 | 300 | 302 | 317 | 334 | 400 |
| Manchester | 402 | 422 | 421 | 469 | 526 | 641 |
| Oldham | 278 | 299 | 312 | 342 | 359 | 435 |
| Rochdale | 329 | 353 | 372 | 384 | 409 | 483 |
| Salford | 300 | 318 | 326 | 351 | 358 | 438 |

| | 1981-82<br>£ | 1982-83<br>£ | 1983-84<br>£ | 1984-85<br>£ | 1985-86<br>£ | 1986-87<br>£ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Stockport | 258 | 270 | 283 | 296 | 313 | 381 |
| Tameside | 291 | 321 | 339 | 358 | 372 | 450 |
| Trafford | 261 | 282 | 303 | 305 | 327 | 406 |
| Wigan | 288 | 315 | 330 | 346 | 350 | 416 |
| *Merseyside* | | | | | | |
| Knowsley | 348 | 358 | 391 | 421 | 444 | 522 |
| Liverpool | 360 | 385 | 410 | 427 | 463 | 543 |
| St. Helens | 292 | 317 | 335 | 339 | 368 | 427 |
| Sefton | 256 | 272 | 283 | 290 | 313 | 384 |
| Wirral | 278 | 297 | 310 | 316 | 335 | 414 |
| *South Yorkshire* | | | | | | |
| Barnsley | 287 | 308 | 329 | 357 | 346 | 409 |
| Doncaster | 293 | 313 | 331 | 343 | 359 | 428 |
| Rotherham | 284 | 294 | 311 | 338 | 349 | 427 |
| Sheffield | 312 | 337 | 364 | 379 | 418 | 489 |
| *Tyne and Wear* | | | | | | |
| Gateshead | 282 | 306 | 326 | 341 | 366 | 452 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne | 330 | 375 | 398 | 405 | 433 | 507 |
| North Tyneside | 289 | 320 | 335 | 367 | 396 | 497 |
| South Tyneside | 306 | 336 | 355 | 370 | 408 | 499 |
| Sunderland | 291 | 301 | 329 | 353 | 362 | 436 |
| *West Midlands* | | | | | | |
| Birmingham | 303 | 312 | 332 | 344 | 377 | 466 |
| Coventry | 291 | 309 | 332 | 352 | 385 | 439 |
| Dudley | 232 | 254 | 269 | 275 | 298 | 374 |
| Sandwell | 298 | 309 | 347 | 355 | 373 | 450 |
| Solihull | 251 | 273 | 285 | 296 | 307 | 367 |
| Walsall | 305 | 335 | 336 | 342 | 359 | 436 |
| Wolverhampton | 317 | 330 | 359 | 370 | 398 | 476 |
| *West Yorkshire* | | | | | | |
| Bradford | 303 | 338 | 357 | 373 | 405 | 464 |
| Calderdale | 294 | 319 | 328 | 348 | 372 | 465 |
| Kirklees | 270 | 297 | 308 | 326 | 352 | 439 |
| Leeds | 267 | 277 | 298 | 306 | 317 | 398 |
| Wakefield | 273 | 291 | 313 | 313 | 339 | 414 |

*Note:* Net current expenditure is defined broadly as rate fund spending on services (i.e. excluding debt charges and other non-current items), net of income (such as sales, fees and charges, non-relevant specific grant), but gross of rate income, rate support grant etc.

## Housing Corporation (Liverpool)

**Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the projects which are funded by the Housing Corporation in Liverpool at the latest date.

**Mr. John Patten:** The question of allocations to housing associations within the gross provision by the Secretary of State for the Environment to the Housing Corporation for its approved development programme is a matter for the Housing Corporation.

**Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total funding by the Housing Corporation for projects in Liverpool in each of the past five years.

**Mr. John Patten:** The question of allocations to particular areas within the gross provision by the Secretary of State for the Environment to the Housing Corporation for its approved development programme is a matter for the Housing Corporation.

## Residuary Bodies

**Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied with the working of the residuary bodies; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** Yes. The seven residuary bodies are making satisfactory progress towards their own wind-up for which the legislation sets a period of five years from 1 April 1986. In practice, I expect that some of the bodies will have completed their task of disposing of or transferring their inherited functions, property, rights and liabilities well before the end of the period. I have regular meetings with the chairmen of the residuary bodies, the most recent of which took place yesterday.

## Climatic Variability

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to implement the recommendations relating to his responsibilities in the report "Social and Economic Responses to Climatic Variability in the United Kingdom".

**Mr. Tracey:** I will answer this question shortly.

## Council House Sales

**Mr. Burt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each London borough for the years 1980 to 1986 the numbers of tenants who have initiated purchase of their council house, and the numbers who have completed; and if he will break these figures down to show purchases of flats and houses.

**Mr. Tracey:** I will answer this question shortly.

### Water Services

**Sir Michael Shaw** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has received any further response from the Yorkshire water authority following the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on the water services it provides; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** The report has been given further consideration by the authority and I am placing a copy of its second response in the Library of the House. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission report had commented on the substantial improvement in the efficiency of the authority in recent years, and Yorkshire Water's initial response in 1985 showed, that the authority was already taking effective action on the five matters to which the report recommended that priority be given.

In the second response, Yorkshire Water reports the action taken on over 50 proposals. It has made significant progress in implementing all the priority recommendations. In particular, I am pleased to report that the authority has embarked on a programme of locational surveys of all sewers and is implementing the recommendations of its working group on water mains. Performance measures have been identified in physical output, manpower, and financial terms, and a data base of unit costs for most services has been established. Yorkshire Water has also fixed levels for investment based on targets for improvement in levels of service, and assesses individual investment projects on the basis of the ratio between customer benefits and cost. Resources were allocated within the region with reference to these processes for the first time in 1985.

The MMC report pointed the way to greater efficiency and effectiveness in the authority's performance. Marked improvements have been made and I congratulate the management and staff, as well as the chairman, Mr. Gordon Jones, on the positive way in which Yorkshire Water has responded to the report.

I will be drawing Yorkshire Water's second progress report to the attention of the other water authorities, and inviting them to consider which of the lessons learnt here could be applied in their region.

### Water Legislation

**Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham), *Official Report*, 18 December 1986, columns *685-6*, if he will list the names of individuals and companies which received fees in 1985-86 and 1986-87; what fees each received; and, in each case, what services were provided.

**Mr. John Patten** [*pursuant to his reply*, Friday 23 January 1987]: I have nothing to add to the answer which my right hon. Friend gave to the hon. Member for Copeland (Dr. Cunningham) on 18 December 1986.

**Dr. John Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, further to his reply of 18 December, column *685* about expenditure incurred in preparation for water legislation, he will provide a detailed analysis of the expenditure on fees incurred in 1985-86 and 1986-87.

**Mr. Ridley** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: I have nothing to add to the answer that I gave the hon. Member on 18 December 1986 at column *685-86*.

### Property Services Agency

**Mr. Straw** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when the Property Services Agency management provided its cost appraisal in respect of the reorganisation of the York area office; what conclusions he has reached on it; to whom copies have been made available; and if a copy will be placed in the Library.

**Mr. Chope** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: I am considering various options for the reorganisation of PSA and I hope to announce a decision soon. A summary of the management benefits to the agency as a whole and the costs and savings of one particular option were sent to the national trade unions concerned on 31 October. When I announce my decision I shall let the hon. Member have the overall cost appraisal relating to the option chosen.

### Departmental Staff

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will state how many lawyers were employed in his Department on 1 April and 1 October in 1984, 1985 and 1986 and if he will give the establishment figures for the same dates; and if he will state how many different individuals have occupied these posts, giving the average length of employment, in the period 1 April 1984 to 1 October 1986.

**Mr. Ridley** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: The number of lawyers employed in the Department for the period 1 April 1984 to 1 October 1986, compared with the complemented posts for the period are:

| | *Staff in post* | *Complement* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 April 1984 | 37½ | 41 |
| 1 April 1985 | 35½ | 41 |
| 1 April 1986 | 37½ | 38 |
| 1 October 1986 | 38½ | 40½ |

(October figures are not available for 1984 and 1985 but should not be significantly different).

The average length of service of lawyers who were employed in this Department during the period 1 April 1984 to 1 October 1986 is 12 years.

The turnover of legal staff during the period resulted in 47 individuals occupying posts in the Department's legal directorate.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Namibia

**Mr. Anderson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons Her Majesty's Government opposed the extension of the EEC sanctions package to Namibia.

**Mr. Eggar:** We joined other European partners in excluding Namibia from the measures taken against South

Africa because we do not believe that to apply such measures to Namibia would advance the common objective of Namibian independence.

### Miss Elena Gurevich

**Mr. Burt** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* as much information as is in his possession about Miss Elena Gurevich of Moscow; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** Elena Gurevich was born in 1964. Her family first applied to emigrate to Israel in 1974. Their application was refused on the grounds that her mother had had access to classified information. The same grounds have been cited for refusal of all subsequent visa applications. We deplore the refusal of the Soviet authorities to grant Elena Gurevich and her family a visa and we shall continue to press them to allow their citizens the basic human right to emigrate.

### Diplomatic Immunity

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish up-to-date figures giving the number of vehicles with diplomatic registration and the number of alleged motoring offences committed by drivers of these vehicles, for each diplomatic mission.

**Mr. Eggar:** There are at present 3,970 cars with diplomatic registration. There were 77 offences in 1986. This represents a considerable reduction from earlier years.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Leicester, East on 22 January, he will now take steps to amend the London diplomatic list to include the full name and address of all spouses, children under 18 and those other relations covered by the Vienna convention of all diplomats registered and based in London.

**Mr. Eggar:** The London diplomatic list has existed in its present form for many years. It fulfils very well the function of providing basic information about senior officers of diplomatic missions in London.

## ENERGY

### Severn Barrage

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will include in his consultations on the studies of the proposed Severn barrage all major contractors involved in the construction of *(a)* the Thames barrage, *(b)* the Avon bridge, *(c)* the Severn bridge and *(d)* the Humber bridge.

**Mr. David Hunt:** Consultation with all relevant bodies will take place within the programme of studies on tidal power announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy in July last year.

### Sellafield

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if he will now make available for independent assessment all the details of the incident at Windscale involving the radioactive contamination of a worker on 15 December 1980 and all the documents relating to subsequent inquiries;

(2) if he will now make available for independent assessment all the details of the incident at Windscale involving the radioactive contamination of two process workers and a fitter towards the end of December 1980 and all the documents relating to subsequent inquiries;

(3) if he will now make available for independent assessment all the details of the incident at Windscale involving possible radioactive contamination of a maintenance worker on 26 March 1981; and all the documents relating to subsequent inquiries.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer already given to him on 8 December 1986 at columns 5 to 6 of the *Official Report*.

### Combined Heat and Power

**Mr. Burt** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will report on progress made on plans for combined heat and power schemes as an economic use of energy; what information he has about the operation so far of the lead city scheme; and whether any such schemes have been discontinued or are proposed to be discontinued.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The three cities selected for grant assistance under the lead city scheme have made considerable progress in their feasibility studies on CHP/DH. The Belfast and Edinburgh consortia are due to complete their studies this spring. The Government have now received the report from the Leicester consortium who are considering how best to take their project forward. There are no plans to discontinue any of the schemes in these lead cities.

### British Gas

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether members of British forces posted overseas were able to apply for shares in British Gas on exactly the same terms as United Kingdom residents; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** Members of British forces posted overseas (excluding those resident in the United States or Canada) were able to apply for shares in British Gas under the same terms and conditions as anybody else.

However, for overseas legal as well as practical reasons, the British Gas share information office was not able to send prospectuses abroad.

Those overseas who contacted the share information officer were, therefore, advised to arrange for a stockbroker, solicitor or bank in this country to make the application on their behalf.

## SCOTLAND

### Dundee

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the companies and firms which have closed down in Dundee since 1979.

**Mr. Lang:** No; comprehensive information is not available, and details of individual companies cannot be disclosed for reasons of confidentiality.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland in how many instances since 1979 the Manpower Services Commission was notified of redundancies in Dundee; and how many jobs were involved.

**Mr. Lang:** There are no comprehensive statistics on redundancies. The following information relates to the number of redundancies, affecting 10 or more workers, notified to the Manpower Services Commission as due to occur in the Dundee travel-to-work area during the period January 1980 to December 1986. The number of reports received was 306, confirming 16,712 redundancies.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the number of people unemployed in Dundee as per standard industrial classification order when such figures were last available.

**Mr. Lang:** Information for May 1982 is given in the table below. It cannot be provided for any later date because the industrial analysis on which it is based was then discontinued.

*Number of unemployed registrants in the Dundee Jobcentre area in May 1982*

| *Industry in which previously employed (1968 Standard Industrial Classification)* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1. Agriculture, forestry, fishing | 204 |
| 2. Mining and quarrying | 88 |
| 3. Food, drink and tobacco | 571 |
| 4. Coal and petroleum products | 10 |
| 5. Chemicals and allied industries | 34 |
| 6. Metal manufacture | 125 |
| 7. Mechanical engineering | 149 |
| 8. Instrument engineering | 608 |
| 9. Electrical engineering | 270 |
| 10. Shipbuilding and marine engineering | 349 |
| 11. Vehicles | 28 |
| 12. Metal goods not elsewhere specified | 92 |
| 13. Textiles | 1,619 |
| 14. Leather, leather goods and fur | 5 |
| 15. Clothing and footwear | 125 |
| 16. Bricks, pottery, glass, cement | 25 |
| 17. Timber, furniture etc. | 137 |
| 18. Paper, printing and publishing | 214 |
| 19. Other manufacturing | 122 |
| 20. Construction | 1,531 |
| 21. Gas, electricity and water | 55 |
| 22. Transport and communications | 516 |
| 23. Distributive trade | 1,525 |
| 24. Insurance, banking, etc. | 175 |
| 25. Professional and scientific services | 723 |
| 26. Miscellaneous services | 1,528 |
| 27. Public administration and defence | 826 |
| — None or not classified by industry | 3,417 |
| Total | 15,071 |

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the number of people unemployed in Dundee by age group; and what were the corresponding figures in 1979.

**Mr. Lang:** The information is not available in the precise form requested. The number of unemployed claimants by age group in the city of Dundee district on 14 July 1983 and on 9 October 1986 (the earliest and most recent dates for which such information can be provided) was as shown in the table below. As a result of the change in the timing of the count in March 1986, these figures cannot be directly compared.

*City of Dundee district*

| *Age group* | *July 1983* | *October 1986* |
|---|---|---|
| Under 17 | 315 | 330 |
| 17 | 711 | 604 |
| 18 | 930 | 682 |
| 19 | 805 | 759 |
| 20 to 24 | 3,365 | 3,365 |
| 25 to 29 | 2,090 | 2,256 |
| 30 to 34 | 1,512 | 1,502 |
| 35 to 39 | 1,219 | 1,295 |
| 40 to 44 | 973 | 993 |
| 45 to 49 | 1,019 | 916 |
| 50 to 54 | 1,102 | 1,054 |
| 55 to 59 | 1,209 | 1,166 |
| 60 and over | 384 | 207 |
| TOTAL ALL AGES | 15,634 | 15,129 |

This information is available in the Library.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people in Dundee have currently been unemployed for one year or more; and what was the corresponding figure in 1979.

**Mr. Lang:** The information is not available in the precise form requested. The number of claimants who had been unemployed for one year or more in the city of Dundee district on 14 July 1983 and on 9 October 1986 (the earliest and most recent dates for which such information can be provided) was 5,797 and 6,686 respectively. As a result of the change in the timing of the count in March 1986, these figures cannot be directly compared.

This information is available in the Library.

## Regional and Islands Council Elections

**Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of those who were eligible to vote at the regional and islands council elections in 1986 were *(a)* domestic ratepayers, *(b)* spouses of domestic ratepayers and *(c)* people who receive any statutory relief from domestic rates.

**Mr. Ancram:** It is estimated that, of the 4 million people eligible to vote in the 1986 regional and islands council elections, 49 per cent. were domestic ratepayers and 30 per cent. were spouses of domestic ratepayers. All domestic ratepayers qualify under statute for domestic rate relief. It is estimated that some 42 per cent. of them (20 per cent. of electors) currently also qualify on income grounds for full or partial rate rebates under social security and housing benefit legislation. A relatively small number of domestic ratepayers also enjoy reduced rates under arrangements outside the housing benefit scheme, probably several thousand under the Rating (Disabled Persons) Act 1978 and 130,000 under the Rating (Revaluation Rebates) (Scotland) Act 1985, but information is not available about the numbers of those entitled to more than one kind of relief or rebate.

## GEAR Project

**Mr. David Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many jobs have been lost in the GEAR area of Glasgow since the GEAR project was set up; and if he will break down these figures according to industry classification.

**Mr. Lang:** The information requested is not available from official sources.

### National Curriculum

**Mr. Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any intention to introduce a national curriculum for Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The curriculum in Scotland has for many years been based on a national consensus of views articulated through the consultative committee on the curriculum, the Secretary of State's principal advisory body in these matters, and reflected in the requirements of the Scottish Examination Board. The Secretary of State will continue to ensure that advice is available to Scottish schools which will secure the provision of a coherent and consistent curriculum.

### Government Aid to Businesses

**Mr. Corrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now make it his policy to answer questions about how much Government financial aid has been given to specific companies in Scotland since 1979.

**Mr. Lang:** A wide variety of aids are provided to companies by the Government and their agencies. It would not be practicable to publish information about Government financial aid to specific companies because of the confidentiality surrounding certain awards and the costs which would be incurred in bringing together the necessary information. Details of regional development grant payments and of regional selective assistance offers, above certain limits in both cases, are regularly published in *British Business*.

### Tayside Health Board

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now increase the annual budget of Tayside health board to ensure that there is a 1·5 per cent. annual increase to take account of demographic changes in populatiin and advances in medical technology.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The SHARE formula ensures that Tayside health board receives a fair proportion of the additional resources made available to the National Health Service in Scotland to take account of demographic change and technological advance. In addition the Government are encouraging the board to initiate projects to improve efficiency and thereby release additional funds for patient care.

## WALES

### Local Authority Expenditure

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing how much has been granted in *(a)* Gwynedd and *(b)* Wales for local authorities capital expenditure on housing, education, personal social services, roads and transport and urban programme in 1985-86 and 1986-87; and what are the comparable budgeted figures for each category for 1987-88.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Capital allocations for the financial years 1985-86 and 1986-87 and initial capital allocations for 1987-88 for the Gwynedd area and the whole of Wales are as follows:

*£ 000's*

| | *Gwynedd area*[1] | | | *All Wales* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Category* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88*[3] *(Initial)* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88*[3] *(Initial)* |
| Housing | 7,363 | 8,364 | 7,818 | 109,144 | 138,435 | 127,644 |
| Urban Programme[2] | 693 | 1,007 | — | 20,050 | 20,743 | — |
| Over £5 million road schemes | 6,951 | 875 | 770 | 53,021 | 39,492 | 43,101 |
| All other services (including PRNI/SP)[4] | 7,539 | 11,182 | 13,341 | 70,432 | 108,729 | 144,711 |

[1] County and district councils.

[2] Allocations for 1987-88 have not yet been issued.

[3] Issued to date.

[4] Specific capital allocations for welsh local authorities are only made for housing, urban programme, road schemes costing over £5 million, projects of regional or national importance and special projects (PRNI/SP). A general capital allocation is made for all other services. It is based on a formula and allocations for particular services are not separately identifiable.

### Housing Investment

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether, at current levels of expenditure, he estimates that there will be an underspend on housing investment by Welsh local authorities in 1986-87.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** On the basis of figures currently available an underspend is not expected.

### Tourism

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many people were employed in the tourist industry in Wales between 1970 and 1975 and 1975 and 1980, and the last available figures; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The information is not available in the form requested. Tourism is not an industry in the conventional, statistical sense of a group of businesses with a distinctive output of goods and/or services. A Wales Tourist Board study published in September 1977, however, concluded that about 83,000 were employed in the industry directly or indirectly. The board estimates that the numbers employed have grown since then to at least 90,000.

### Housing (Repair Grants)

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the grant available for house repairs in *(a)* Wales, *(b)* South Wales and *(c)* Cardiff between 1970 to 1975, 1975 to 1980 and 1980 to 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The level of grant available for the repair of dwellings is the same throughout Wales. Repair grants were introduced in 1974 at a rate of £800 per dwelling. That level increased to £1,500 in 1977, to £2,000 and subsequently £4,000 in 1980 and to its present level of £4,800 in 1983.

### Pupil-Teacher Ratio

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the pupil ratio at schools in Wales between 1970 to 1975, 1975 to 1980, and 1980 to 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The pupil-teacher ratio within maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools is given in the following table:

| *At January each year* | *Pupil teacher ratio within schools* |
|---|---|
| 1970 | 22·0 |
| 1975 | 20·2 |
| 1980 | 19·1 |
| 1985 | 18·8 |

### Financial Assistance

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing for each year, the audited Government financial assistance that has been given to *(a)* the Welsh Development Agency, *(b)* Mid Wales Development and *(c)* the Wales Tourist Board in each year since 1979.

**Mr. Edwards:** The information is contained in the annual reports for 1979-80 to 1985-86 of each of the bodies, copies of which are in the Library of the House.

### Venture Capital (WDA)

**Mr. Rogers** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many proposals for venture capital were received by the Cardiff consortium section of the Welsh Development Agency in 1986; and how many proposals were approved in that period.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The Welsh Development Agency is not responsible for the operation of the Cardiff consortium. I suggest that the hon. Gentleman contacts the consortium directly at its offices in Cardiff.

### Elderly People

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many and what proportion of people of pensionable age in each district authority area in Wales live alone.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The most recent information is that collected at the 1981 census and is given in the following table:

*Persons of pensionable age*[1]

| | *Number in one person households*[2] | *As a percentage of all persons of pensionable age* |
|---|---|---|
| Alyn and Deeside | 2,795 | 26·4 |
| Colwyn | 4,015 | 29·1 |
| Delyn | 2,893 | 27·4 |
| Glyndwr | 2,253 | 27·3 |
| Rhuddlan | 3,953 | 28·7 |
| Wrexham Maelor | 5,579 | 29·6 |
| Total Clwyd | 21,488 | 28·3 |
| Carmarthen | 2,654 | 25·6 |
| Ceredigion | 3,429 | 28·2 |
| Dinefwr | 2,070 | 25·8 |
| Llanelli | 4,231 | 27·2 |
| Preseli | 3,176 | 28·1 |
| South Pembrokeshire | 1,858 | 27·0 |
| Total Dyfed | 17,418 | 27·1 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 4,312 | 28·8 |
| Islwyn | 2,899 | 27·1 |
| Monmouth | 3,080 | 25·5 |
| Newport | 6,133 | 28·3 |
| Torfaen | 4,003 | 28·6 |
| Total Gwent | 20,427 | 27·8 |
| Aberconwy | 3,742 | 28·0 |
| Arfon | 3,248 | 33·6 |
| Dwyfor | 1,705 | 27·2 |
| Meirionnydd | 2,189 | 30·8 |
| Ynys Mon | 3,354 | 28·3 |
| Total Gwynedd | 14,238 | 29·5 |
| Cynon Valley | 3,666 | 29·7 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 3,299 | 30·6 |
| Ogwr | 5,403 | 24·8 |
| Rhondda | 4,374 | 27·4 |
| Rhymney Valley | 4,137 | 28·0 |
| Taff-Ely | 3,490 | 27·6 |
| Total Mid Glamorgan | 24,369 | 27·6 |
| Brecknock | 2,155 | 26·9 |
| Montgomery | 2,356 | 25·7 |
| Radnor | 1,117 | 24·7 |
| Total Powys | 5,628 | 25·9 |
| Cardiff | 13,568 | 28·1 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 4,492 | 26·2 |
| Total South Glamorgan | 18,060 | 27·6 |
| Afan | 2,517 | 27·2 |
| Lliw Valley | 3,076 | 26·6 |
| Neath | 3,466 | 27·0 |
| Swansea | 9,111 | 27·1 |
| Total West Glamorgan | 18,170 | 27·0 |
| Wales Total | 139,798 | 27·7 |

[1] Retirement age is defined as aged 65 and over for males and aged 60 and over for females.

[2] Excludes absent households.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many people there are of retirement age in each district authority area of Wales; and how many and what proportion of these are *(a)* married, *(b)* single men and *(c)* single women.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The most recent information is that collected at the 1981 census. The data in the following table are derived from the county reports.

*Usually resident population of retirement age*[1]

| | Total Number | Married | | Single Males[2] | | Single Females[2] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | per cent. | Number | per cent. | Number | per cent. |
| Alyn and Deeside | 10,578 | 6,146 | 58·1 | 224 | 2·1 | 522 | 4·9 |
| Colwyn | 13,782 | 7,338 | 53·2 | 280 | 2·0 | 1,529 | 11·1 |
| Delyn | 10,569 | 5,745 | 54·4 | 242 | 2·3 | 725 | 6·9 |
| Glyndwr | 8,252 | 4,381 | 53·1 | 281 | 3·4 | 733 | 8·9 |
| Rhuddlan | 13,769 | 7,564 | 54·9 | 249 | 1·8 | 1,144 | 8·3 |
| Wrexham Maelor | 18,855 | 10,102 | 53·6 | 477 | 2·5 | 1,080 | 5·7 |
| Total Clwyd | 75,805 | 41,276 | 54·5 | 1,753 | 2·3 | 5,733 | 7·6 |
| Carmarthen | 10,356 | 5,144 | 49·7 | 448 | 4·3 | 975 | 9·4 |
| Ceredigion | 12,171 | 6,235 | 51·2 | 459 | 3·8 | 1,288 | 10·6 |
| Dinefwr | 8,023 | 4,202 | 52·4 | 254 | 3·2 | 607 | 7·6 |
| Llanelli | 15,553 | 8,135 | 52·3 | 442 | 2·8 | 979 | 6·3 |
| Preseli | 11,321 | 5,879 | 51·9 | 347 | 3·1 | 812 | 7·2 |
| South Pembrokeshire | 6,874 | 3,690 | 53·7 | 199 | 2·9 | 521 | 7·6 |
| Total Dyfed | 64,298 | 33,285 | 51·8 | 2,149 | 3·3 | 5,182 | 8·1 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 14,950 | 7,799 | 52·2 | 517 | 3·5 | 663 | 4·4 |
| Islwyn | 10,692 | 5,844 | 54·7 | 299 | 2·8 | 406 | 3·8 |
| Monmouth | 12,068 | 6,535 | 54·1 | 448 | 3·7 | 815 | 6·8 |
| Newport | 21,698 | 11,544 | 53·2 | 557 | 2·6 | 1,194 | 5·5 |
| Torfaen | 14,003 | 7,787 | 55·6 | 402 | 2·9 | 638 | 4·6 |
| Total Gwent | 73,411 | 39,509 | 53·8 | 2,223 | 3·0 | 3,716 | 5·1 |
| Aberconwy | 13,367 | 7,127 | 53·3 | 290 | 2·2 | 1,377 | 10·3 |
| Arfon | 9,660 | 4,562 | 47·2 | 270 | 2·8 | 865 | 9·0 |
| Dwyfor | 6,263 | 3,136 | 50·1 | 257 | 4·1 | 668 | 10·7 |
| Meironnydd | 7,111 | 3,532 | 49·7 | 237 | 3·3 | 774 | 10·9 |
| Ynys Mon | 11,858 | 6,288 | 53·0 | 381 | 3·2 | 984 | 8·3 |
| Total Gwynedd | 48,259 | 24,645 | 51·1 | 1,435 | 3·0 | 4,668 | 9·7 |
| Cynon Valley | 12,332 | 6,129 | 49·7 | 405 | 3·3 | 774 | 6·3 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 10,793 | 5,249 | 48·6 | 379 | 3·5 | 701 | 6·5 |
| Ogwr | 21,769 | 11,601 | 53·3 | 694 | 3·2 | 1,282 | 5·9 |
| Rhondda | 15,985 | 7,769 | 48·6 | 555 | 3·5 | 1,072 | 6·7 |
| Rhymney Valley | 14,773 | 7,616 | 51·6 | 458 | 3·1 | 698 | 4·7 |
| Taff-Ely | 12,632 | 6,543 | 51·8 | 382 | 3·0 | 723 | 5·7 |
| Total Mid Glamorgan | 88,284 | 44,907 | 50·9 | 2,873 | 3·3 | 5,250 | 6·0 |
| Brecknock | 8,005 | 4,132 | 51·6 | 370 | 4·6 | 702 | 8·8 |
| Montgomery | 9,166 | 4,943 | 53·9 | 453 | 4·9 | 754 | 8·2 |
| Radnor | 4,525 | 2,525 | 55·8 | 228 | 5·0 | 363 | 8·0 |
| Total Powys | 21,696 | 11,600 | 53·5 | 1,051 | 4·8 | 1,819 | 8·4 |
| Cardiff | 48,253 | 24,599 | 51·0 | 1,341 | 2·8 | 3,667 | 7·6 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 17,173 | 9,383 | 54·6 | 350 | 2·0 | 1,099 | 6·4 |
| Total South Glamorgan | 65,426 | 33,982 | 51·9 | 1,691 | 2·6 | 4,766 | 7·3 |
| Afan | 9,251 | 4,927 | 53·3 | 276 | 3·0 | 450 | 4·9 |
| Lliw Valley | 11,569 | 6,108 | 52·8 | 334 | 2·9 | 699 | 6·0 |
| Neath | 12,828 | 6,721 | 52·4 | 353 | 2·8 | 746 | 5·8 |
| Swansea | 33,621 | 17,828 | 53·0 | 812 | 2·4 | 2,147 | 6·4 |
| Total West Glamorgan | 67,269 | 35,584 | 52·9 | 1,775 | 2·6 | 4,042 | 6·0 |
| Wales Total | 504,448 | 264,788 | 52·5 | 14,950 | 3·0 | 35,176 | 7·0 |

[1] Retirement age is defined as aged 65 and over for males and aged 60 and over for females.

[2] Does not include persons who are either widowed or divorced.

## Eye Patients

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the National Health Service hospitals in Wales which dispense spectacles to hospital eye patients on site.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The following NHS hospitals in Wales dispensed spectacles on site in 1985, the latest year for which statistics are available:

St. David's, Carmarthen
Glanrhyd
Hensol
Parc
Brecon War Memorial
Llandrindod Wells
Adelina Patti
South Pembrokeshire

## Derelict Land Reclamation

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total spending on derelict land reclamation in Wales in each year since 1979; what are the estimates for 1987-88 and 1988-89; what was the total funding for derelict land reclamation and environmental improvements by the Welsh Development Agency in each year since 1979; and what are the estimates for 1987-88 and 1988-89.

**Mr. Edwards:** The information is as follows:

*Land Reclamation and Environmental Improvement*

*£ million*

| | *Budget allocation* | *Outturn* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 7·4 | 7·7 |
| 1980-81 | 7·9 | 9·3 |
| 1981-82 | 9·6 | 11·1 |
| 1982-83 | 10·9 | 10·3 |
| 1983-84 | 13·6 | 12·0 |
| 1984-85 | 7·3 | 9·3 |
| 1985-86 | 9·5 | 10·9 |
| 1986-87 | 12·7 | [1]12·7 |

[1] Estimated outturn.

As I announced in the House on 8 December, the agency's land reclamation and environmental improvement budget for each of the next three financial years will be about £4 million, or 30 per cent. higher than the initial budget allocation for 1986-87.

## NHS Staff

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) what is the average gross weekly earnings of *(a)* secretarial and *(b)* clerical staff in the National Health Service in Wales; and how this compares with the average gross weekly earnings of secretarial and clerical staff in general;

(2) how many *(a)* secretarial staff and *(b)* clerical workers in the National Health Service in Wales have gross weekly earnings of (i) £120 or more, (ii) between £100 and £120, (iii) between £80 and £100 and (iv) less than £80; and what proportion of the total each category (i) to (iv) represents.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The information is not readily available. I will write to the hon. Gentleman and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of *(a)* secretarial staff and *(b)* clerical workers in the National Health Service in Wales are women.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** At the end of September 1986, almost 100 per cent. of secretarial staff and almost 91 per cent. of clerical workers[1] employed in the National Health Service were women.

[1] Clerical officers and higher clerical officers.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will set up a review into the conditions of work and pay of secretarial staff and clerical workers in the National Health Service in Wales.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Pay and conditions of service for this group of staff are negotiated within the Administrative and Clerical Whitley Council, which is currently conducting a grading structure review.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he is satisfied that present levels of salaries of secretarial staff and clerical workers in the National Health Service in Wales are sufficient to attract adequately qualified applicants for vacant posts.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** I have been given no indication that the salary levels negotiated within the Whitley Council are failing to attract suitably qualified secretarial and clerical staff into the NHS in Wales.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many secretarial and clerical staff are employed by the National Health Service in Wales; and what proportion they represent of the total National Health Service work force in Wales.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** At the end of September 1986, the National Health Service in Wales employed 4,984 persons on secretarial[1] and clerical grades, representing 7·5 per cent. of all persons employed. These employees account for 4,238 whole-time equivalent posts, representing 7·7 per cent. of all such posts.

[1] Includes superintendent of typists.

## Government Expenditure Plans

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will break down the figures in table 3.17 of the Government's expenditure plans for 1987-88 to 1989-90, Cmnd. 56-II, on the same basis as tables 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13 and 3.14 of the same publication.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** There are no Welsh equivalents to Tables 3.6 and 3.11. For the rest, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer that I gave on 22 January at columns *686-96* to my hon. Friend the Member for Ynys Mon (Mr. Best).

## Local Authority Rents

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to the average rent increases made by each Welsh housing authority in the current financial year.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The average level of rent increases made by Welsh housing authorities during 1986-87 is shown in the following table:

*Average level of rent increases per dwelling 1986-87*

| *Local Authority* | *£* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Alyn and Deeside | 0·73 | 5·5 |
| Colwyn | 1·00 | 6·0 |
| Delyn | 0·63 | 3·7 |
| Glyndwr | 0·55 | 3·6 |
| Rhuddlan | 0·36 | 2·7 |
| Wrexham Maelor | 0·29 | 2·6 |
| Carmarthen | 0·22 | 1·3 |
| Ceredigion | 1·29 | 7·8 |
| Dinefwr | 0·66 | 4·5 |
| Llanelli | 0·58 | 3·8 |
| Preseli | 0·49 | 3·3 |
| South Pembrokeshire | 0·56 | 3·3 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 1·00 | 4·9 |
| Islwyn | 0·77 | 5·2 |
| Newport | −0·14 | −0·8 |
| Torfaen | 0·29 | 1·6 |
| Aberconwy | 1·28 | 7·5 |
| Arfon | −0·38 | −2·3 |
| Dwyfor | −0·19 | −1·4 |
| Meirionnydd | 0·65 | 4·0 |
| Ynys Mon | 0·76 | 4·9 |
| Cynon Valley | 1·11 | 6·5 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 0·49 | 2·9 |
| Ogwr | 0·96 | 4·7 |
| Rhondda | 2·37 | 13·4 |
| Rhymney Valley | 1·04 | 5·8 |
| Taff-Ely | 0·31 | 1·8 |
| Brecknock | 0·31 | 1·9 |
| Montgomeryshire | 0·28 | 1·7 |
| Radnor | −0·12 | −0·6 |
| Cardiff | 1·01 | 5·4 |

| *Local Authority* | £ | *Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| Vale of Glamorgan | −0·14 | −0·8 |
| Port Talbot | 0·39 | 2·6 |
| Lliw Valley | 1·21 | 7·3 |
| Neath | 0·64 | 4·2 |
| Swansea | 0·41 | 2·5 |
| Wales | 0·63 | 3·8 |

*Note:* Figures for Monmouth have not yet been received.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Retirement

Q99. **Sir David Price** asked the Prime Minister what she is doing to put into effect the Government's concept of a decade of retirement for British citizens between the age of 60 and 70 years.

**The Prime Minister:** Work is under way to re-examine the assumptions about retirement patterns and labour market behaviour which underpin any estimates of the overall cost of changes in pension age. Since cost is the main obstacle to introducing a flexible pension scheme on the lines suggested in the Green Paper on social security in June 1985, and since cost estimates are highly sensitive to changes in these basic assumptions, this work is a necessary foundation to further consideration of this issue.

### Port Glasgow

Q136. **Dr. Godman** asked the Prime Minister if she has any plans to visit Port Glasgow in the near future.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### Engagements

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 27 January.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

### Electronic Data Systems

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if she will list the current contracts between Government Departments and Electronic Data Systems; and if she is satisfied with co-ordination between the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence, and the Department of Health and Social Security on this work.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government do not hold centrally information on all information technology contracts between Government Departments and suppliers of goods and services.

In those cases where the Central Computer and Telecommunications Agency acts as agent for Departments, central records are held. There are no current contracts between CCTA and Electronic Data Systems.

There is no need for co-ordination except where a contract involves more than one Department.

## DEFENCE

### Fylingdales

11. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the progress of the modernisation programme at Fylingdales.

**Mr. Freeman:** The modernisation programme is still at the planning stage. As I told the hon. Member for Ryedale (Mrs. Shields) on 4 November 1986, a notice of proposed development has been submitted to the north Yorkshire moors national park committee and a memorandum of understanding concluded with the United States.

### Army Regimental System

12. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans to institute changes in the regimental system of the British Army.

**Mr. Freeman:** No.

### Crown Proceedings Act 1947

14. **Mr. Evennett** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received concerning Her Majesty's Government's decision on section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act 1947.

48. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations has he received regarding giving retrospection to the abolition of section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act.

**Mr. Freeman:** Since my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced on 8 December 1986 *Hansard*, columns 86-87 that the Government had decided that section 10 should be repealed we have received four representations: one questioning whether repeal is necessary and three urging that it should be made retrospective.

### NATO Defence Strategy

15. **Mr. Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to propose changes in Northern Atlantic Treaty Organisation defence strategy with regard to conventional weapons.

**Mr. Younger:** No. NATO's strategy of flexible response and the role of conventional weapons within that strategy remains fully valid and the best basis for maintaining defence.

### Nuclear Weapons Testing (Nevada)

16. **Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether British nuclear weapon testing in Nevada is planned to continue.

**Mr. Younger:** As long as a comprehensive test ban treaty fails to be negotiated, the United Kingdom will continue to conduct tests in order to maintain the effectiveness of its nuclear capabilities.

### Royal Dockyards

18. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the allocation of contracts for the management of the royal dockyards.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** My hon. Friend will be aware that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State intends to make a statement about the royal dockyards this afternoon and he will therefore understand if I refrain from answering his question.

### Procurement

19. **Mr. Galley** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the defence procurement budget was spent with British companies in 1985-86.

26. **Mr. Andy Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total cost of equipment and services purchased by his Department in 1985-86 from British companies.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** In 1985-86, just over 90 per cent. of the MOD's gross equipment expenditure of some £8·5 billion was spent with British companies, or on collaborative projects from which United Kingdom industry benefitted as a participant.

43. **Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what procedures exist for appeals or for investigation of complaints about his Department's decisions on procurement and the protection of research and development products; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** It is the Ministry's policy to treat all companies in a scrupulously fair and impartial manner. Any company which is unsuccessful in a competitive tendering may seek a de-briefing from the Ministry. More generally any company which considers it has a complaint about a procurement decision should first raise the matter with the staff responsible for the procurement. If that action does not resolve the complaint, it should be referred as appropriate to a more senior level.

The Ministry respects the ownership of intellectual property rights in its procurement. If use is made of a patented invention the patentee is notified as soon as practicable and terms are agreed for its use.

### Harrier GR5

20. **Mr. Patchett** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will now specify the role of the Harrier GR5.

**Mr. Stanley:** The primary role of the Harrier GR5 will be to provide direct air support of NATO ground forces, but it could also be used in deeper interdiction sorties against a wide range of targets. We have no plans to give Harrier GR5 a nuclear strike role.

### European Fighter Aircraft

21. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make a statement on the current progress on the European fighter aircraft.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave him on 9 December 1986 at column *141*.

36. **Mr. Hayward** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations have taken place in the last month with his European ministerial colleagues on the interim engine for the European fighter aircraft.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** None. A process of international competitive tender for the selection of the interim engine for the European fighter aircraft is in progress.

### United States Secretary of State for Defence

22. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met the United States Secretary of State for Defence; and what subjects were discussed.

**Mr. Younger:** The United States Defence Secretary and I last met together privately in London on 8 December 1986, following the NATO Defence Planning Committee meeting in Brussels, when a range of issues of mutual defence interest was discussed.

### Forces (Costs)

23. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the cost of the British nuclear deterrent and the cost of conventional forces at current values.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** As shown in table 2·5 of the statement on the Defence Estimates 1986, the cost of the strategic nuclear force is estimated to be £658 million for the current financial year. Broadly speaking, therefore, the balance of the defence budget is available for conventional forces.

### Falkland Islands

24. **Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to visit the Falklands;

29. **Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his recent visit to the Falkland Islands.

44. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about his visit to the Falkland Islands.

**Mr. Younger:** I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the member for Chipping Barnet (Mr. Chapman) earlier today.

### RAF Vehicle (Accident)

25. **Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to improve safety, following the accident involving the Royal Air Force convoy in Wiltshire on Saturday 10 January.

**Mr. Stanley:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) earlier today.

### Recruiting

27. **Sir David Price** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the current position of recruiting for the armed forces; and in what particular categories recruiting is falling short of expectations.

**Mr. Freeman:** Recruitment to the services is generally satisfactory with 32,651 men and women joining the armed force in 1985-86. There are shortfalls in officer recruitment and certain other rank specialisation where there is traditionally fierce competition with the civil sector.

### Nuclear Weapons (Transport)

28. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many representations he has received regarding the methods of transportation throughout the United Kingdom of nuclear warheads and nuclear missiles; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Stanley:** In 1986 and so far this year my Department has received about 60 letters from right hon. and hon. Members and directly from members of the public concerned with various aspects of this issue.

37. **Mr. Loyden** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he is satisfied with the practices and regulations governing the movement of any convoys in which nuclear weapons may be involved.

**Mr. Stanley:** It has been the practice of successive Governments, for security reasons, not to comment on the methods of transporting nuclear weapons. However, the arrangements for ensuring their safe transport remain constantly under review.

39. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether, in the light of the incident in Wiltshire on 10 January in which a military convoy crashed, Her Majesty's Government intend to review their procedures concerning the road transport of nuclear weapons.

**Mr. Stanley:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) earlier today.

41. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will now make it his practice to give the numbers of nuclear weapon convoys which travel *(a)* by road, *(b)* by rail and *(c)* by other forms of transport.

**Mr. Stanley:** No.

### Nuclear Defence Policy

30. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received regarding the United Kingdom's nuclear defence policy.

45. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent representations he has received regarding Britain's nuclear defence policy.

**Mr. Stanley:** In 1986 and so far this year my Department has received around 800 letters and standard postcards from right hon. and hon. Members and directly from members of the public concerned with various aspects of United Kingdom and NATO nuclear defence policy.

### Territorial Army (South-West)

31. **Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the present position regarding the increased manpower authorised and the additional units to be established for the Territorial Army in the south-west of England.

**Mr. Freeman:** Plans to form a new TA infantry battalion in south west England, as part of the phase II expansion of the TA, were published in defence open government document (DOGD) 84/02, a copy of which is in the Library. We are currently considering some possible modifications to the detailed arrangements.

### Service Men (Pay and Conditions)

32. **Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the total number of complaints received by his Department in 1986 from service men about pay and conditions of service.

**Mr. Freeman:** Complete records are not held centrally and they could be assembled only at disproportionate cost. However, a total of 47 complaints from service personnel about pay and conditions were dealt with centrally by the Ministry of Defence in London during 1986. Of these, nine were settled by reference to single service boards under normal complaints procedures.

### Trident

33. **Mr. Sumberg** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of the Trident programme.

**Mr. Younger:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Leicester, South (Mr. Spencer) earlier today.

46. **Mr. Franks** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what amount is contractually committed to the Trident submarine programme to be paid by June 1987, October 1987, April 1988 and June 1988, respectively; and what are the cancellation costs for each of these dates.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answers that I gave to the hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull, North (Mr. McNamara) on 12 and 15 January 1987 (cols. *98* and *308* respectively). It is not the practice to give forecasts of cost or commitment profiles for projects on a year by year or more frequent basis. The cost of cancellation would depend upon contractors' properly incurred liabilities at the time of cancellation.

### Pilkington Group

34. **Mr. Beaumont-Dark** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the approximate value of orders of defence equipment ordered from the Pilkington group of companies for 1987.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The approximate value of orders for defence equipment placed with the Pilkington group of companies so far in financial year 1986-87 is £40 million.

### Auxiliary Oil Replenishment Vessel

35. **Mr. Nicholas Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made with the design and construction of the first of class AOR vessel.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The design is progressing satisfactorily. Fabrication is expected to start later this year.

### Tornado Aircraft

38. **Mr. Robert B. Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of overseas orders for Tornado aircraft.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** There are currently two overseas orders for Tornado. Both are progressing satisfactorily.

### Nimrod Airframes

40. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for Defence to what use he intends to put the Nimrod airframes originally purchased in connection with the airborne early warning programme.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave him on Monday 12 January.

### Job Dispersal

42. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to move his Department's jobs away from the south of England.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Bolton, North-East (Mr. Thurnham) on 11 March 1986 at column *802*.

### Anti-tactical Ballistic Missile

47. **Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assessments he has made of the case for developing an anti-tactical ballistic missile for deployment in the European theatre; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The requirement for the defence of the European theatre against tactical ballistic missiles is currently being studied within NATO. The United Kingdom is participating fully in these studies.

### Binary Chemical Weapons

49. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consultations he or his Department have held or are holding on binary chemical weapons with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation military authorities to draw up the current year's ministerial guidance.

**Mr. Stanley:** Consultations on the ministerial guidance for 1987 have not yet started and in any case will be confidential.

### Land (Training)

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Defence in how many areas his Department has sought to purchase or extend land already in its possession for training purposes indicating *(a)* the area, *(b)* the number of hectares involved, *(c)* the purpose of the training and *(d)* the number of public rights of way involved.

**Mr. Freeman:** During the current financial year the Department has sought to purchase or extend land in its possession for training purposes as follows:

| *(a)* *Area* | *(b)* *Number of hectares* | *(c)* *Purpose* | *(d)* *Number of public rights of way* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Swynnerton | 1·15 | Dry training | None |
| Nesscliff | 50·02 | Dry training | None |
| Salisbury Plain | 882·18 | Dry training | None |
| Leek | 34·8 | Dry training | None |
| Sennybridge | 15·79 | Dry training | None |
| Hullavington | 12·14 | Dry training | None |
| Ash Ranges | 49·96 | Dry training | 1 |
| Warcop | 346 | Dry training | 1 |
| Catterick/Feldom | 18 | Dry training | None |
| Holcombe Moor | 378 | Dry training | 19 |
| Beckingham | 128 | Dry training | 3 |
| Garelochhead | 1,480 | Dry training | None |
| Magilligan | 95 | Dry training | None |
| Aborfield | 68 | Dry training | None |
| Exeter | 3·5 | Dry training | None |
| Dartmoor | 0·33 | Dry training | None |
| Hollingbourne, Kent | 700·4 | Dry training | 30 |
| Alkham Valley, Kent | 123·2 | Dry training | 6 |
| Cinque Ports Training Area | 76·8 | Dry training | 2 |
| Stanford Principal Training Area | 1,375·2 | Dry training | 6 |
| Crowborough, East Sussex | 4·6 | Dry training | None |
| Langport, Somerset | 85 | Range safety area | 3 |

Not all the Department's proposals to acquire land have been successful.

### Fixed Price Contracts

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what steps are taken to ensure that, in the fixed price contracts for his Department, sufficient flexibility is allowed to enable latest developments to be incorporated into the relevant defence product; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** A basic requirement of a fixed price contract is a clearly defined specification of the work. It is Ministry policy to disturb such specifications as little as possible, but where a worthwhile operational or technical improvement was proposed consideration would be given to whether, exceptionally, the contract should be amended in the interests of overall value for money.

### RAF Northolt

**Mr. Shersby** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has any plans to dispose of RAF Northolt; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** RAF Northolt remains an operational RAF station and there are no plans to dispose of the site. The potential for improving the facilities for civil air users is being considered and this may involve the development of a civil enclave within the station.

**Mr. Shersby** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what representations he has received from the Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise concerning additional civilian flights at RAF Northolt; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if it remains his policy to retain the existing maximum limit of 28 flights a day at RAF Northolt; if he will consider the noise implications of any increase in the existing average number of movements; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** No such representations have been received. There are no plans to increase the existing ceiling of 28 civilian flights per day at RAF Northolt, a limit set in order to minimise disturbance to local residents.

### Royal Marine Officers (Correspondence)

**Mr. Cyril D. Townsend** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will initiate an inquiry into the recent public disclosure of a letter between the honorary Captain General and the Commandant General of the Royal Marines concerning a former Royal Marine officer.

**Mr. Younger:** I can confirm that such an inquiry has been instituted.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Universities and Polytechnics

**Mr. Michael Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what assessment his Department has made of the current demand for places at universities and polytechnics for *(a)* computer sciences, *(b)* electrical engineering, *(c)* mechanical engineering and *(d)* mechanical production; and what proportion of students he estimates are turned down for places on these courses.

**Mr. Walden:** Information is not available on total demand for places in higher education to study these subjects. Statistics on applications to universities and polytechnics for entry in 1986, through the national admissions systems, are set out in the tables—but there is significant overlap between them. It is estimated that overall about 50 per cent. of applicants to universities also apply to polytechnics; estimates by subject are not currently available. Applicants to universities and polytechnics may also apply to other colleges or higher education which are not included in a national admissions system and for which data on numbers of candidates is thus not available.

The numbers of candidates and acceptances for United Kingdom university full-time and sandwich undergraduate courses in 1986 via the Universities Central Council on Admissions are as follows:

*Universities United Kingdom 1986*

| | *Candidates with subject of first preference as shown*[1] *(1)* | *Accepted candidates for subject shown* *(2)* | *Acceptance rate (per cent.)* *(2) ÷ (1)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Computer Sciences | 4,020 | 1,900 | 47 |
| Electrical/electronic engineering | 4,008 | 2,384 | 59 |
| Mechanical engineering | 3,675 | 2,246 | 61 |
| Production engineering | 559 | 310 | 55 |

[1] Including candidates who fail to achieve entry requirements.

The total numbers of applications and estimated numbers of candidates for full-time and sandwich first degree courses at polytechnics in England and Wales in 1986, via the Polytechnics Central Admissions System, and the estimated numbers of students enrolling on these courses are as follows:

*Polytechnics England and Wales 1986*

| | *Total Applications for the subjects shown*[1] *(1)* | *Estimated number of candidates for the subjects shown*[1 2] *(2)* | *Numbers of students enrolling (provisional)*[3] *(3)* | *Estimated Acceptance Rate (per cent.) (3) ÷ (2)*[3] *(4)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Computer Sciences | 15,384 | 4,400 | 1,800 | 41 |
| Electrical/electronic engineering | 8,436 | 2,400 | 1,900 | 79 |
| Mechanical engineering | 12,099 | 3,450 | 900 | 26 |
| Production engineering | 1,534 | 450 | 200 | 44 |

[1] Including candidates who fail to achieve entry requirements.

[2] Estimated on assumption that overall average number of applications per candidate (3·5) also holds for each subject.

[3] Estimated from provisional counts of student enrolments.

### Ministerial Speeches

**Mr. Stephen Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many official speeches he has made on the general subject of education in each of the last four years.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** This information is not available in the form requested.

Since I took office in May last year I have made some 18 major speeches on various aspects of education policy. In the three previous years the comparable figures in respect of my predecessor were:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| May 1983 to April 1984 | 13 |
| May 1984 to April 1985 | 14 |
| May 1985 to April 1986 | 14 |

### Bogus Degrees and Diplomas

**Mr. Prentice** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what studies have been made by his Department on the subject of bogus degrees or diplomas; what representations he has received; what evidence he has about the growth of the problem; and whether he will make a statement;

(2) if he will introduce legislation to regulate bogus educational qualifications, and, in particular, bogus degrees; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will make a statement on the list prepared for the Council of Europe of institutions where alleged qualifications are not generally recognised in Europe; and whether Her Majesty's Government will press for the publication of this list;

(4) whether Her Majesty's Government will hold discussions with other countries in the European Community, and with the European Commission, with a view to joint action against the purveyors of bogus degrees or diplomas.

**Mr. Walden:** The Government recognise that the problem exists, although they have no accurate information about its extent. My right hon. Friend has received a number of representations from individuals, including several hon. Members, and from the College of Preceptors, the British Council and the Open University.

The Government deplore the activities of those offering bogus qualifications. Proposals for legislation to curtail such activities have been studied, in particular those put forward by my right hon. Friend the Member for Daventry. Legislation remains a possibility, but there are substantial practical difficulties, not least in relation to European Community law and the position of respectable foreign universities operating in this country. The Government will continue to consider the position, but see difficulties in introducing early legislation.

The Council of Europe has shelved plans to publish a revised version of its list of non-recognised institutions. The Government have strong reservations about the value of such a list, which would need to be both comprehensive and frequently updated in order to be effective.

The Government have no plans to hold discussions with other European Community members with a view to joint action. An approach to the European Commission is, however, intended in order to overcome the difficulties referred to about Community law.

### Expenditure

**Mr. Radice** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a table showing the recurrent grant to the universities for each year since 1978-79, in cash and constant prices, excluding those amounts representing compensation for changes in home student fees and compensation for redundancy and early retirement.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** Recurrent grant to the universities for each year since 1978-79, in cash and constant prices, excluding additional funds provided by the Government for compensation for redundancy and early retirement, is as follows:

*University Grants Committee recurrent grant*

| *Financial years* | *Cash* | *Real terms*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 602·0 | 1,135·6 |
| 1979-80 | 728·5 | 1,175·9 |
| 1980-81 | 942·9 | 1,283·0 |
| 1981-82 | 968·0 | 1,198·9 |
| 1982-83 | 1,126·2 | 1,300·8 |
| 1983-84 | 1,192·2 | 1,317·8 |
| 1984-85 | 1,253·2 | 1,328·4 |
| 1985-86 | 1,282·6 | 1,282·6 |
| 1986-87 | [2]1,317·8 | 1,279·4 |

[1] At 1985-86 prices using the GDP deflator.

[2] Estimate.

The table excludes the additional funding provided by the Government of £50 million and £30 million in the financial years 1982-83 and 1983-84 for redundancy and premature retirement compensation. The University Grants Committee paid a total of £153·1 million in compensation for redundancy and early retirement between the academic years 1981-82 and 1984-85.

The £158·2 million increase in recurrent grant between the financial years 1981-82 and 1982-83 included an addition in respect of compensation for changes in home student fees, which is reflected in the provision for later years.

### Schools (Capital Allocations)

**Mr. Radice** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the allocation to each local education authority for capital expenditure on schools, in cash and constant prices, in each year since 1978-79.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him today.

**Mr. Ashdown** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a table showing local authority capital allocations in respect of schools for each year since 1978-79, in cash terms, and in 1978-79 prices.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker** [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 January 1987]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave today to the hon. Member for Durham, North (Mr. Radice).

**Mr. Radice** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what was the capital allocation made to each local education authority for expenditure on schools, in cash and constant prices, for each year since 1979.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker** [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 January 1987, c. *373*]: The information requested for the years

1981-82 to 1987-88 is set out in tables 1 and 2. Before 1981-82 local education authorities did not receive block allocations but were notified annually, in the context of a rolling programme, of a limit on the value of building starts in the following year.

*Table 1*

*Allocation of LEA prescribed capital expenditure for schools[1], 1981-82 to 1984-85*

*£ thousands*

| *Local education authority* | *1981-82* | | *1982-83* | | *1983-84* | | *1984-85 (Schools and FHE)[3]* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Cash prices[4]* | *Constant prices[2]* | *Cash prices[3]* | *Constant prices[2]* | *Cash prices* | *Constant prices* | *Cash prices* | *Constant prices* |
| Barking | 508 | 629 | 284 | 328 | 335 | 370 | 1,442 | 1,529 |
| Barnet | 748 | 926 | 257 | 297 | 368 | 407 | 2,453 | 2,600 |
| Bexley | 875 | 1,084 | 518 | 598 | 993 | 1,098 | 845 | 896 |
| Brent | 1,063 | 1,317 | 777 | 897 | 967 | 1,069 | 1,678 | 1,779 |
| Bromley | 1,158 | 1,434 | 797 | 921 | 738 | 816 | 492 | 522 |
| Croydon | 509 | 630 | 300 | 347 | 704 | 778 | 1,227 | 1,301 |
| Ealing | 1,165 | 1,443 | 598 | 691 | 391 | 432 | 1,347 | 1,428 |
| Enfield | 1,003 | 1,242 | 409 | 472 | 242 | 268 | 576 | 611 |
| Haringey | 1,477 | 1,829 | 365 | 1,577 | 829 | 916 | 1,090 | 1,155 |
| Harrow | 488 | 604 | 254 | 293 | 220 | 243 | 523 | 554 |
| Havering | 373 | 462 | 390 | 450 | 284 | 314 | 216 | 229 |
| Hillingdon | 1,684 | 2,086 | 1,669 | 1,928 | 877 | 969 | 1,068 | 1,132 |
| Hounslow | 1,768 | 2,190 | 1,309 | 1,512 | 1,743 | 1,927 | 3,063 | 3,247 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 292 | 362 | 202 | 233 | 529 | 585 | 1,330 | 1,410 |
| Merton | 662 | 820 | 357 | 412 | 224 | 248 | 993 | 1,053 |
| Newham | 2,869 | 3,553 | 2,028 | 2,342 | 1,997 | 2,207 | 2,039 | 2,161 |
| Redbridge | 486 | 602 | 909 | 1,050 | 861 | 952 | 1,006 | 1,066 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | 361 | 447 | 166 | 192 | 354 | 391 | 735 | 779 |
| Sutton | 185 | 229 | 146 | 169 | 198 | 219 | 451 | 478 |
| Waltham Forest | 1,692 | 210 | 1,587 | 1,833 | 1,200 | 1,326 | 889 | 942 |
| Inner London | 10,566 | 13,086 | 10,335 | 11,937 | 6,288 | 6,951 | 9,703 | 10,285 |
| Birmingham | 5,557 | 6,882 | 3,786 | 4,373 | 2,614 | 2,889 | 6,484 | 6,873 |
| Coventry | 1,809 | 2,240 | 1,641 | 1,895 | 1,875 | 2,073 | 2,919 | 3,094 |
| Dudley | 1,280 | 1,585 | 1,174 | 1,356 | 2,575 | 2,846 | 3,516 | 3,727 |
| Sandwell | 1,018 | 1,261 | 837 | 967 | 841 | 930 | 1,705 | 1,807 |
| Solihull | 178 | 220 | 184 | 213 | 304 | 336 | 723 | 766 |
| Walsall | 2,867 | 3,551 | 2,535 | 2,928 | 1,080 | 1,194 | 1,026 | 1,088 |
| Wolverhampton | 2,111 | 2,615 | 865 | 999 | 1,283 | 1,418 | 2,375 | 2,518 |
| Knowsley | 453 | 561 | 389 | 449 | 655 | 724 | 895 | 949 |
| Liverpool | 2,443 | 3,026 | 859 | 992 | 650 | 718 | 4,243 | 4,498 |
| St. Helens | 3,202 | 3,966 | 2,779 | 3,210 | 2,160 | 2,388 | 2,111 | 2,238 |
| Sefton | 940 | 1,164 | 312 | 360 | 550 | 608 | 824 | 873 |
| Wirral | 1,500 | 1,858 | 618 | 714 | 2,332 | 2,578 | 2,117 | 2,244 |
| Bolton | 2,692 | 3,334 | 2,151 | 2,484 | 1,601 | 1,770 | 1,536 | 1,628 |
| Bury | 1,699 | 2,104 | 579 | 669 | 709 | 784 | 1,030 | 1,092 |
| Manchester | 1,702 | 2,108 | 1,165 | 1,346 | 2,523 | 2,789 | 6,997 | 7,417 |
| Oldham | 1,289 | 1,596 | 852 | 984 | 695 | 768 | 968 | 1,026 |
| Rochdale | 1,827 | 2,263 | 1,795 | 2,073 | 869 | 961 | 1,452 | 1,539 |
| Salford | 1,593 | 1,973 | 1,040 | 1,201 | 457 | 505 | 822 | 871 |
| Stockport | 1,424 | 1,764 | 1,257 | 1,452 | 937 | 1,036 | 1,770 | 1,876 |
| Tameside | 1,630 | 2,019 | 1,359 | 1,570 | 1,234 | 1,364 | 1,690 | 1,791 |
| Trafford | 467 | 578 | 255 | 295 | 518 | 573 | 1,027 | 1,089 |
| Wigan | 3,477 | 4,306 | 2,611 | 3,016 | 2,427 | 2,683 | 2,004 | 2,124 |
| Barnsley | 625 | 774 | 398 | 460 | 367 | 406 | 401 | 425 |
| Doncaster | 1,581 | 1,958 | 1,406 | 1,624 | 1,044 | 1,154 | 1,226 | 1,300 |
| Rotherham | 821 | 1,017 | 388 | 448 | 464 | 513 | 471 | 499 |
| Sheffield | 2,431 | 3,011 | 1,656 | 1,913 | 2,342 | 2,589 | 3,007 | 3,188 |
| Bradford | 5,291 | 6,553 | 4,427 | 5,113 | 6,635 | 7,334 | 6,707 | 7,110 |
| Calderdale | 1,268 | 1,570 | 936 | 1,081 | 1,228 | 1,357 | 1,090 | 1,155 |
| Kirklees | 2,722 | 3,371 | 2,830 | 3,269 | 2,519 | 2,784 | 3,753 | 3,978 |
| Leeds | 5,119 | 6,340 | 4,611 | 5,326 | 3,267 | 3,611 | 2,899 | 3,073 |
| Wakefield | 3,240 | 4,013 | 2,375 | 2,743 | 1,923 | 2,126 | 1,596 | 1,692 |
| Gateshead | 649 | 804 | 495 | 572 | 834 | 922 | 572 | 606 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 809 | 1,002 | 902 | 1,042 | 1,454 | 1,607 | 2,265 | 2,401 |
| North Tyneside | 542 | 671 | 867 | 1,001 | 595 | 658 | 721 | 764 |
| South Tyneside | 1,451 | 1,797 | 1,206 | 1,393 | 591 | 653 | 1,280 | 1,357 |
| Sunderland | 2,106 | 2,608 | 2,511 | 2,900 | 2,108 | 2,330 | 2,862 | 3,034 |
| Isles of Scilly | Nil | — | Nil | — | Nil | — | — | — |

| Local education authority | 1981-82 |  | 1982-83 |  | 1983-84 |  | 1984-85 (Schools and FHE)[5] |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Cash prices[4] | Constant prices[2] | Cash prices[3] | Constant prices[2] | Cash prices | Constant prices | Cash prices | Constant prices |
| Avon | 2,191 | 2,714 | 2,271 | 2,623 | 2,883 | 3,181 | 5,270 | 5,586 |
| Bedfordshire | 4,873 | 6,035 | 3,186 | 3,680 | 2,098 | 2,319 | 2,439 | 2,585 |
| Berkshire | 3,277 | 4,059 | 4,046 | 4,673 | 7,857 | 8,685 | 8,227 | 8,721 |
| Buckinghamshire | 6,872 | 8,511 | 6,477 | 7,481 | 5,023 | 5,552 | 6,854 | 7,265 |
| Cambridgeshire | 5,490 | 6,799 | 3,708 | 4,283 | 4,784 | 5,288 | 5,039 | 5,341 |
| Cheshire | 6,969 | 8,631 | 5,728 | 6,616 | 7,687 | 8,497 | 7,366 | 7,808 |
| Cleveland | 6,965 | 8,626 | 4,111 | 4,748 | 2,646 | 2,925 | 3,626 | 3,844 |
| Cornwall | 4,442 | 5,501 | 4,234 | 4,890 | 4,098 | 4,530 | 4,377 | 4,640 |
| Cumbria | 1,640 | 2,031 | 896 | 1,035 | 1,255 | 1,387 | 3,982 | 4,221 |
| Derbyshire | 7,041 | 8,720 | 7,333 | 8,470 | 5,997 | 6,629 | 6,546 | 6,939 |
| Devon | 7,711 | 9,550 | 5,422 | 6,262 | 2,857 | 3,158 | 7,832 | 8,302 |
| Dorset | 4,332 | 5,365 | 3,967 | 4,582 | 3,296 | 3,643 | 5,385 | 5,708 |
| Durham | 2,248 | 2,784 | 1,938 | 2,238 | 1,472 | 1,627 | 2,054 | 2,177 |
| East Sussex | 3,227 | 3,997 | 3,193 | 3,688 | 3,656 | 4,041 | 4,601 | 4,877 |
| Essex | 10,189 | 12,619 | 6,676 | 7,711 | 6,715 | 7,423 | 6,604 | 7,000 |
| Gloucestershire | 2,958 | 3,664 | 2,400 | 2,772 | 2,589 | 2,862 | 2,772 | 2,938 |
| Hampshire | 7,804 | 9,665 | 7,776 | 8,981 | 9,508 | 10,510 | 9,666 | 10,246 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 3,176 | 3,933 | 2,031 | 2,346 | 1,310 | 1,448 | 1,669 | 1,769 |
| Hertfordshire | 3,514 | 4,352 | 2,307 | 2,665 | 3,887 | 4,297 | 5,479 | 5,808 |
| Humberside | 5,397 | 6,684 | 5,910 | 6,826 | 5,347 | 5,910 | 6,883 | 7,296 |
| Isle of Wight | 793 | 982 | 414 | 478 | 385 | 426 | 948 | 1,005 |
| Kent | 7,104 | 8,798 | 4,030 | 4,655 | 3,976 | 4,395 | 4,347 | 4,608 |
| Lancashire | 7,778 | 9,633 | 5,217 | 6,026 | 8,245 | 9,114 | 11,055 | 11,719 |
| Leicestershire | 7,447 | 9,223 | 5,465 | 6,312 | 4,535 | 5,013 | 7,074 | 7,499 |
| Lincolnshire | 2,745 | 3,400 | 2,898 | 3,347 | 1,982 | 2,195 | 4,455 | 4,722 |
| Norfolk | 3,659 | 4,532 | 4,543 | 5,247 | 5,204 | 5,752 | 4,261 | 4,517 |
| North Yorkshire | 3,068 | 3,800 | 2,426 | 2,802 | 2,590 | 2,863 | 5,675 | 6,016 |
| Northamptonshire | 6,888 | 8,531 | 4,424 | 5,110 | 2,997 | 3,313 | 4,179 | 4,430 |
| Northumberland | 3,126 | 3,872 | 1,620 | 1,871 | 1,360 | 1,503 | 1,002 | 1,062 |
| Nottinghamshire | 2,285 | 2,830 | 2,206 | 2,548 | 1,669 | 1,845 | 2,666 | 2,826 |
| Oxfordshire | 1,549 | 1,918 | 1,949 | 2,251 | 2,125 | 2,349 | 3,245 | 3,440 |
| Shropshire | 3,494 | 4,327 | 2,992 | 3,456 | 2,178 | 2,408 | 2,072 | 2,196 |
| Somerset | 1,329 | 1,646 | 1,332 | 1,538 | 2,572 | 2,843 | 2,559 | 2,713 |
| Staffordshire | 10,039 | 12,433 | 6,882 | 7,949 | 6,262 | 6,922 | 10,691 | 11,333 |
| Suffolk | 4,625 | 5,728 | 3,281 | 3,790 | 3,350 | 3,703 | 4,348 | 4,609 |
| Surrey | 2,189 | 2,711 | 2,457 | 2,838 | 2,549 | 2,818 | 4,340 | 4,601 |
| Warwickshire | 863 | 1,069 | 1,248 | 1,441 | 1,086 | 1,200 | 1,428 | 1,514 |
| West Sussex | 2,089 | 2,587 | 2,045 | 2,362 | 3,127 | 3,457 | 5,027 | 5,329 |
| Wiltshire | 1,909 | 2,364 | 2,238 | 2,585 | 2,902 | 3,208 | 3,810 | 4,039 |

*Table 1 (continued)*
*Allocations of LEA prescribed capital expenditure for schools[1] 1985-86 to 1987-88*

*£ thousands*

| Local education authority | 1985-86 |  | 1986-87 |  | 1987-88 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Cash prices[3] | Constant prices[2] | Cash prices | Constant prices | Cash prices | Constant prices[2] |
| Barking | 144 | 144 | 471 | 457 | 437 | 409 |
| Barnet | 858 | 858 | 472 | 458 | 640 | 599 |
| Bexley | 298 | 298 | 679 | 659 | 1,593 | 1,491 |
| Brent | 661 | 661 | 1,309 | 1,271 | 2,421 | 2,266 |
| Bromley | 502 | 502 | 1,679 | 1,630 | 1,564 | 1,464 |
| Croydon | 1,670 | 1,670 | 2,691 | 2,613 | 2,337 | 2,187 |
| Ealing | 1,235 | 1,235 | 1,520 | 1,476 | 1,205 | 1,128 |
| Enfield | 618 | 618 | 634 | 616 | 1,152 | 1,078 |
| Haringey | 734 | 734 | 783 | 760 | 1,088 | 1,018 |
| Harrow | 209 | 209 | 317 | 308 | 301 | 282 |
| Havering | 316 | 316 | 395 | 383 | 393 | 368 |
| Hillingdon | 496 | 496 | 297 | 288 | 1,043 | 976 |
| Hounslow | 1,451 | 1,451 | 540 | 524 | 1,157 | 1,083 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 413 | 413 | 444 | 431 | 221 | 207 |
| Merton | 1,227 | 1,227 | 782 | 759 | 1,019 | 954 |
| Newham | 2,469 | 2,469 | 1,235 | 1,199 | 1,101 | 1,030 |
| Redbridge | 767 | 767 | 1,015 | 985 | 1,730 | 1,619 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | 232 | 232 | 221 | 215 | 66 | 62 |
| Sutton | 394 | 394 | 305 | 296 | 227 | 212 |
| Waltham Forest | 901 | 901 | 2,100 | 2,039 | 2,445 | 2,288 |
| Inner London | 8,626 | 8,626 | 7,367 | 7,152 | 12,316 | 11,525 |
| Birmingham | 3,363 | 3,363 | 4,134 | 4,014 | 3,494 | 3,270 |
| Coventry | 1,676 | 1,676 | 3,199 | 3,106 | 4,135 | 3,869 |
| Dudley | 1,801 | 1,801 | 1,520 | 1,476 | 1,250 | 1,170 |

| *Local education authority* | *1985-86* | | *1986-87* | | *1987-88* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Cash prices*³ | *Constant prices*² | *Cash prices* | *Constant prices* | *Cash prices* | *Constant prices*² |
| Sandwell | 1,409 | 1,409 | 964 | 936 | 482 | 451 |
| Solihull | 609 | 609 | 1,242 | 1,206 | 475 | 444 |
| Walsall | 1,104 | 1,104 | 1,054 | 1,023 | 824 | 771 |
| Wolverhampton | 417 | 417 | 453 | 440 | 1,173 | 1,098 |
| | | | | | | |
| Knowsley | 666 | 666 | 969 | 941 | 825 | 772 |
| Liverpool | 1,523 | 1,523 | 1,751 | 1,700 | 1,141 | 1,068 |
| St. Helens | 1,711 | 1,711 | 747 | 725 | 810 | 758 |
| Sefton | 1,620 | 1,620 | 2,588 | 2,513 | 1,790 | 1,675 |
| Wirral | 579 | 579 | 1,373 | 1,333 | 1,240 | 1,160 |
| | | | | | | |
| Bolton | 382 | 382 | 392 | 381 | 487 | 456 |
| Bury | 303 | 303 | 331 | 321 | 320 | 299 |
| Manchester | 4,498 | 4,498 | 4,535 | 4,403 | 7,538 | 7,054 |
| Oldham | 662 | 662 | 1,111 | 1,079 | 2,750 | 2,573 |
| Rochdale | 1,667 | 1,667 | 2,028 | 1,969 | 2,195 | 2,054 |
| Salford | 1,027 | 1,027 | 1,621 | 1,574 | 1,768 | 1,654 |
| Stockport | 946 | 946 | 1,131 | 1,098 | 1,135 | 1,062 |
| Tameside | 496 | 496 | 306 | 297 | 364 | 341 |
| Trafford | 1,311 | 1,311 | 1,191 | 1,156 | 992 | 928 |
| Wigan | 1,314 | 1,314 | 2,285 | 2,218 | 2,636 | 2,467 |
| | | | | | | |
| Barnsley | 1,057 | 1,057 | 572 | 555 | 447 | 418 |
| Doncaster | 178 | 178 | 223 | 217 | 324 | 303 |
| Rotherham | 429 | 429 | 484 | 470 | 237 | 222 |
| Sheffield | 1,703 | 1,703 | 1,307 | 1,269 | 2,080 | 1,946 |
| | | | | | | |
| Bradford | 7,759 | 7,759 | 6,740 | 6,544 | 6,121 | 5,728 |
| Calderdale | 704 | 704 | 1,164 | 1,130 | 1,863 | 1,743 |
| Kirklees | 1,305 | 1,305 | 932 | 905 | 650 | 608 |
| Leeds | 1,831 | 1,831 | 1,616 | 1,569 | 1,220 | 2,077 |
| Wakefield | 1,284 | 1,284 | 1,837 | 1,783 | 1,977 | 1,850 |
| | | | | | | |
| Gateshead | 866 | 866 | 1,375 | 1,335 | 1,112 | 1,041 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 754 | 754 | 830 | 806 | 1,737 | 1,625 |
| North Tyneside | 2,206 | 2,206 | 1,536 | 1,491 | 1,907 | 1,785 |
| South Tyneside | 922 | 922 | 633 | 615 | 874 | 818 |
| Sunderland | 2,019 | 2,019 | 900 | 874 | 1,733 | 1,622 |
| | | | | | | |
| Isles of Scilly | — | — | — | — | 30 | 28 |
| Avon | 2,376 | 2,376 | 2,986 | 2,899 | 3,474 | 3,251 |
| Bedfordshire | 1,340 | 1,340 | 1,696 | 1,647 | 1,105 | 1,034 |
| Berkshire | 6,749 | 6,749 | 4,918 | 4,775 | 3,299 | 3,087 |
| Buckinghamshire | 5,295 | 5,295 | 5,378 | 5,221 | 5,846 | 5,471 |
| Cambridgeshire | 4,165 | 4,165 | 2,441 | 2,370 | 3,255 | 3,046 |
| Cheshire | 4,278 | 4,278 | 3,332 | 3,235 | 4,693 | 4,392 |
| Cleveland | 2,137 | 2,137 | 3,160 | 3,068 | 3,883 | 3,634 |
| Cornwall | 3,069 | 3,069 | 3,401 | 3,302 | 5,115 | 4,787 |
| Cumbria | 3,456 | 3,456 | 2,174 | 2,111 | 2,280 | 2,134 |
| Derbyshire | 6,446 | 6,446 | 6,330 | 6,146 | 8,595 | 8,043 |
| Devon | 4,409 | 4,409 | 7,453 | 7,236 | 4,211 | 3,941 |
| Dorset | 3,556 | 3,556 | 2,352 | 2,283 | 3,423 | 3,203 |
| Durham | 2,375 | 2,375 | 1,387 | 1,347 | 937 | 877 |
| East Sussex | 3,226 | 3,226 | 2,836 | 2,753 | 4,089 | 3,826 |
| Essex | 10,949 | 10,949 | 11,034 | 10,713 | 10,904 | 10,204 |
| Gloucestershire | 4,460 | 4,460 | 5,998 | 5,823 | 6,383 | 5,973 |
| Hampshire | 10,722 | 10,722 | 10,484 | 10,179 | 9,222 | 8,630 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 1,334 | 1,334 | 1,727 | 1,677 | 2,474 | 2,315 |
| Hertfordshire | 3,003 | 3,003 | 3,357 | 3,259 | 2,643 | 2,473 |
| Humberside | 3,443 | 3,443 | 6,740 | 6,544 | 10,008 | 9,365 |
| Isle of Wight | 775 | 775 | 1,103 | 1,071 | 1,354 | 1,267 |
| Kent | 4,723 | 4,723 | 5,152 | 5,002 | 6,464 | 6,049 |
| Lancashire | 12,513 | 12,513 | 9,851 | 954 | 4,603 | 4,307 |
| Leicestershire | 5,383 | 5,383 | 5,754 | 5,586 | 4,099 | 3,836 |
| Lincolnshire | 2,889 | 2,889 | 3,528 | 3,425 | 4,457 | 4,171 |
| Norfolk | 2,488 | 2,488 | 4,182 | 4,060 | 4,847 | 4,536 |
| North Yorkshire | 3,511 | 3,511 | 2,281 | 2,215 | 1,892 | 1,770 |
| Northamptonshire | 3,944 | 3,944 | 3,250 | 3,155 | 1,460 | 1,366 |
| Northumberland | 1,148 | 1,148 | 950 | 920 | 610 | 571 |
| Nottinghamshire | 2,001 | 2,001 | 1,917 | 1,861 | 1,817 | 1,700 |
| Oxfordshire | 1,042 | 1,042 | 938 | 911 | 1,330 | 1,245 |
| Shropshire | 2,966 | 2,966 | 2,219 | 2,154 | 5,119 | 4,790 |
| Somerset | 967 | 967 | 1,792 | 1,740 | 2,488 | 2,328 |
| Staffordshire | 7,734 | 7,734 | 6,775 | 6,578 | 6,841 | 6,402 |
| Suffolk | 3,558 | 3,558 | 5,731 | 5,564 | 5,954 | 5,572 |

| *Local education authority* | *1985-86* *Cash prices*[3] | *Constant prices*[2] | *1986-87* *Cash prices* | *Constant prices* | *1987-88* *Cash prices* | *Constant prices*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Surrey | 3,180 | 3,180 | 3,064 | 2,975 | 3,570 | 3,341 |
| Warwickshire | 1,637 | 1,637 | 1,145 | 1,112 | 1,005 | 940 |
| West Sussex | 3,084 | 3,084 | 1,978 | 1,920 | 1,612 | 1,508 |
| Wiltshire | 3,297 | 3,297 | 1,781 | 1,729 | 3,047 | 2,851 |

*Notes to Table 1*

1. includes provision for nursery education.
2. calculated at 1985-86 prices using the GDP deflator.
3. the allocations shown are those announced before the start of the financial year, and do not include additional allocations made later to some authorities.
4. includes a notional element in respect of energy conservation work at both schools and FHE establishments.
5. single block allocations covering both schools and FHE were made in 1984-85: there was no separate schools element.

*Table 2*

*Allocations for capital expenditure by governors of aided schools 1981-82 to 1984-85, by LEA area*

*£ thousands*

| *Local Education Authority* | *1981-82*[1] *Cash prices* | *Constant prices* | *1982-83* *Cash prices*[2] | *Constant prices*[3] | *1983-84* *Cash prices*[2] | *Constant prices*[3] | *1984-85* *Cash prices*[2] | *Constant prices*[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barking | — | — | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| Barnet | — | — | 260 | 300 | 192 | 212 | 1,091 | 1,156 |
| Bexley | — | — | 82 | 95 | 47 | 52 | 5 | 5 |
| Brent | — | — | 342 | 395 | 298 | 329 | 340 | 360 |
| Bromley | — | — | 118 | 136 | 80 | 88 | 32 | 34 |
| Croydon | — | — | 24 | 28 | 29 | 32 | 45 | 48 |
| Ealing | — | — | 185 | 214 | 350 | 387 | 340 | 360 |
| Enfield | — | — | 81 | 94 | 314 | 347 | 375 | 398 |
| Haringey | — | — | 147 | 170 | 58 | 64 | 60 | 64 |
| Harrow | — | — | 21 | 24 | 22 | 24 | 10 | 11 |
| Havering | — | — | 24 | 28 | 43 | 48 | 20 | 21 |
| Hillingdon | — | — | 94 | 109 | 131 | 145 | 175 | 186 |
| Hounslow | — | — | 24 | 28 | 76 | 84 | 190 | 201 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | — | — | 8 | 9 | 168 | 186 | 190 | 201 |
| Merton | — | — | 347 | 401 | 119 | 132 | 20 | 21 |
| Newham | — | — | 0 | 0 | 10 | 11 | 15 | 16 |
| Redbridge | — | — | 212 | 245 | 454 | 502 | 555 | 588 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | — | — | 48 | 55 | 19 | 21 | 100 | 106 |
| Sutton | — | — | 76 | 88 | 188 | 208 | 360 | 382 |
| Waltham Forest | — | — | 0 | 0 | 48 | 53 | 1,005 | 1,065 |
| Inner London | — | — | 3,181 | 3,674 | 2,416 | 2,671 | 1,590 | 1,685 |
| Birmingham | — | — | 576 | 665 | 622 | 688 | 182 | 193 |
| Coventry | — | — | 27 | 31 | 23 | 25 | 28 | 30 |
| Dudley | — | — | 402 | 464 | 603 | 667 | 417 | 442 |
| Sandwell | — | — | 31 | 36 | 26 | 29 | 10 | 11 |
| Solihull | — | — | 94 | 109 | 108 | 119 | 86 | 91 |
| Walsall | — | — | 287 | 331 | 533 | 589 | 50 | 53 |
| Wolverhampton | — | — | 147 | 170 | 78 | 86 | 185 | 196 |
| Knowsley | — | — | 159 | 184 | 105 | 116 | 110 | 117 |
| Liverpool | — | — | 643 | 743 | 1,440 | 1,592 | 1,275 | 1,352 |
| St. Helens | — | — | 147 | 170 | 30 | 33 | 32 | 34 |
| Sefton | — | — | 369 | 426 | 452 | 500 | 45 | 48 |
| Wirral | — | — | 1,141 | 1,318 | 155 | 171 | 470 | 498 |
| Bolton | — | — | 65 | 75 | 194 | 214 | 106 | 112 |
| Bury | — | — | 47 | 54 | 44 | 49 | 47 | 50 |
| Manchester | — | — | 294 | 340 | 704 | 778 | 1,145 | 1,214 |
| Oldham | — | — | 172 | 199 | 99 | 109 | 40 | 42 |
| Rochdale | — | — | 622 | 718 | 57 | 63 | 75 | 80 |
| Salford | — | — | 122 | 141 | 203 | 224 | 80 | 85 |
| Stockport | — | — | 156 | 180 | 323 | 357 | 40 | 42 |
| Tameside | — | — | 181 | 209 | 394 | 436 | 530 | 562 |
| Trafford | — | — | 223 | 258 | 42 | 46 | 60 | 64 |
| Wigan | — | — | 766 | 885 | 718 | 794 | 475 | 504 |
| Barnsley | — | — | 106 | 122 | 36 | 40 | Nil | Nil |
| Doncaster | — | — | 152 | 176 | 28 | 31 | 40 | 42 |
| Rotherham | — | — | 559 | 646 | 70 | 77 | 61 | 65 |
| Sheffield | — | — | 24 | 28 | 56 | 62 | 33 | 35 |

| *Local Education Authority* | *1981-82*[1] | | *1982-83* | | *1983-84* | | *1984-85* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Cash prices* | *Constant prices* | *Cash prices*[2] | *Constant prices*[3] | *Cash prices*[2] | *Constant prices*[3] | *Cash prices*[2] | *Constant prices*[3] |
| Bradford | — | — | 779 | 900 | 835 | 923 | 60 | 64 |
| Calderdale | — | — | 29 | 33 | 145 | 160 | 230 | 244 |
| Kirklees | — | — | 96 | 111 | 121 | 134 | 254 | 269 |
| Leeds | — | — | 146 | 169 | 36 | 40 | 15 | 16 |
| Wakefield | — | — | 8 | 9 | 52 | 51 | 155 | 164 |
| Gateshead | — | — | 66 | 76 | 118 | 130 | 233 | 247 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | — | — | 108 | 125 | 96 | 106 | 65 | 69 |
| North Tyneside | — | — | 24 | 28 | 109 | 120 | 285 | 302 |
| South Tyneside | — | — | Nil | Nil | 29 | 32 | 65 | 69 |
| Sunderland | — | — | 47 | 54 | 31 | 34 | 15 | 16 |
| Isles of Scilly | — | — | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Avon | — | — | 165 | 191 | 352 | 389 | 144 | 153 |
| Bedfordshire | — | — | 172 | 199 | 41 | 45 | 15 | 16 |
| Berkshire | — | — | 200 | 231 | 86 | 95 | 145 | 154 |
| Buckinghamshire | — | — | 268 | 310 | 603 | 667 | 175 | 186 |
| Cambridgeshire | — | — | 194 | 224 | 196 | 217 | 395 | 419 |
| Cheshire | — | — | 1,035 | 1,195 | 568 | 628 | 652 | 691 |
| Cleveland | — | — | 556 | 642 | 116 | 128 | 213 | 226 |
| Cornwall | — | — | 229 | 264 | 360 | 398 | 35 | 37 |
| Cumbria | — | — | 345 | 398 | 156 | 172 | 300 | 318 |
| Derbyshire | — | — | 576 | 665 | 310 | 343 | 225 | 239 |
| Devon | — | — | 49 | 57 | 573 | 633 | 1,410 | 1,495 |
| Dorset | — | — | 93 | 107 | 84 | 93 | 610 | 647 |
| Durham | — | — | 219 | 253 | 181 | 200 | 258 | 273 |
| East Sussex | — | — | 35 | 40 | 43 | 48 | 35 | 37 |
| Essex | — | — | 514 | 594 | 184 | 203 | 215 | 228 |
| Gloucestershire | — | — | 223 | 258 | 406 | 449 | 285 | 302 |
| Hampshire | — | — | 388 | 448 | 48 | 53 | 40 | 42 |
| Hereford and Worcester | — | — | 285 | 329 | 115 | 127 | 650 | 689 |
| Hertfordshire | — | — | 406 | 469 | 244 | 270 | 295 | 313 |
| Humberside | — | — | 145 | 167 | 28 | 31 | 35 | 37 |
| Isle of Wight | — | — | 18 | 21 | 20 | 22 | 10 | 11 |
| Kent | — | — | 1,404 | 1,622 | 713 | 788 | 935 | 991 |
| Lancashire | — | — | 706 | 815 | 928 | 1,026 | 1,500 | 1,590 |
| Leicestershire | — | — | 794 | 917 | 274 | 303 | 705 | 747 |
| Lincolnshire | — | — | 301 | 348 | 195 | 216 | 177 | 188 |
| Norfolk | — | — | 843 | 974 | 479 | 529 | 180 | 191 |
| North Yorkshire | — | — | 94 | 109 | 183 | 202 | 580 | 615 |
| Northamptonshire | — | — | 41 | 47 | 245 | 271 | 90 | 95 |
| Northumberland | — | — | 175 | 202 | 107 | 118 | 35 | 37 |
| Nottinghamshire | — | — | 259 | 299 | 619 | 684 | 190 | 201 |
| Oxfordshire | — | — | 47 | 54 | 56 | 62 | 15 | 16 |
| Shropshire | — | — | 114 | 132 | 45 | 50 | 75 | 80 |
| Somerset | — | — | 888 | 1,026 | 8 | 9 | 30 | 32 |
| Staffordshire | — | — | 588 | 679 | 431 | 476 | 435 | 461 |
| Suffolk | — | — | 136 | 157 | 83 | 92 | 200 | 212 |
| Surrey | — | — | 640 | 739 | 315 | 348 | 50 | 53 |
| Warwickshire | — | — | 259 | 299 | 346 | 382 | 110 | 117 |
| West Sussex | — | — | 129 | 149 | 288 | 318 | 263 | 279 |
| Wiltshire | — | — | 526 | 608 | 40 | 44 | 12 | 13 |

*Table 2—continued*

*Allocations for capital expenditure by governors of aided schools, 1985-86 to 1987-88 by local education authority area—continued.*

*£ thousands*

| *Local Education Authority* | *1985-86* | | *1986-87* | | *1987-88* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Cash prices*[2] | *Constant prices*[3] | *Cash prices*[2] | *Constant prices*[3] | *Cash prices*[2] | *Constant prices*[3] |
| **Barking** | **20** | **20** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **0** |
| **Barnet** | **1,662** | **1,662** | **400** | **388** | **880** | **823** |
| **Bexley** | **42** | **42** | **3** | **3** | **126** | **118** |
| **Brent** | **46** | **46** | **12** | **12** | **613** | **574** |
| **Bromley** | **211** | **211** | **0** | **0** | **20** | **19** |
| **Croydon** | **45** | **45** | **48** | **47** | **503** | **471** |
| **Ealing** | **341** | **341** | **331** | **321** | **762** | **713** |
| **Enfield** | **620** | **620** | **197** | **191** | **93** | **87** |
| **Haringey** | **425** | **425** | **323** | **314** | **75** | **70** |
| **Harrow** | **20** | **20** | **1** | **1** | **25** | **23** |

| Local Education Authority | 1985-86 |  | 1986-87 |  | 1987-88 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Cash prices[2] | Constant prices[3] | Cash prices[2] | Constant prices[3] | Cash prices[2] | Constant prices[3] |
| Havering | 13 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Hillingdon | 67 | 67 | 40 | 39 | 230 | 215 |
| Hounslow | 324 | 324 | 169 | 164 | 153 | 143 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 71 | 71 | 44 | 43 | 0 | 0 |
| Merton | 118 | 118 | 170 | 165 | 65 | 61 |
| Newham | 25 | 25 | 47 | 46 | 60 | 56 |
| Redbridge | 695 | 695 | 28 | 27 | 5 | 5 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 11 |
| Sutton | 185 | 185 | 35 | 34 | 0 | 0 |
| Waltham Forest | 1,375 | 1,375 | 245 | 238 | 50 | 47 |
| Inner London | 3,477 | 3,477 | 1,686 | 1,637 | 862 | 807 |
| Birmingham | 1,070 | 1,070 | 615 | 597 | 985 | 922 |
| Coventry | 70 | 70 | 22 | 21 | 340 | 318 |
| Dudley | 666 | 666 | 724 | 703 | 858 | 803 |
| Sandwell | 25 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 14 |
| Solihull | 75 | 75 | 0 | 0 | 166 | 155 |
| Walsall | 25 | 25 | 26 | 25 | 50 | 47 |
| Wolverhampton | 30 | 30 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 7 |
| Knowsley | 190 | 190 | 600 | 583 | 570 | 533 |
| Liverpool | 2,080 | 2,080 | 2,360 | 2,291 | 2,239 | 2,095 |
| St. Helens | 63 | 63 | 6 | 6 | 88 | 831 |
| Sefton | 52 | 52 | 2 | 2 | 50 | 47 |
| Wirral | 615 | 615 | 416 | 404 | 322 | 301 |
| Bolton | 578 | 578 | 575 | 558 | 734 | 687 |
| Bury | 40 | 40 | 3 | 3 | 120 | 112 |
| Manchester | 1,602 | 1,602 | 2,250 | 2,184 | 2,831 | 2,649 |
| Oldham | 73 | 73 | 16 | 16 | 274 | 256 |
| Rochdale | 125 | 125 | 0 | 0 | 335 | 313 |
| Salford | 129 | 129 | 610 | 592 | 750 | 702 |
| Stockport | 269 | 269 | 447 | 434 | 122 | 114 |
| Tameside | 73 | 73 | 35 | 34 | 35 | 33 |
| Trafford | 40 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 28 |
| Wigan | 630 | 630 | 781 | 758 | 1,045 | 978 |
| Barnsley | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Doncaster | 95 | 95 | 50 | 49 | 0 | 0 |
| Rotherham | 46 | 46 | 69 | 67 | 69 | 65 |
| Sheffield | 115 | 115 | 300 | 291 | 130 | 122 |
| Bradford | 350 | 350 | 320 | 311 | 270 | 253 |
| Calderdale | 151 | 151 | 3 | 3 | 25 | 23 |
| Kirklees | 180 | 180 | 16 | 16 | 14 | 13 |
| Leeds | 30 | 30 | 90 | 87 | 20 | 19 |
| Wakefield | 125 | 125 | 120 | 117 | 47 | 44 |
| Gateshead | 318 | 318 | 163 | 158 | 895 | 838 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 218 | 218 | 191 | 185 | 338 | 316 |
| North Tyneside | 429 | 429 | 20 | 19 | 275 | 257 |
| South Tyneside | 185 | 185 | 185 | 180 | 251 | 235 |
| Sunderland | 77 | 77 | 0 | 0 | 375 | 351 |
| Isles of Scilly | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Avon | 391 | 391 | 193 | 187 | 885 | 828 |
| Bedfordshire | 40 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Berkshire | 62 | 62 | 265 | 257 | 593 | 555 |
| Buckinghamshire | 11 | 11 | 423 | 411 | 1,701 | 1,592 |
| Cambridgeshire | 87 | 87 | 127 | 123 | 465 | 435 |
| Cheshire | 867 | 867 | 836 | 812 | 393 | 368 |
| Cleveland | 200 | 200 | 135 | 131 | 130 | 122 |
| Cornwall | 176 | 176 | 252 | 245 | 116 | 109 |
| Cumbria | 528 | 528 | 401 | 389 | 596 | 558 |
| Derbyshire | 375 | 375 | 190 | 184 | 685 | 641 |
| Devon | 1,472 | 1,472 | 132 | 128 | 372 | 348 |
| Dorset | 135 | 135 | 216 | 210 | 1,267 | 1,186 |
| Durham | 448 | 448 | 425 | 413 | 449 | 420 |
| East Sussex | 640 | 640 | 380 | 369 | 1,630 | 1,525 |
| Essex | 467 | 467 | 150 | 146 | 120 | 112 |
| Gloucestershire | 366 | 366 | 252 | 245 | 442 | 414 |
| Hampshire | 60 | 60 | 70 | 68 | 130 | 122 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 793 | 793 | 1,399 | 1,358 | 654 | 612 |

| *Local Education Authority* | *1985-86* *Cash prices*[2] | *1985-86* *Constant prices*[3] | *1986-87* *Cash prices*[2] | *1986-87* *Constant prices*[3] | *1987-88* *Cash prices*[2] | *1987-88* *Constant prices*[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hertfordshire | 209 | 209 | 46 | 45 | 457 | 428 |
| Humberside | 20 | 20 | 1,818 | 1,765 | 2,684 | 2,512 |
| Isle of Wight | 23 | 23 | 2 | 2 | 70 | 66 |
| Kent | 307 | 307 | 496 | 482 | 534 | 500 |
| Lancashire | 2,244 | 2,244 | 1,302 | 1,264 | 793 | 742 |
| Leicestershire | 928 | 928 | 1,241 | 1,205 | 592 | 554 |
| Lincolnshire | 160 | 160 | 3 | 3 | 65 | 61 |
| Norfolk | 177 | 177 | 89 | 86 | 41 | 38 |
| North Yorkshire | 1,890 | 1,890 | 273 | 265 | 45 | 42 |
| Northamptonshire | 44 | 44 | 505 | 490 | 205 | 192 |
| Northumberland | 40 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 110 | 103 |
| Nottinghamshire | 22 | 22 | 66 | 64 | 322 | 301 |
| Oxfordshire | 113 | 113 | 470 | 456 | 273 | 255 |
| Shropshire | 284 | 284 | 112 | 109 | 45 | 42 |
| Somerset | 30 | 30 | 22 | 21 | 50 | 47 |
| Staffordshire | 239 | 239 | 181 | 176 | 489 | 458 |
| Suffolk | 164 | 164 | 163 | 158 | 68 | 64 |
| Surrey | 68 | 68 | 10 | 10 | 1,079 | 1,010 |
| Warwickshire | 245 | 245 | 19 | 18 | 80 | 75 |
| West Sussex | 270 | 270 | 334 | 324 | 420 | 393 |
| Wiltshire | 62 | 62 | 29 | 28 | 35 | 33 |

*Notes to table 2*

[1] Allocations for 1981-82 and earlier years were made on a different basis and have therefore been omitted.

[2] The allocations shown are those announced before the start of the financial year in question and do not reflect subsequent revisions.

[3] Calculated at 1985-86 prices using the GDP deflator.

## TRANSPORT

### Merchant Seamen

**Sir Paul Bryan** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing the number of British seafarers employed in British-owned merchant vessels in each year since 1980.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The following table has been derived from information provided by the General Council of British Shipping.

| *End September* | *thousands* |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 57·9 |
| 1981 | 53·7 |
| 1982 | 47·5 |
| 1983 | 40·0 |
| 1984 | 34·5 |
| 1985 | 34·5 |
| 1986 | [1]32·0 |

[1] Provisional.

Figures exclude employees in the United Kingdom non-federated sector (comprising mainly fishing, port and coastal activities).

### Rose and Crown, Fosdyke

**Sir Richard Body** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether he will give the date when he received from the district valuer, Boston, an estimate of the value of the property known as the Rose and Crown, Fosdyke, Lincolnshire;

(2) whether he will give an estimate of the likely cost of making a compulsory purchase order for, and the holding of a public inquiry about, the purchase of the property known as the Rose and Crown, Fosdyke, Lincolnshire.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave on Thursday 22 January at column 696.

### Airports (Touting)

**Mr. Mason** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to the information he has regarding the activities of taxi and other touts at London airports causing a nuisance to overseas visitors; what steps he plans to take to stop these practices; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I am advised by the Commissioner that he takes this problem seriously, to the extent that 10 officers are employed in dealing with touting at Heathrow airport, where more than 600 offences were dealt with last year. The other London airports are not in the Metropolitan police district.

### Climatic Variability

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to implement the recommendations relating to his responsibilities in the report "Social and Economic Responses to Climatic Variability in the United Kingdom".

**Mr. Moore:** I will answer this question shortly.

### British Airways

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will make it his policy to ensure that members of British forces posted overseas are entitled to apply for shares in British Airways on exactly the same basis as United Kingdom residents.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** British forces posted overseas may apply for shares in British Airways on exactly the same terms as United Kingdom residents provided that they have satisfied themselves that to do so would not conflict with any local legal requirements. Alternatively, they may give a United Kingdom resident power of attorney to apply on their behalf.

**Mr. Charles Morrison** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a further statement about the privatisation of British Airways.

**Mr. Moore:** This morning the offer for sale of 720,200,000 ordinary shares in British Airways plc was fully underwritten at a price of 125p per share. This represents a market capitalisation value of £900 million. Copies of the prospectus are available in the Library.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### Family Statistics

**Sir Brandon Rhys Williams** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the statistical analysis in the letter written to the hon. Member for Kensington by the Minister for Health on 18 August 1986, showing *(a)* the number of working families with children in 1984 at various income levels and *(b)* the number of out-of-work families of working age with children in 1984 at various income levels; and if he will also give a breakdown of the out-of-work families who were not in receipt of any benefit, showing how many had no entitlement and how many appear to have been entitled but were not claiming.

**Mr. Major:** The tables accompanying my predecessor's letter of 18 August 1986 to my hon. Friend are as follows.

A breakdown of out-of-work families with children who were not in receipt of supplementary benefit in 1984, the latest date available, is also shown.

It is not possible to identify from the family expenditure survey potential recipients of national insurance benefits who are entitled but not claiming.

*Number of working families with children at various income levels—(Great Britain) 1984*

*Thousands*

| *Gross weekly income excluding state benefits* | *Total* | *One parent families* | *Two parent families* | *One wage families* | *Two wage families* | *Number of dependent children* 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Under £80 | 110 | 40 | 80 | 90 | 20 | 60 | 40 | 20 | [1] |
| £80-89 | 50 | 10 | 40 | 30 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 10 | [1] |
| £90-99 | 80 | 20 | 60 | 60 | 20 | 50 | 20 | 10 | [1] |
| £100-109 | 80 | 20 | 60 | 60 | 20 | 40 | 30 | 10 | [1] |
| £110-119 | 130 | 30 | 100 | 90 | 40 | 60 | 40 | 20 | [1] |
| £120-129 | 170 | 10 | 170 | 120 | 50 | 90 | 50 | 30 | 10 |
| £130-139 | 200 | 10 | 200 | 130 | 70 | 110 | 80 | 20 | [1] |
| £140-149 | 200 | 10 | 190 | 110 | 90 | 100 | 80 | 20 | 10 |
| £150-159 | 270 | 20 | 240 | 110 | 160 | 90 | 120 | 40 | 10 |
| £160-169 | 240 | 10 | 230 | 140 | 100 | 100 | 110 | 20 | 10 |
| £170-179 | 340 | 20 | 320 | 180 | 170 | 160 | 130 | 40 | 10 |
| £180-189 | 230 | 10 | 220 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 90 | 20 | 10 |
| £190-199 | 270 | [1] | 270 | 100 | 170 | 100 | 110 | 30 | 30 |
| £200-219 | 530 | 10 | 520 | 200 | 330 | 210 | 250 | 50 | 20 |
| £220-239 | 460 | [1] | 450 | 170 | 290 | 160 | 200 | 80 | 10 |
| £240-259 | 420 | 10 | 410 | 150 | 270 | 140 | 210 | 60 | 20 |
| £260-279 | 360 | 10 | 360 | 110 | 250 | 120 | 190 | 40 | 10 |
| £280-299 | 210 | [1] | 210 | 70 | 140 | 80 | 110 | 20 | [1] |
| £300 and over | 1,100 | 10 | 1,100 | 290 | 810 | 380 | 540 | 160 | 30 |
| Total | 5,460 | 240 | 5,220 | 2,330 | 3,130 | 2,180 | 2,420 | 690 | 170 |

[1] Less than 5,000

*Notes:*

1. The figures are derived from the 1984 Family Expenditure Survey and are subject to sampling error. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10,000 and so rows and columns may not sum exactly to the totals shown.
2. Gross weekly income is the income reported in 1984 without any updating.
3. A 'working family' is defined as one where at least one parent is in full-time employment or self-employment. The figures include families where the head has been sick or unemployed for less than 3 months—in these cases income has been taken as the family's income when the head was in work.
4. The figures exclude any families not living in private households.
5. A 'two wage family' is one where the second wage exceeds £4 a week.

*Number of out of work families of working age children at various income levels—Great Britain, 1984*

*Thousands*

| *Gross weekly income including state benefits* | *Total* | *One parent families* | *Two parent families* | *Number of dependent children* | | | | *None* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| £ | | | | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4 or more* | *(a)* | *(b)* |
| Under 50 | 110 | 100 | 10 | 100 | 10 | [1] | [1] | 30 | 70 |
| 50-59 | 70 | 50 | 20 | 50 | 10 | [1] | [1] | 10 | 40 |
| 60-69 | 200 | 160 | 40 | 140 | 40 | 10 | [1] | 20 | 160 |
| 70-79 | 230 | 130 | 90 | 130 | 80 | 20 | [1] | 20 | 190 |
| 80-89 | 240 | 100 | 140 | 100 | 120 | 30 | [1] | 20 | 190 |
| 90-99 | 190 | 70 | 120 | 50 | 100 | 40 | 10 | 40 | 110 |
| 100-109 | 100 | 30 | 70 | 40 | 10 | 30 | 10 | 20 | 60 |
| 110-119 | 100 | 40 | 70 | 30 | 30 | 20 | 30 | 20 | 50 |
| 120-129 | 50 | 20 | 40 | 10 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 20 |
| 130-139 | 20 | [1] | 20 | [1] | 10 | 10 | [1] | 10 | 10 |

| *Gross weekly income including state benefits* | *Total* | *One parent families* | *Two parent families* | *Number of dependent children* | | | | *None* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| £ | | | | *1* | *2* | *3* | *4 or more* | *(a)* | *(b)* |
| 140-149 | 20 | [1] | 20 | [1] | 10 | [1] | 10 | [1] | 10 |
| 150 and over | 120 | 30 | 90 | 50 | 40 | 20 | 20 | 80 | 10 |
| Total | 1,460 | 730 | 730 | 700 | 480 | 190 | 90 | 310 | 910 |

*(a)* Without supplementary benefit.

*(b)* With supplementary benefit.

[1] Less than 5,000.

*Number of out of work families of working age children at various income levels—Great Britain, 1984 (continued)*

*Thousands*

| *Gross weekly income including state benefits* | *NI benefits being received* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *UB* | | *SB* | | *IVB* | | *Other* | |
| | *(a)* | *(b)* | *(a)* | *(b)* | *(a)* | *(b)* | *(a)* | *(b)* |
| £ | | | | | | | | |
| Under 50 | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 10 | [1] |
| 50-59 | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 10 | [1] |
| 60-69 | [1] | 10 | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 10 | [1] |
| 70-79 | [1] | 10 | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] |
| 80-89 | 10 | 20 | [1] | [1] | 10 | [1] | [1] | [1] |
| 90-99 | 10 | 10 | [1] | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | [1] |
| 100-109 | [1] | 10 | [1] | [1] | 10 | [1] | [1] | [1] |
| 110-119 | [1] | 10 | [1] | [1] | 20 | [1] | 10 | [1] |
| 120-29 | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 10 | [1] | [1] | [1] |
| 130-39 | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 10 | [1] | [1] | [1] |
| 140-49 | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] |
| 150 and over | [1] | [1] | [1] | [1] | 10 | [1] | 10 | [1] |
| Total | 20 | 60 | [1] | 10 | 70 | 10 | 60 | [1] |

*(a)* Without supplementary benefit.

*(b)* With supplementary benefit.

[1] Less than 5,000.

*Notes:*

(1) The figures are derived from the 1984 Family Expenditure Survey and are subject to sampling error. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10,000 and so rows and columns may not sum exactly to the totals shown.

(2) The totals do not coincide exactly with other published statistics. This is due to the different data sources.

(3) Gross Weekly income includes rent and rate rebates and is the income reported in 1984 without any updating.

(4) An "out of work family" is defined as one where neither parent is in full-time employment or self-employment, except that families where the head has been sick or unemployed for less than 3 months are excluded.

(5) The figures exclude any families not living in private households.

(6) "Other" NI benefits include industrial disablement, maternity and widows benefits.

*Out-of-work families of working age with children not in receipt of supplementary benefit (Great Britain 1984)*

*(Thousands)*

| *Gross weekly income including state benefits* £ | *Not entitled to supplementary benefit* | *Entitled but not claiming supplementary benefit* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 50 | 10 | 30 | 40 |
| 50-59 | 20 | — | 20 |
| 60-69 | 20 | 10 | 30 |
| 70-79 | 10 | 10 | 20 |
| 80-89 | 30 | 10 | 40 |
| 90-99 | 50 | 20 | 60 |
| 100-109 | 30 | — | 30 |
| 110-119 | 50 | — | 50 |
| 120-129 | 30 | — | 30 |
| 130-139 | 20 | — | 20 |
| 140-149 | 10 | — | 10 |
| 150 and over | 110 | — | 110 |
| Total | 380 | 90 | 470 |

*Notes:*

1. The figures are derived from the 1984 Family Expenditure Survey and are subject to sampling error. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10,000 and so rows and columns may not sum exactly to the totals shown.

2. Gross weekly income is the income reported in 1984 without updatings and includes housing benefit (but not unclaimed entitlement to it).

3. An "out of work" family is defined as one where neither parent is in full-time employment or self-employment, except that families where the head has been sick or unemployed for less than 3 months are excluded.

4. The figures exclude any families not living in private households.

5. Inferences cannot be drawn from the number of out of work families with children entitled but not claiming supplementary benefit about the take-up of supplementary benefit.

### Benefits

**Mr. Park** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will provide figures for the number of people in Coventry dependent on social security benefits, broken down by category of benefit and age group.

**Mr. Lyell:** Information is not available for centrally paid benefits, for example, retirement pension, about the number of beneficiaries in any particular locality nor, generally, about the beneficiaries' age groups.

The Coventry area is covered by two local offices of the Department, Coventry East and Coventry West, and the latest available information about recipients of various locally administered benefits is as follows:

| | *Coventry East* | *Coventry West* |
|---|---|---|
| Sickness and Invalidity Benefit | 3,393 | 2,886 |
| Maternity Allowance | 292 | 390 |
| Severe Disablement Allowance (all above figures as at 13.1.87) | 543 | 534 |
| Supplementary Benefit (as at 16.12.86) | | |
| *(a)* beneficiaries over pension age | 5,521 | 5,730 |
| *(b)* beneficiaries under pension age and required to sign at the Unemployment Benefit Office | 10,304 | 7,565 |
| *(c)* other beneficiaries under pension age | 6,673 | 5,046 |

Housing benefit is administered by the local authority and the numbers of recipients in Coventry at 31.3.86 (the latest date for which information is available) were as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Rent Rebate recipients | 18,504 |
| Rent Allowance recipients | 8,414 |
| Rate Rebate recipients | [1]54,113 |

[1] Includes local authority tenants who also receive a rent rebate and private tenants who also receive a rent allowance.

### Ambulance Service

**Mr. Park** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will report on the progress of his investigation into the possible transfer of control of the West Midlands ambulance service from Birmingham to Coventry.

**Mrs. Currie:** There is no such investigation under way. My right hon. Friend stated in his reply to the hon. Member for Coventry, South-East (Mr. Nellist) on 13 January at column *128* that he was satisfied that the West Midlands ambulance service is working effectively, and undertook to examine the individual case mentioned.

### National Insurance Contributions

**Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his estimate of the direct revenue effect in 1986-87 of changing the rates of class 1 national insurance contributions in all earnings bands by one percentage point; and whether he will show separately the effect on employers' and employees' contributions.

**Mr. Major:** It is estimated that such a change to all rates of employers' and employees' national insurance contributions in 1986-87 would have led to changes in receipts from employers and employees of £1,430 million and £1,290 million respectively.

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, what would be the cost of abolishing employers' national insurance contributions in all assisted regions.

**Mr. Major** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: I regret that the information requested could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Occupational Deafness

**Mr. Evans** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will amend the Social Security Industrial Injuries (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations to cover persons who have been employed in the glass industry and who suffer from occupational deafness;

(2) if he will invite the standing working group of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council to investigate the extent of industrial deafness in the glass industry.

**Mr. Major:** The Government are advised on the prescription of industrial diseases by the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council, whose standing working group is keeping the occupational deafness provisions under review. We have drawn the council's attention to the hon. Member's suggestion.

**Mr. Evans** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has received any representations from employers' organisations to extend the scope of the Social Security Industrial Injuries (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations to cover workers suffering from occupational deafness, in industries and occupations other than those currently listed in the regulations.

**Mr. Major:** We have received no representations to this effect from employers' organisations.

**Mr. Evans** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has received any representations from trade unions to extend the scope of the Social Security Industrial Injuries (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations to cover workers suffering from occupational deafness in industries and occupations other than those currently listed in the regulations.

**Mr. Major:** We have received a number of representations from trade unions. Their views have been passed to the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council which is keeping the occupational deafness provisions under review.

### Brotton-Skelton Hospital

**Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects that building works on the new Brotton-Skelton 70-bed community hospital will be commenced.

**Mrs. Currie:** Regional health authorities are responsible for the planning of capital schemes in the light of their available resources and competing local priorities. We understand that no firm date can yet be given for the start of the Brotton-Skelton hospital pending completion by the Northern regional health authority of the review of its capital programme which is currently in progress. My hon. Friend may wish to write for more detailed information to the chairman of the northern regional health authority.

### Death and Maternity Grants

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what action he now proposes to take in the light of the discovery that under the regulatory powers governing the operation of the Social Fund in the Social Security Act 1986, no provision exists for him to determine the size of payments for death or maternity grant purposes.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to the statement that I made to the House on 22 January 1987 at column 1042.

### Birth Statistics

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list for all births in 1984 to residents *(a)* in England and *(b)* In England and Wales which were conducted by (i) caesarian section and (ii) instrumental delivery the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neo[illegible]eaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories, under 1,500g, 1,500 to 1,999g, 2,000 to 2,499g, 2,500 to 2,999g, 3,000 to 3,499g, 3,500 to 3,999g, 4,000g plus and unstated birthweight;

(2) if he will list for all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority which were conducted by *(a)* caesarian section and *(b)* instrumental delivery the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500g, 1,500 to 1,999g, 2,000 to 2,499g, 2,500 to 2,999g, 3,000 to 3,499g, 3,500 to 3,999g, 4,000g plus and unstated birthweight;

(3) if he will list for all births in 1984 to residents in Wales which were conducted by *(a)* caesarian section and *(b)* instrumental delivery the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths, and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500g, 1,500 to 1,999g, 2,000 to 2,499g, 2,500 to 2,999g, 3,000 to 3,499g, 3,500 to 3,999g, 4,000g plus and unstated birthweight.

**Mrs. Currie:** I regret that the information requested is not available. The registration of births (live and still) does not identify the mode of delivery.

### Residential Homes

**Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for each local authority in England and Wales average weekly expenditure on the provision of meals for each resident in its homes for the elderly.

**Mrs. Currie:** The information requested for England is not available centrally. Any information available for Wales is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

### Married Women Pensioners

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what work his Department has undertaken to make married women pensioners aware of the abolition of the half test rule, and of the tax allowance which they can now claim following its abolition.

**Mr. Major:** A total of 67,792 potential beneficiaries were identified in 1985 from computer records. Those women who might benefit in cash terms from the abolition of the rule were invited to claim their pension entitlement. The remaining women, who were already drawing pensions on their husband's contributions which equalled or exceeded those to which they would be entitled on their own contributions, were informed of their entitlement and advised that it might be helpful to them for tax purposes. A publicity campaign was conducted in an attempt to reach those women who could not be identified individually. Advertisements were places in the national press, women's magazines and specialist publications for the elderly, and leaflets inviting women to claim their pension entitlement were widely distributed. Both the advertisements and the leaflets included a coupon claim form. Consulates in countries overseas were also notified of the new arrangements.

As a result of these measures a total of 35,254 married women have been awarded pension for the first time or have had their previous entitlement increased.

### Diabetic Patients

**Ms. Harman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has reached any decision on the prescribing by general practitioners of home blood glucose testing strips for diabetic patients.

**Mrs. Currie:** This is still under review.

**Ms. Harman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why general practitioners working within the National Health Service are not allowed to prescribe plastic disposable syringes for the use of diabetic patients in cases where such syringes are considered by the doctor to be more suited to the patients needs.

**Mrs. Currie:** Diabetic patients who need disposable syringes can obtain them free through the hospital service. We are aware, however, that many diabetic patients prefer disposable syringes and the possibility of including them in the list of prescribable appliances is under review.

### Leukaemia

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will immediately set up an investigation into the high incidence of child leukaemia in the Fareham, Hampshire area.

**Mrs. Currie:** The occurrence of an increased incidence of childhood leukaemia in the Fareham area, outside the common and natural range, has not been established. The Department will, however, arrange for the study of the available statistics and will then consider whether more detailed investigations are appropriate.

### Climatic Variability

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to implement the recommendations relating to his responsibilities in the report "Social and Economic Responses to Climatic Variability" in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Major:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Severe Weather Payments

**Mr. Mea[illegible]** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he [illegible] give *(a)* the daily mean temperature and *(b)* the weekly mean temperature for the 64 Department of Health and Social Security weather stations for the week beginning 19 January.

**Mr. Major:** The information requested for the 63 designated weather stations is as shown in the following table:

| *Weather Station* | *Monday* | *Tuesday* | *Wednesday* | *Thursday* | *Friday* | *Saturday* | *Sunday* | *Average* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Scotland* | | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeen AP | 2·4 | 4·0 | 6·1 | 8·5 | 8·3 | 6·7 | 5·4 | 5·9 |
| Dumfries | 2·4 | 3·7 | 5·9 | 7·0 | 2·4 | 2·4 | 3·0 | 3·8 |
| Edinburgh AP | 3·9 | 5·0 | 7·6 | 7·5 | 5·0 | 3·2 | 2·7 | 5·0 |
| Eskdalemuir (Galashiels) | 0·8 | 1·5 | 3·7 | 4·0 | 2·5 | 0·8 | 0·8 | 2·0 |
| Fort William | 6·5 | 7·1 | 9·0 | 7·9 | 5·8 | 4·9 | 5·8 | 6·7 |
| Glasgow AP | 4·4 | 5·8 | 7·9 | 6·9 | 3·6 | 0·9 | 1·9 | 4·5 |
| Kinloss (Inverness) | 4·7 | 6·6 | 6·6 | 7·9 | 7·6 | 5·8 | 6·1 | 6·5 |
| Kirkwall | 3·8 | 5·0 | 6·2 | 7·9 | 8·4 | 6·8 | 6·1 | 6·3 |
| Lerwick | 5·0 | 4·8 | 5·4 | 6·8 | 6·6 | 6·7 | 1·9 | 5·3 |
| Leuchars (Dundee) | 2·9 | 4·3 | 4·7 | 6·3 | 6·6 | 3·1 | 2·6 | 4·3 |
| Machriphanish (Campbeltown) | 6·9 | 8·6 | 9·2 | 7·4 | 5·9 | 3·3 | 4·8 | 6·6 |
| Prestwick (Ayr) | 5·1 | 6·7 | 8·5 | 7·1 | 4·3 | 2·6 | 3·8 | 5·4 |
| Stornaway | 7·7 | 6·7 | 6·6 | 8·5 | 8·7 | 7·1 | 6·1 | 7·3 |
| Whithorn | 4·1 | 4·7 | 7·1 | 6·9 | 4·1 | 3·1 | 4·4 | 4·9 |
| Wick | 3·6 | 6·2 | 7·2 | 8·1 | 8·4 | 5·3 | 4·8 | 6·2 |
| *England* | | | | | | | | |
| Aughton (Liverpool) | 0·9 | 2·1 | 5·3 | 5·3 | 2·9 | 5·0 | 4·0 | 3·6 |
| Bedford RAE | −1·9 | 0·3 | 2·7 | 5·6 | 4·2 | 4·7 | 3·8 | 2·8 |
| Binbrook (Hull) | −1·5 | 0·8 | 3·0 | 5·6 | 6·0 | 5·1 | 3·3 | 3·2 |
| Birmingham AP | −1·2 | 0·5 | 3·4 | 4·8 | 4·4 | 4·3 | 4·3 | 2·9 |
| Blackpool AP | 1·1 | 2·0 | 4·9 | 5·2 | 3·6 | 3·1 | 2·1 | 3·1 |
| Boscombe, Down (Sarum) | −1·7 | −0·1 | 3·0 | 4·9 | 5·0 | 4·4 | 2·8 | 2·6 |
| Boulmer (Berwick) | 2·1 | 2·8 | 6·0 | 7·2 | 6·6 | 6·1 | 5·2 | 5·1 |
| Bournemouth AP | −0·7 | 0·6 | 3·0 | 5·1 | 6·3 | 5·3 | 3·6 | 3·3 |
| Bristol | 0·8 | 2·5 | 5·0 | 6·1 | 5·8 | 5·9 | 4·6 | 4·4 |
| Brize Norton (Oxford) | −1·5 | −0·3 | 2·9 | 4·5 | 4·1 | 4·5 | 3·6 | 2·5 |
| Carlisle | 0·5 | 3·6 | 4·7 | 3·4 | 2·1 | 1·5 | 3·2 | 2·7 |
| Chivenor (Barnstaple) | n/a | n/a | 5·3 | 6·4 | 7·1 | 5·0 | 4·6 | n/a |
| Coltishall (Norwich) | −1·1 | −0·2 | 1·4 | 3·8 | 5·1 | 4·4 | 4·4 | 2·5 |
| Coningsby (Boston) | −1·2 | 0·1 | 2·4 | 4·3 | 4·2 | 4·6 | 3·1 | 2·5 |
| Culdrose (Penzance) | 3·8 | 5·0 | 5·8 | 6·2 | 6·8 | 5·9 | 4·8 | 5·5 |
| Easthampstead | −2·0 | −1·0 | 2·7 | 3·6 | 4·4 | 4·1 | 3·5 | 2·2 |
| Eskmeals (Whitehaven) | 3·2 | 3·7 | 6·1 | 6·0 | 2·9 | 2·9 | 3·3 | 4·0 |
| Exeter | 2·6 | 3·1 | 4·9 | 5·4 | 5·9 | 5·2 | 3·3 | 4·3 |
| Finningley (Sheffield) | −1·0 | 1·5 | 3·9 | 6·5 | 5·5 | 5·8 | 4·1 | 3·7 |
| Gatwick AP (Guildford) | −2·5 | −0·9 | 1·4 | 3·5 | 5·1 | 4·8 | 3·5 | 2·1 |
| Heathrow AP (London) | −1·7 | 0·1 | 3·8 | 5·2 | 6·2 | 5·2 | 4·3 | 3·3 |
| Herstmonceux (Brighton) | −2·1 | −1·3 | 1·1 | 3·1 | 5·1 | 4·5 | 3·8 | 2·0 |
| Honington (Bury St. Edmunds) | −1·7 | −0·9 | 1·0 | 4·2 | 4·8 | 4·3 | 3·8 | 2·2 |
| Leeds WC | 0·5 | 3·1 | 5·9 | 8·9 | 4·6 | 6·4 | 5·5 | 5·0 |
| Leeming (Newcastle) | −1·0 | 0·4 | 3·8 | 5·7 | 2·9 | 3·3 | 4·4 | 2·8 |
| Lyneham (Chippenham) | −1·5 | 0·5 | 2·8 | 4·8 | 4·1 | 4·0 | 2·7 | 2·5 |
| Manchester AP | 0·9 | 2·0 | 5·0 | 5·0 | 5·0 | 5·9 | 5·0 | 4·1 |
| Manston (Dover) | −2·3 | −0·9 | 0·6 | 2·0 | 3·3 | 3·6 | 3·3 | 1·4 |
| Marham (Kings Lynn) | −1·5 | −0·7 | 1·0 | 3·9 | 4·6 | 4·9 | 4·0 | 2·3 |
| Mount Batten (Plymouth) | 2·1 | 3·5 | 5·1 | 6·7 | 7·4 | 5·8 | 4·4 | 5·0 |
| Okehampton | 0·9 | 3·1 | 4·1 | 4·1 | 4·3 | 2·7 | 1·2 | 2·9 |
| St. Mawgan (Truro) | 3·1 | 4·8 | 6·0 | 6·4 | 7·2 | 4·7 | 4·0 | 5·1 |
| Shawbury (Shrewsbury) | 0·1 | 2·3 | 3·7 | 4·7 | 3·1 | 4·3 | 4·8 | 3·3 |
| Southampton WC | −0·8 | 1·2 | 3·6 | 5·5 | 6·8 | 5·8 | 4·3 | 3·8 |
| Stansted | −2·3 | −0·1 | 1·3 | 4·4 | 4·3 | 3·9 | 3·9 | 2·2 |
| Tynemouth (Sunderland) | 1·2 | 3·1 | 6·6 | 6·5 | 5·0 | 5·3 | 5·3 | 4·7 |
| Watnall (Derby) | −1·6 | 0·8 | 3·7 | 6·7 | 5·9 | 5·5 | 3·4 | 3·5 |
| Wattisham (Ipswich) | −1·8 | −1·0 | 0·6 | 3·7 | 4·5 | 4·0 | 3·8 | 2·0 |
| Whitby CG | −0·2 | 0·9 | 5·9 | 6·5 | 4·5 | 4·1 | 5·7 | 3·9 |
| Wyton (Cambridge) | −1·8 | 0·2 | 2·6 | 5·2 | 4·9 | 4·7 | 3·8 | 2·8 |
| Yeovilton (Yeovil) | 0·1 | 1·5 | 3·1 | 4·1 | 5·0 | 4·9 | 3·4 | 3·1 |
| *Wales* | | | | | | | | |
| Aberporth (Aberystwyth) | 1·8 | 3·6 | 5·1 | 5·8 | 5·6 | 5·2 | 4·7 | 4·5 |
| Brawdy (Pembroke) | 3·2 | 4·6 | 5·6 | 6·2 | 6·2 | 3·8 | 3·9 | 4·7 |
| Cilfyndd (Merthyr Tydfil) | −0·7 | 1·4 | 3·2 | 5·4 | 5·7 | 4·4 | 3·7 | 3·3 |
| Mumbles (Swansea) | 1·3 | 4·3 | 5·1 | 6·5 | 5·5 | 5·6 | 4·6 | 4·7 |

| Weather Station | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday | Average |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rhoose (Cardiff) | 1·0 | 1·9 | 3·9 | 5·6 | 5·3 | 4·7 | 3·4 | 3·7 |
| Trawsfynydd (Dolgellau) | 2·1 | 3·2 | 4·0 | 5·0 | 4·7 | 5·0 | 3·6 | 3·9 |
| Valley (Caernarfon) | 4·5 | 1·0 | 6·5 | 7·1 | 6·8 | 5·7 | 4·5 | 5·1 |

n.a. = Data not available.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make it his policy that pensioners not normally in receipt of supplementary pensions should have their heating requirement assessed as £5 per week greater during exceptionally severe weather; and that if this additional cost puts them over the supplementary pension threshold they should receive the severe weather payment.

**Mr. Major** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: No. Pensioners with incomes above their supplementary benefit requirements level, who are receiving housing benefit supplement, are eligible for the £5 extra payment, where the other conditions are satisfied.

### General Practice Trainees

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has regarding the legality within the European Economic Community of the limitation of numbers of general practice trainees; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** There are no provisions in the laws of the European Communities which prevent member states from operating medical manpower controls provided that they do not affect the rights of Economic Community nationals to compete freely for such appointments; this, of course, includes general practice trainee places.

### Cot Deaths

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what statistical information is collected by his Department regarding the incidence of cot deaths; for how many years information has been collected; what has been the annual number of cot deaths recorded; what information there is on the incidence of cot deaths following vaccination; how many cot deaths have been noted as occurring within *(a)* 24, *(b)* 48, *(c)* 72 and *(d)* seven days following vaccination; and over what period these deaths occurred.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the right hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Disabled People

**Mr. Alfred Morris** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to make an inquiry under section 36 of the National Assistance Act 1948 of any local authorities which publish a nil budget estimate for any service for which they have a duty to assess the needs of disabled people under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Major** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: Under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 local authorities have a duty to provide certain services for an individual disabled person if they are satisfied that such services are necessary in order to meet his or her needs. Section 36 of the National Assistance Act provides that where a local authority has failed to discharge its duties under section 2, the Secretary of State may, after such inquiry as he may think fit, make an order declaring the authority to be in default. The publication of a nil budget estimate cannot in itself indicate such a failure. Where, however, there is evidence that a local authority has failed actually to provide the services which are necessary to meet a disabled person's needs, the necessary inquiries are made.

### Breast and Cervical Cancer

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many specialist staff are employed by each of the district health authorities in England in the detection of *(a)* breast and *(b)* cervical cancer.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 26 January 1987]: The information requested is not available centrally.

### Social Fund Inspectors

**Mrs. Beckett** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on ministerial responsibility for the proposed social fund inspectors.

**Mr. Major** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: My right hon. Friend will be responsible for making persons available to the social fund commissioner for appointment as social fund inspectors, and for issuing any general directions and guidance on reviews of social fund decisions. The commissioner will be responsible for appointing the inspectors, arranging their training, monitoring the quality of their decisions and giving them any advice or assistance needed to improve the standard of those decisions. The commissioner will also report annually to my right hon. Friend on the standards of review by inspectors, and my right hon. Friend will publish his report.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### British Gas

**Mr. Leigh** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the first tranche of British Gas debt will be repaid.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The first tranche of £750,000,000 of the British Gas debenture will be redeemed this financial year.

### Departmental Staff (Training)

**Mr. Michael Marshall** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the average number of days' training [illegible] year given to professional information technology staff within Her Majesty's Customs and Excise who are no longer trainees in the most recent years available.

**Mr. Brooke:** Following is the information:

1985—7·95 man days per person
1986—6·86 man days per person

### Premium Bonds

**Mr. J. Enoch Powell** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the names of winners of premium bonds are held in a form which makes it possible meaningfully to analyse them by region, or otherwise geographically.

**Mr. Lawson:** The national savings register of premium bonds contains the addresses given by holders. A geographical analysis of monthly prize winners is available for each recent draw.

### Morgan Grenfell (Inquiry)

**Sir Brandon Rhys Williams** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the respective roles of *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Bank of England in the establishment of an inquiry into the management of Morgan Grenfell and, in particular, on the resignations of the chief executive and the head of the corporate finance department; and under what powers the Bank of England has purported to act in this matter.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer explained to the House on 20 January, at column 781, Morgan Grenfell, as a recognised bank, is subject to the supervisory authority of the Bank of England and to the terms of the Banking Act 1979. I have nothing further to add concerning the bank's role with respect to Morgan Grenfell. As my right hon. Friend also told the House, the Governor is keeping him informed of developments.

### Personal Wealth

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of personal wealth was represented by the top 2, 10 and 20 per cent., respectively, of the British population in 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Public Expenditure

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* the figures for general Government expenditure, privatisation proceeds and gross domestic product used in the plotting of chart 1.1 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56-I, page 5).

**Mr. MacGregor:** General Government expenditure and privatisation proceeds figures were published in tables 2.1, 2.22 and 2.24 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56-II).

The gross domestic product figures underlying chart 1.1 are as follows, rounded to the nearest billion:

| | *£ billion* |
|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 173 |
| 1979-80 | 207 |
| 1980-81 | 236 |
| 1981-82 | 260 |
| 1982-83 | 283 |
| 1983-84 | 307 |
| 1984-85 | 329 |
| 1985-86 | 360 |
| 1986-87 | 380 |
| 1987-88 | 407 |
| 1988-89 | 431 |
| 1989-90 | 455 |

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a note explaining how the definitions used for the calculation of the public expenditure-gross domestic product ratio have changed from White Paper to White Paper, with their numerical consequences, over the period 1979-1987.

**Mr. MacGregor:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 28 January 1986, at columns 443-44. There were no definitional changes in the general Government expenditure-GDP percentage between the 1986 and 1987 public expenditure W[illegible] Papers (Cmnd. 9702 and Cmnd. 56 respectively). A series of general Government expenditure as a percentage of GDP was published in table 2.22 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56).

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place tables in the Library showing the percentages by Department, spending authority and economic category for the period 1979-80 to 1989-90 using precisely the same definitions and classifications as in chart 1.3 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56-I, page 7).

**Mr. MacGregor:** The figures underlying the percentages in chart 1.3 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56-I), were published in tables 2.1, 2.3 and 2.7 of volumn II. These tables cover the period 1981-82 to 1989-90. Figures by spending authorities and economic category are not readily available prior to 1981-82. Copies of the White Paper are available in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* the detailed entries for "Other national accounts adjustments" for the years 1981-82 to 1989-90, consistent with table 2.1 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper.

**Mr. MacGregor:** The underlying detailed figures for the "Other national accounts adjustments", shown in table 2.1 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56-II), appear in table 2.19 of that White Paper.

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table in cash terms showing, for each of the years 1979-80 to 1989-90 for each of the organisations which have been included in at least one year in the equivalent of table 5.3 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 56-II), those actual or planned asset sales not included in "central privatisation proceeds"; whether such proceeds have directly accrued to the Exchequer or have remained in the relevant businesses; and if he will provide this information in a format comparable to the table in columns 861-62 of the *Official Report* of 26 July 1986, except that at least totals should be provided for the planning years.

**Mr. MacGregor:** I assume the hon. Member is referring to the answer of 26 July 1985, at columns 863-64, which my predecessor gave in reply to his earlier question on this subject.

Actual and forecast receipts from asset sales included in the internally generated funds figures shown in table 5.3 of Cm. 56 for 1979-80 to 1986-87 are shown in the table.

For the years 1987-88 to 1989-90 receipts from asset sales totalling approximately £300 million, £250 million and £200 million respectively, have been assumed.

Proceeds from the sale of assets are a source of internally generated funds for nationalised industries and do not directly accrue to the Exchequer although they do affect the industries' need for external finance.

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table comparable with table 2.1 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 56-II), showing, by programme for the years 1979-80 to 1989-90, the actual or projected proceeds of public sector sales of assets outside the "central privatisation proceeds" detailed in table 2.21.

**Mr. MacGregor:** The table shows sales of land and buildings by Department for the years 1979-80 to 1989-90. The figures include sales by local authorities and new towns as well as central Government and are consistent with the figures published in the 1987 public expenditure White Paper, Cm. 56. To be consistent with table 2.1, the figures are provided by Department rather than programme.

It is not possible to identify fully the sales of assets, other than those from privatisation proceeds and sales of land and buildings, within the public expenditure figures. However, the amounts of these other sales are likely to be relatively small.

*Sales of Land and Buildings 1979-80 to 1989-90 by Department*

*£ million*

| | *1979-80 outturn* | *1980-81 outturn* | *1981-82 outturn* | *1982-83 outturn* | *1983-84 outturn* | *1984-85 outturn* | *1985-86 outturn* | *1986-87 estimated outturn* | *1987-88 plans* | *1988-89 plans* | *1989-90 plans* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Defence | 45 | 66 | 54 | 41 | 32 | 28 | 60 | 62 | 38 | 40 | 40 |
| Foreign and Commonwealth Office[1] | — | — | 2 | — | 3 | 2 | 5 | 14 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food[2] | 9 | 21 | 13 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 12 | 21 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Trade and Industry[3] | 3 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 11 | 16 | 10 | — | — | — | — |
| Employment | — | — | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 3 | 1 | — | — |
| Transport | 32 | 44 | 66 | 41 | 44 | 53 | 60 | 48 | 37 | 40 | 40 |
| DOE—Housing | 544 | 792 | 1,392 | 1,965 | 1,525 | 1,355 | 1,289 | 1,528 | 1,419 | 1,420 | 1,460 |
| DOE—Other environmental services | 121 | 192 | 215 | 288 | 314 | 394 | 506 | 522 | 530 | 520 | 530 |
| Home Office[4] | 22 | 26 | 26 | 39 | 54 | 51 | 59 | 32 | 36 | 30 | 30 |
| Education | 20 | 25 | 47 | 46 | 46 | 79 | 98 | 110 | 63 | 60 | 70 |
| Arts and Libraries | — | 8 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | — | — | — | — | — |
| DHSS—Health and personal social services | 15 | 22 | 25 | 27 | 45 | 64 | 104 | 153 | 159 | 160 | 170 |
| DHSS—Social Security | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Scotland | 42 | 81 | 133 | 192 | 230 | 251 | 215 | 195 | 184 | 160 | 150 |
| Wales | 19 | 27 | 102 | 137 | 90 | 81 | 84 | 99 | 101 | 110 | 100 |
| Northern Ireland | 1 | — | 49 | 44 | 45 | 45 | 40 | 31 | 26 | 20 | 20 |
| Chancellor's departments | — | — | 4 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Other departments[5] | 5 | 9 | 7 | 16 | 8 | 8 | 24 | 23 | 36 | 20 | 20 |
| TOTAL | 878 | 1,316 | 2,139 | 2,860 | 2,462 | 2,441 | 2,566 | 2,841 | 2,650 | 2,600 | 2,650 |

[1] Including Overseas Development Administration.
[2] Including Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce and Forestry Commission.
[3] Including Export Credits Guarantee Department.
[4] Including Lord Chancellor's Department.
[5] Including Property Services Agency and Civil Superannuation.

## Capital Gains

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many valuations of assets at 6 April 1965 prices for the purposes of capital gains tax and corporation tax on capital gains were carried out in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will estimate the costs incurred by the Inland Revenue in connection with those valuations.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

## EC Budget

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest figure for the proportion of the European Commission budget spent on *(a)* all agriculture support, *(b)* social fund and *(c)* regional fund.

**Mr. Brooke:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest figure for Britain's net contribution to the European Commission; and if he will express that figure as a percentage of the total EEC budget.

**Mr. Brooke:** The latest estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution to the European Community budget in 1986-87 is £1,259 million (see table 3.3 of the public expenditure White Paper, Cmnd. 56-II). This is some 5·4 per cent. of the 1986 Community budget.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Annual Review

**Mrs. Roe** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement on the outcome of the 1987 annual review of agriculture.

**Mr. Jopling:** A White Paper setting out the conclusions of the 1987 annual review of agriculture will be laid before Parliament today. The White Paper shows that gross output at current prices is forecast to rise by 1·5 per cent. to £12,198 million in 1986. The cereals harvest was a particularly good one. Output prices generally were higher but input prices were lower largely due to cheaper fuel and fertilisers.

Aggregate farming income is forecast to rise by 21 per cent. to £1,411 million in 1986, though there were marked variations over the United Kingdom as a whole. With a 2 per cent. fall in the work force, labour productivity is forecast to rise by around 2 per cent. compared with an annual average growth rate of 6 per cent. over the 10 years up to 1985.

### EEC (Food Sales to Soviet Union)

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food at what price, in pounds sterling, a pound of butter, a pound of beef, a litre of wine and a ton of grain is sold by the European Commission to the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** The most recent prices (in sterling terms) at which these commodities would have been made available to traders for bulk sales to third countries including the USSR are as follows:

Butter: 10p/lb.
Beef: bone in forequarters 32p/lb
bone in hindquarters 49p/lb
boneless cuts 38p to 59p/lb depending on the cut
Wine: 5p/litre
Cereals: £40-50 per tonne depending on type and quality

These prices are inclusive of export refunds and United Kingdom MCA's where applicable. With the exception of the cereals price which is the free on board price, they do not cover any transport, distribution or other costs. The prices at which these commodities are sold to the Soviet Union is a matter for the traders concerned.

### Marine Pollution

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the present concentration of mercury in *(a)* fish in Liverpool bay and *(b)* eels in the Thames estuary; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** The average level of mercury in fish taken from Liverpool bay, weighted in accordance with the pattern of consumption, was 0·23 mg/kg in 1985, the latest year for which figures are available. The level in eels in the Thames estuary in 1986 was 0·30 mg/kg.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food when he intends to publish the baseline survey of metals in sea water on which his Department is currently engaged.

**Mr. Gummer:** This survey is part of a baseline survey by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, which is expected to be completed and made available in 1988.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what resources are available to his Department in terms of finance and manpower to carry out the work of protecting the North sea from pollution arising from human sources.

**Mr. Gummer:** The protection of the North sea from pollution forms part of the aquatic environment programme of my Ministry. The resources devoted to it are listed in the publication "Ministerial Information in MAFF 1986" a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to the answer of 20 November, *Offical Report*, column *348*, if he will give the latest assessment *(a)* by Her Majesty's Government and *(b)* by other Governments of the scale of pollution in the North sea.

**Mr. Gummer:** I have nothing to add to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Newham, North-West (Mr. Banks) on 20 November 1986 at col. *348*.

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, pursuant to the answer of 25 November, *Official Report*, column *182*, if he will list all the licences issued under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 for the dumping or disposal by burning at sea of harzardous industrial chemicals and wastes.

**Mr. Gummer:** More than 30 such licences have been issued. A public register of all licences issued under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 is maintained in my Ministry and may be inspected free of charge at any reasonable time.

### Common Agricultural Policy

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report*, a revised table bringing up to date the information on annual expenditure under the common agricultural policy as given in his written answer dated 14 May 1986, *Official Report*, columns *481-82*; and if he will provide estimates for 1986 and a forecast for 1987.

**Mr. Jopling:** The information requested is set out in the following table:

| | *CAP Expenditure*[2] | | *Year on year increase in real terms per cent.* | *CAP expenditure as a percentage of total EC expenditure per cent.* | *United Kingdom receipts under the CAP*[2] *£ million* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *mecu* | *£ million*[1] | | | |
| 1973 | 3,085 | 1,912 | — | 82 | 63 |
| 1974 | 3,230 | 1,647 | −24 | 75 | 112 |
| 1975 | 4,708 | 2,637 | +27 | 78 | 347 |
| 1976 | 5,796 | 3,603 | +11 | 77 | 213 |
| 1977 | 7,123 | 4,657 | +12 | 74 | 174 |
| 1978 | 9,000 | 5,974 | +17 | 79 | 318 |
| 1979 | 10,880 | 7,064 | +11 | 76 | 384 |
| 1980 | 11,943 | 7,232 | −1 | 73 | 569 |
| 1981 | 11,581 | 6,449 | −12 | 65 | 666 |
| 1982 | 13,077 | 7,294 | +3 | 64 | 756 |
| 1983 | 16,637 | 9,759 | +18 | 68 | 1,085 |
| 1984 | 19,093 | 11,150 | +9 | 69 | 1,310 |
| 1985 | 20,549 | 12,084 | +2 | 73 | 1,187 |
| 1986 | 23,104 | 14,350 | +6 | 66 | 1,345 |
| 1987 | 24,152 | 15,468 | +1 | 67 | n/a |

*Sources*:

1973-85 EC Court of Auditors reports, EC Commission EAGGF Financial Reports.

1986 Budget, MAFF estimates.

1987 Draft Budget.

GDP deflators from EC Commission.

[1] Conversion rate to sterling at the average rate for the EAGGF Guarantee section each year except 1986 and 1987, for which the budget rate has been used.

[2] Figures in ecus for expenditure under the CAP funded outside the EAGGF are not available for the years 1973-77. Figures for the United Kingdom receipts of this expenditure are also not available for all years. However, in both cases the amounts are negligible.

## Research

**Mr. Corbett** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will list the funding by project purpose and amount of agricultural research by his Department in each of the past five years.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** A summary of my Department's research programme is published in an annual report on research and development. This outlines the broad allocation of expenditure and provides a commentary on selected aspects of the national programme. Copies of the five most recent reports are being placed in the Library of the House. I regret that a more detailed breakdown could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## Animal Welfare

**Mr. Corbett** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will list by title, start date and amount, the funding of agricultural research projects involving *(a)* minor and *(b)* major aspects of animal welfare in each of the past five years.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The information which is readily available has been placed in the Library of the House. It covers the three years 1983-84 to 1985-86 and gives details of work with animal welfare implications as reported to the Farm Animal Welfare Council by the Agriculture Departments and the Agricultural and Food Research Council. The projects have been annotated to show whether animal welfare was a primary or secondary objective of the study. More detailed information extending over a longer time scale could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Corbett** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will list in the *Official Report*, by title and subject, those recommended revised welfare codes and reports from the Farm Animal Welfare Council, and the dates on which they were submitted to Ministers, which still await ministerial decision; and when decisions upon them are likely to be made.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Ministers have yet to take decisions on the implementation of the following reports and proposals for codes from the Farm Animal Welfare Council:

—Welfare of farmed deer (submitted January 1985). The Government's proposals for implementation are expected to be circulated to interested parties shortly.

—Welfare of livestock when slaughtered by religious methods (July 1985). Discussions are still taking place with interested organisations.

—Welfare of livestock at markets (May 1986). Proposals should be issued within the next few months.

—Interim statement on regulations (November 1986). Interested organisations have been asked for comments by 31 January.

—Revised welfare codes for turkeys and domestic fowls as well as new codes for ducks and rabbits and the disposal of day-old chicks (June 1982-November 1986). These codes will be laid before Parliament together very shortly.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Wednesday 28 January 1987*

## DEFENCE

### Contracts

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to highlight particular problem areas or contractors who persistently underestimate cost or completion dates.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 27 January to the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Wainwright).

### European Fighter Aircraft

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the role of the European fighter aircraft in his Department's plans for European defence.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The EFA is intended to replace the Phantom and the Jaguar in the air defence and ground attack roles.

### S90 (Hull Design)

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the latest position regarding the investigation into the properties of the S90 short fat hull.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** As my right hon. Friend announced in another place on 13 November 1986, at column *124*, Lloyd's Register of Shipping has agreed to conduct the inquiry into hull forms for frigates and destroyers under the chairmanship of Mr. H. R. MacLeod. I understand that Lloyd's Register has begun the gathering and assessment of the evidence and we look forward to receiving its report in due course. I would expect the inquiry to take about six to nine months to complete its work.

### NATO (Ships)

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the United Kingdom's participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation frigate replacement programme (NFR90).

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Together with seven other NATO nations, the United Kingdom participated in a 15-month joint feasibility study, which was completed towards the end of 1985.

In concert with our partners in this project, the results have been evaluated; detailed discussions aimed at the commencement of the next phase, project definition, are currently in progress with the other nations. Current plans envisage decisions on the way ahead being reached by about the middle of the year.

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made as to how the planned United Kingdom number of surface ships is able to meet the maritime force requirements in the light of the study completed by the major North Atlantic Treaty Organisation commanders; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Stanley:** The study to which I believe my hon. Friend is referring is confidential and work on it is continuing. The United Kingdom makes by far the largest contribution to the NATO surface naval presence in the eastern Atlantic and the Channel of any European NATO member.

### Strategic Defence Initiative

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements he has made for the £300,000 contract awarded by the United States to his Department for research into strategic defence initiative-related test bed requirements to be completed; and whether private firms will be involved in this work.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** This study, which is already under way, is being led by the MOD's Royal Signals and Radar Establishment, Malvern, with the bulk of the work being sub-contracted to companies in the United Kingdom. A contract was recently awarded to Ferranti Computer Systems Ltd. which leads a consortium involving British Aerospace, the Marconi Company, Scicon and Software Sciences. Normal MOD rules of contracting by competition applied. The study, which is scheduled to be completed by March 1987, is valued at US$300,000.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Derelict Land Reclamation

**Mr. Ottaway** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what resources are being made available for derelict land reclamation in 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** The resources available for derelict land reclamation in 1987-88 will be about £81·14 million compared with £78·38 million at the beginning of 1986-87 and about double in real terms the £23·5 million available in 1979-80. Of this, £75 million (92 per cent.) will be spent in the north, north-west, Yorkshire and Humberside, west midlands and east midlands.

I have increased the allocation for grant to the private sector and nationalised industries by over two thirds, to £9·55 million. Resources for local authority schemes are slightly lower than in 1986-87, at £71·3 million. This is well justified by the level of interest shown by private firms and by the value for money that can be obtained from using scarce public resources in partnership with the private sector.

Local authorities retain a major role in reclamation, so I have approved a further three rolling programmes to enable authorities to tackle areas of extensive dereliction in Rotherham, Sunderland and Barrow. Total expenditure on the 16 programmes now approved will be over £29 million next year. This will enable local authorities to tackle dereliction on an area basis more effectively than could be achieved on a scheme by scheme basis.

I have allocated a further £10 million to continue support for the reclamation of the former Consett and

Corby steel works (5·3 million), and investigation and remedial works on limestone workings in the Black Country (£5 million).

The allocations include over £7 million for the reclamation of coal tip and related dereliction. Following the "Coal and the Environment" (1981) report, this is the largest amount made available in any year, and demonstrates the Government's continued support for good quality schemes in coalfield areas.

Priorities for derelict land reclamation continue to [illegible] as set out in my Department's circular, "Reclamation for Re-use of Derelict Land (28/85)". This stressed the importance of schemes designed to reclaim urban, especially inner city land for housing and industrial and commercial end uses. These priorities will be reflected in the schemes to be supported in 1987-88.

### Multi-occupied Properties

**Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received regarding multi-occupied properties; and how he proposes to respond.

**Mr. Tracey:** I refer to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Elmet (Mr. Batiste) on Friday 23 January by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction.

### Loft Insulation

**Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he has any plans to change his policy of providing loft insulation grants to householders in England and Wales;

(2) what is his policy on the provision of loft insulation grants; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** My hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction announced proposed changes to the Homes Insulation Scheme on 19 December, at column 756, in response to a question from the hon. Member for Devon, North (Mr. Speller). The proposed new scheme would withdraw the general rate at 66 per cent. but would extend the availability of the 90 per cent. grant to all householders in receipt of housing benefit or supplementary benefit.

The new arrangements would also apply in Wales, where my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales has responsibility for the scheme.

**Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the level of expenditure on loft insulation grants *(a)* in 1979 and *(b)* in the most recent year for which figures are available; and whether he has any plans to increase such expenditure.

**Mr. Tracey:** Expenditure on grants in 1979 was £14·9 million, and in 1985, the most recent year for which figures are available, it was £25·4 million. My right hon. Friend has no plans to increase expenditure.

### Pollution

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what evidence he has submitted to the Paris Commission on the efficacy of environmental quality objectives and uniform emission standards; and if he will place a copy in the Library.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** My Department made a statement on the use of environmental quality objectives and uniform emission standards to a Paris Commission working group to evaluate the two approaches in February 1985. This statement, together with those of other contracting parties, was included as an annex to the seventh annual report on the activities of the Paris Commission; the report also records the conclusions reached on the subject by the commission at its seventh annual meeting. Arrangements are being made to place a copy in the Library. My Department also makes an annual return to the Paris Commission to demonstrate compliance with the quality standard for mercury.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he intends to respond to the House of Lords Select Committee recommendation concerning the unification of uniform emission standards and the environmental quality objective approaches to water quality management.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** In his speech of 21 November 1985 my noble Friend Lord Skelmersdale undertook that the Government would give serious consideration to the House of Lords Select Committee's recommendations concerning a "unified" approach to the control of discharge of list 1 substances, while pointing out that any change in the current parallel approach would have far-reaching implications and require very careful thought. This remains the position.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment to what degree financially in the last three years his Department has supported work on *(a)* the effects of hydrocarbon discharges, including polyaromatic hydrocarbons on the North sea, and *(b)* development of biological indicators of pollution, and if he will detail the institute or person with whom these contracts were placed.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** In the last three years my Department has not supported work on the effects of hydrocarbon discharges to the sea. Some £500,000 has been spent on the development of biological indicators of pollution, the main projects being:

— Sewage discharges to the sea and stress indices—at the Water Research Centre;

— Evaluation of techniques for detecting pollution effects on benthic communities; and part of an integrated study on environmental quality — at the Institute for Marine Environmental Research;

— Effects of heavy metals in estuarine benthic organisms at the Marine Biological Association.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the contribution Her Majesty's Government have made to the data bases being developed by the international council for the exploration of the sea and that of the joint monitoring programme of the Oslo and Paris commission.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The United Kingdom Government have played a full part in the development of these data bases and regularly submit information on the levels of contaminants in water, biota and sediments for particular locations.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what controls Her Majesty's Government have introduced in the last three years to control the discharge of grey list substances to coastal and estuarine waters.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I refer to my replies to the hon. Member's questions on 27 November, at columns 314-15. Her Majesty's Government have introduced national quality standards in respect of six grey list substances—copper, zinc, nickel, chromium, lead and arsenic; quality standards have been set for saline as well as fresh water. Water authorities are required to ensure that the quality standards are met, which entails the appropriate control of discharges.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when Her Majesty's Government intend to publish the results of the study they sponsored to examine the implementation in England and Wales of the cadmium directive, 1983/513/EEC.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Publication of the results of this study has been delayed because of the need to respect commercial confidentiality. However, agreement has now been reached with the companies concerned and I expect to publish the results shortly.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment by what date water authorities have to draw up plans incorporating time scales for the reduction of pollution from list II substances for those areas where quality standards are not met.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Water authorities are required, under DOE circular 18/85, WO37/85, to inform my Department by 1 January 1988 of details of the measures they intend to take to enable the national quality standards so far established for list II substances to be met in any areas where they are not already being achieved, and of dates by which these measures will be taken.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment by when, through international agreement, Her Majesty's Government are obliged to ensure that the best technical means are employed to reduce pollution by certain substances; and whose advice is sought to assist his judgment on what the best technical means are.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** As far as discharges to water are concerned, Her Majesty's Government are already bound by the relevant provisions of the EC directives relating to discharges of mercury, cadmium, lindane, carbon tetrachloride, pentachlorophenol and DDT (directives 82/176, 83/513, 84/156, 84/491, and 86/280) to grant authorisations for new plants which apply the standards corresponding to the best technical means available, when that is necessary for the elimination of pollution or for the distortions to competition.

Hitherto my Department has, in determining best technical means available, drawn on the expertise of its own staff who have taken into account any relevant discussion that may have taken place in the Community at the time of negotiation of limit values for the substance concerned. In the future, consideration of what constitutes best technical means available will be one of the tasks undertaken by the water pollution arm of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list those occasions in the last three years when, in the light of experience or fresh scientific evidence, Her Majesty's Government have tightened numerically any environmental quality objectives;

(2) if he will list those occasions in the last three years when, in the light of experience or fresh scientific evidence, Her Majesty's Government have lessened numerically any environmental quality objectives.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** My Department has not, in the last three years, tightened or relaxed any environmental quality standards.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, in the light of the Minister of State's statement that complete protection of all ecosystems is unattainable, it is his intention that Her Majesty's Government should adopt a precautionary approach to protection of the North sea.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The Government already adopt a precautionary approach to the protection of the environment, including the North sea. We undertake, and will continue to undertake, measures to reduce inputs of contaminants to the marine environment where there are reasonable scientific grounds for supposing that failure to take action may in due course result in environmental damage. In doing so, we take into account the likely costs and benefits of such measures.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish a detailed list of research for the wider activity of the joint monitoring group of Oslo and Paris commissions which Her Majesty's Government have conducted or commissioned in the last three years.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I shall write separately detailing the research asked for.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list cases where Her Majesty's Government have found it necessary to require a refinery within their jurisdiction to reduce the oil content of its discharge into marine, freshwater and estuarine ecosystems to 5mg/L.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Consent conditions for refineries are the responsibility of the water authorities and are available from public registers.

## Council Housing

**Mr. Fallon** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will publish in the *Official Report* in tabular form for each district council in the northern region the number of council properties *(a)* difficult to let, *(b)* vacant, *(c)* available for letting, *(d)* vacant for over one year and *(e)* vacant for over two years at 1 April 1986.

**Mr. Tracey:** This information provided in local authorities' housing investment programme returns, is available in the Library in the "HIP (1986) all items print" under columns A71, A99, A91, A109 and A119, respectively.

## Housing (Disabled Persons)

**Mr. Rowe** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many local authorities' housing departments take responsibility for the adaptation of premises for disabled persons.

**Mr. Tracey:** The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 requires all housing authorities when considering the needs of their districts to have regard to the special needs of chronically sick and disabled persons.

It is for each authority to determine its own priorities for housing investment and to decide whether there is a need for purpose-built dwellings or for adaptation to existing dwellings to make them suitable for occupation by disabled people. We have urged authorities to concentrate their housing resources on those in greatest need including disabled people.

Three hundred and fifty four English housing authorities, of a total of 366, notified the Department that they had made adaptations, or supported them through home improvement grants, during 1985-86 to make dwellings more suitable for occupation by disabled people.

**Mr. Rowe** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what payments he made to local authorities either through the rate support grant or directly to adapt premises for disabled persons in the last financial year.

**Mr. Tracey:** The Department supports local authority expenditure on housing and building adaptations for disabled people in a variety of ways.

Where rate support grant is concerned, local authorities may choose to spend part of their revenue expenditure for this purpose. But the block grant given towards that spending is not hypothecated on the basis that they will.

The Department also meets a proportion of the cost of local authority home improvement grants, and the whole cost of local authority home insulation grants. Both schemes provide for higher rates of grant to disabled people in certain circumstances. It is for local authorities to decide how to allocate their resources. It is not possible to identify the extent to which Exchequer grant to local authorities relates specifically to this purpose.

### Empty Council Property

**Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met representatives of the London boroughs to discuss the problem of bringing empty council properties back into use.

**Mr. John Patten:** On 19 January I met representatives of the local authority associations to discuss homelessness; our discussions included measures to bring authorities' empty housing back into use, and the disappointing response of some London boroughs to the Government's initiative, which I announced in August 1986, of making estate action resources available to accommodate homeless people in empty properties on estates.

### Urban Development Corporations

**Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on progress in setting up the four new urban development corporations which he announced in October 1986.

**Mr. John Patten:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the right hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Freeson) on 15 January, at column 269.

### Cornwall (Planning Applications)

**Mr. Ashdown** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, for the last five years, how many times he has, for the county of Cornwall, called in planning applications that had previously received the backing of the planning authority involved.

**Mr. Tracey:** Nine such applications have been called in by my right hon. Friend or his predecessors, within the last five years.

### Commercial Development

**Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received concerning pressures for substantial commercial developments in traditionally residential outer suburbs of the English conurbations; and what criteria he follows in deciding whether to call in planning applications of this kind.

**Mr. Tracey:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State does from time to time receive representations on such matters. Requests for applications to be called in are considered on their individual merits, but the general approach is to be very selective about calling in applications for the Secretary of State's decision, and in general applications are called in only when planning issues of more than local importance are involved.

### East Sussex

**Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many houses have been built by each borough and district council in East Sussex in each year since 1974; and what are the projected figures for each council until 1990-91;

(2) how many units of sheltered accommodation have been built by each borough and district council in East Sussex, both directly and in partnership with a housing association or trust, in each year since 1974; and what are the projected figures for each council until 1990-91.

**Mr. Tracey:** Reported completion of dwellings built for each of the authorities and, of these, the numbers from 1982 to 1985 which were designed for the elderly with warden supervision, appear in the following issues of "Local Housing Statistics" which are available in the Library.

*All dwellings*

| *Period* | *Issue* |
|---|---|
| 1974 | 33 |
| 1975 | 37 |
| 1976 | 41 |
| 1977 | 45 |
| 1978 | 49 |
| 1979 | 59 |
| 1980 to 1983 | 73 |
| 1984 | 77 |
| 1985 | 78 |
| 1st half 1986 | 79 |
| *Sheltered dwellings* | |
| 1982 | 66 |
| 1983 | 70 |
| 1984 | 74 |
| 1985 | 78 |

Sheltered dwelling completions were not identified in returns up to June 1980. The numbers reported in 1980, 1981 and the first half of 1986 were:

| | *2nd half 1980* | *1981* | *1st half 1986* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Brighton** | 25 | — | — |
| **Hastings** | 42 | — | — |
| **Wealden** | 42 | 33 | 50 |

Housebuilding returns do not identify dwellings built in partnership by councils and housing associations. The only sheltered dwellings for housing associations reported as completed in East Sussex were 19 in 1984 in Rother.

The authorities' estimates of dwellings to be completed for them in 1986-87 and programme bids for 1987-88 and 1988-89, are in their 1982 HIP2 returns, which are also available in the Library. These figures show dwellings for the elderly and disabled separately from others, but do not distinguish sheltered dwellings.

### Housing (Basildon)

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many houses the Basildon Development Corporation — New Towns Commission sold in each of the last five years; and for the same period how many shared ownership schemes or dwellings for single people have been built.

**Mr. John Patten:** The information is as follows:

*(a) Sales of dwellings initially built for rent*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | 613 |
| 1983-84 | 512 |
| 1984-85 | 536 |
| 1985-86 | 448 |
| 1986-87[1] | 185 |

*(b) Sale of dwellings built in partnership with private developers (not including shared-ownership sales)*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | 467 |
| 1983-84 | 352 |
| 1984-85 | 167 |
| 1985-86 | 248 |
| 1986-87[2] | 251 |

*(c) Shared ownership sales of newly built dwellings*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | 237 |
| 1983-84 | 274 |
| 1984-85 | 153 |
| 1985-86 | 236 |
| 1986-87[3] | 64 |

[1] Up to 30 September 1986.

[2] Up to 31 December 1986.

[3] Up to 31 December 1986.

*Note:* All these dwellings were built by private developers in partnership with the corporation and commission.

I understand that only one scheme of new town dwellings specifically for single people was built at Basildon. This is a 64-unit development for rent, first let in 1980.

### Bromley (Office Development)

**Mr. John Hunt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when his Department was first informed of the withdrawal by the London borough of Bromley from the court proceedings in respect of the proposed office development at Bromley, South by Arlington Securities.

**Mr. Tracey:** Inquiries on 6 January 1987 revealed that the Treasury Solicitor had been informed, by the London borough of Bromley's letter dated 10 December 1986, of its intention to withdraw. The Treasury Solictor had not previously notified the Department because the challenge remains extant until a notice of discontinuance has been agreed by all the parties. The notice of discontinuance has not yet been received and the matter remains subjudice. I have written to my hon. Friend to explain the situation.

### Nature Conservation

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to reissue his Department's circular No. 108/77 on nature conservation and planning.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I expect to reissue the circular shortly following extensive consultations with interested bodies.

### Homes Insulation Scheme

**Dame Jill Knight** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will extend the homes insulation scheme to cover draught-proofing as well as loft insulation for people on supplementary benefit.

**Mr. John Patten:** Future arrangements for help with the cost of materials for draught-proofing are being considered by the Government Departments concerned.

### Homeless People

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many people have been accepted as homeless by each London borough council in 1978 and in each subsequent year;

(2) how many people accepted as homeless were housed in bed and breakfast, other temporary accommodation or in permanent accommodation, respectively, by each London borough council in 1978 and in each year since.

**Mr. John Patten** [*pursuant to the reply*, 12 January 1986, c. *39*]: Information about homeless acceptances and use of different forms of accommodation is contained in the Department's published quarterly statistics on homelessness and in annual HIP returns from local authorities; copies of these documents are in the Library. Further information on placings into temporary accommodation is contained in the CIPFA publication "Homelessness Statistics", also available in the Library.

### Land Register

**Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how many acres of land have been placed on the register of vacant and derelict public land since its inception in 1981; if he will show in tabular form the ownership and size of parcel of land removed from the register since 1981; what new sites have been added each year; and under whose ownership;

(2) if he will list the parcels of land which have moved *(a)* on and *(b)* off the register of vacant and derelict public land in each of the last five years, identifying how much has been removed by disposal in each year; and what percentage of such land belongs to (i) Government, (ii) local government, (iii) nationalised industries, (iv) statutory undertakers or (v) any other category;

(3) if he will list the land on which notices have been served as a result of its being on the register for vacant and derelict public land, and the time interval between service of notice under the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1982 and the completion of the sale for each parcel of land on which notices were served;

(4) how many staff are currently employed in his Department to manage the register of vacant and derelict public land; and what is the annual cost in each of the last five years;

(5) if he will set out in tabular form the ownership and size of the parcels of public land which have been removed from the register of vacant and derelict public land since the first register was published in 1981, showing how much was realised in each sale and the owner;

(6) how much land currently on the register of vacant and derelict public land belongs to the Ministry of Defence; how much has been sold in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement;

(7) how much land currently on the register of vacant and derelict public land belongs to *(a)* his Department, *(b)* regional health authorities or *(c)* district health authorities; how much has been sold in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement;

(8) how much land currently on the register of vacant and derelict public land belongs to his Departmemt; how much has been sold in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement;

(9) how much land currently on the register of vacant and derelict public land belongs to the Department of Transport; how much has been sold in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** I shall answer these questions shortly.

**Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has plans to require all public vacant land irrespective or size of potential future use to be included on the register of vacant and derelict public land.

**Mr. John Patten:** There are no plans to widen generally the present criteria for entering unused and underused land owned by public bodies on the land registers. Nevertheless, my right hon. Friend is prepared to consider entering on the register individual parcels of such land, irrespective of size, drawn to his attention by members of the public.

**Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what price was obtained for each parcel of land which has now been sold and which was formerly on the register for vacant and derelict public land; who was the owner; and what percentage of the money realised for each sale was kept by the former owner.

**Mr. John Patten:** This information is not available.

### Winfrith (Radiation Levels)

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish figures of levels of radiation in an area covered by the monitoring stations surrounding Winfrith, Dorset.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** There are 16 monitoring stations around the SGHW reactor. Levels of radiation detected at these stations are equivalent to dose rates of 70 nano sieverts per hour, consistent with background levels. The only exception has been a detection of the Chernobyl cloud, when levels increased to about 100 nano sieverts per hour, returning to the normal level after about two weeks.

### Gipsies

**Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of sites provided by each local authority in West Yorkshire for gipsy encampment, and the number they are required to provide.

**Mr. Tracey:** Yes. The number of sites provided by each local authority in West Yorkshire for gipsy encampments is: Bradford two sites (32 pitches); Leeds one site (16 pitches); Wakefield one site (22 pitches); Kirklees and Calderdale no sites. The law requires each metropolitan district to provide accommodation for up to 15 caravans.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### Mauritius (Students)

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on United Kingdom scholarships for students from Mauritius.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** The Government have for some years offered scholarships to students from Mauritius. Thirty five undergraduates and 33 at other levels studied here during 1986 under such arrangements. Seventeen of these were financed under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan and six under the new Overseas Development Administration Shared Scholarship Scheme.

In addition to the continuation of these two schemes and our in-service training scheme, a new arrangement requested by the Mauritian Government was agreed during the visit of the Mauritian Education Minister to Britain last week. Under this the top 16 school leavers from Mauritius in each of the next two years will study in Britain; the British Government will fund some in full and pay the tuition costs of the remainder.

### AIDS

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what help he is giving to underdeveloped countries to control HIV through their education programmes and blood transfusion screening to benefit their own nationals and United Kingdom visitors.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** We are giving substantial support to the World Health Organisation's global AIDS programme. The programme is helping developing countries to establish facilities to screen blood and blood products and improve their health education as part of their national AIDS control programmes.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Maladministration (Ex Gratia Payments)

**Mr. John Fraser** asked the Attorney-General if he will make a statement describing the present arrangements for ex gratia payments by the courts to litigants who have suffered loss by maladministration within the court system.

**The Attorney-General:** The Lord Chancellor is prepared to consider claims for compensation where loss is sustained through any negligence of court officials in matters for which he is responsible.

The courts as such do not make such payments.

### Royal Ulster Constabulary

**Mr. Alton** asked the Attorney-General if he will prosecute the 11 Royal Ulster Constabulary officers named in Mr. John Stalker's report, whom he recommended should be charged with conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

**The Attorney-General:** Mr. Stalker's recommendations are confidential and I am not prepared to make any statement in relation to them. The investigation originally undertaken by Mr. John Stalker is being continued by Mr. Colin Sampson, but is not yet completed.

When the DPP(NI) receives the completed report he will consider the question of prosecutions. I have asked him to inform me fully with regard to the facts reported to him and to consult me before any directions are given.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Civil Defence

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many civil defence shelters have been built by local authorities between 1970 to 1975, 1975 to 1980, and 1980 to 1985 *(a)* in Wales, *(b)* in South Wales, *(c)* in Cardiff, *(d)* in Scotland, and *(e)* in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** There is no statutory requirement for such provision, and information is not kept centrally. So far as can be ascertained the answer is none.

Local authorities in Great Britain are required under the 1983 regulations to make plans for the use of buildings and other structures as public shelter. Progress is variable, and a pilot study is being undertaken in eight areas to test how best this might be achieved.

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider introducing legislation to provide for the local planning authorities to require that all new houses include a civil defence shelter; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Government's plans for the protection of the population include the improvement by the public of the protection already afforded by their own homes, and the utilisation, by local authorities, of buildings and other structures for public shelter. These plans are kept under review, but there are no proposals for change at present.

### Animals (Experiments)

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are taken to ensure that the standards of keeping and using animals for experimental purposes by pharmaceutical and other firms comply with the statutory requirements; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which has replaced the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876, provides a new and more rigorous system of controls over the use of living animals for experimental and other scientific research. The controls are enforced by a professional Home Office inspectorate, the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate. The inspectorate makes frequent visits to establishments, normally without notice, and keeps a close watch on the use of animals and on standards of care and accommodation. The Act provides for the issue of codes of practice as to the case of protected animals and their use for regulated procedures. A code is being prepared and will be ready later this year.

### National Association of Victims Support Schemes

**Mr. Arnold** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what support he is giving to the National Association of Victims Support Schemes; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** During the financial year 1986-87 the Home Office is providing a grant of £150,000 to the National Association of Victims Support Schemes, together with £136,000 to assist local schemes which are experiencing financial difficulties. In 1987-88, as well as renewing the grant to NAVSS, the Home Office intends to make £2 million available in further support for local schemes, as the first stage in a new programme of funding totalling £9 million over three years. The primary purpose of this funding is to support full-time salaried co-ordinators.

### Drugs (Misuse)

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has yet received the report of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs on the adequacy of current Misuse of Drugs Act controls; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** Last year the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs was asked to examine the nature of any risk arising from the cultivation in the United Kingdom of opium poppies and to consider whether existing statutory controls are adequate to deal with it. We expect to receive the council's report very soon.

### Police National Computer

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the operational requirement of the replacement police national computer; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** We expect the Police National Computer Board to agree the operational requirement for the replacement police national computer later this year. I shall place a copy in the Library.

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to ensure that records of access to the police national computer are kept according to the nine categories mentioned in the reply of 18 November, *Official Report*, columns *89-90;* and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** As I explained to the hon. Member in my answer of 18 November, at column *89*, the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis has informed us that records of accesses to the police national computer by the Metropolitan police are kept in terms of the nine categories mentioned. As these records are kept in the form of a manual log at each terminal, they cannot be easily compiled for statistical purposes, but we are satisfied that they are adequate to identify the originator of any PNC inquiry and see no need for any change.

### Metropolitan Police

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the procedures and criteria used in sanctioning the manpower levels of the Metropolitan police.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The programme of manpower increases for the Metropolitan police which my right hon. Friend announced last May was based upon a review to assess the force's specific needs for additional manpower. This review sought to establish the proven needs for additional police officers and how the Commissioner would deploy them and with what objectives. It also assessed the extent to which these needs could be met by civilianisation and by the release of police officers as a result of the Commissioner's reorganisation of the force.

As a result it was decided that there should be increases of up to 1,200 in the police establishment and 600 in the civil staff ceiling, phased over four years. As the first step in this programme increases of 300 in the police establishment and 150 in the civil staff ceiling have been authorised for 1986-87. We have made it clear that before authorising further increases over the next three years we shall need to be satisfied that earlier increases have been effectively used in accordance with the agreed objectives, and that satisfactory progress has been made with civilianisation and the force reorganisation. Officials are keeping in close touch with the Metropolitan Police to monitor progress on these matters.

### Chemical Weapons

**Mr. Jessel** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance is given to local authorities on air filtration needed for district and county control centres to protect against chemical weapons.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No guidance has been given. The Government are examining the requirement for, and methods of, protection against chemical agents.

### Brewing and Licensed Trade

**Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next plans to meet representatives of the brewing and licensed trade.

**Mr. Waddington:** At present my right hon. Friend has no plans to do so.

### Identity Cards

**Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set up a departmental committee, or some other form of inquiry, to establish the advantages and disadvantages of introducing identity cards for the population of the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No. The introduction of identity cards along the lines of those issued in some European countries has been considered from time to time, but we are not persuaded that a sufficiently strong case could be made out for their issue here.

### Immigration

**Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for each of the last 24 months, how many visitors have been recorded in the Home Office computer; and what proportion of those who have reached their due date of departure have not yet departed.

**Mr. Waddington:** The recording of the entry of visitors on the Home Office computer is selective. Only a minority, those passengers who are subject to special conditions, are recorded on it when they enter. The number of visitors whose arrivals were so recorded for each of the last 24 months is as follows:

| *Month of admission* | *Number of visitors whose arrival was recorded* | |
|---|---|---|
| | *1985* | *1986* |
| January | 17,900 | 17,700 |
| February | 16,400 | 17,300 |
| March | 21,600 | 23,100 |
| April | 24,000 | 24,000 |
| May | 27,600 | 28,200 |
| June | 34,700 | 34,000 |
| July | 46,100 | 46,200 |
| August | 40,100 | 39,200 |
| September | 31,800 | 31,200 |
| October | 25,400 | 23,000 |
| November | 22,300 | 18,000 |
| December | 24,900 | 20,400 |

It is not possible to produce from the computer a complete record of all departures, but none the less it remains a valuable aid to enforcement of the control.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to introduce visas for visitors coming from Nigeria.

**Mr. Douglas Hurd:** I shall tomorrow lay before Parliament a statement of change in the immigration rules which provides that citizens of Nigeria arriving at a United Kingdom port on or after 1 February 1987 will require visas to enter the United Kingdom unless they are settled here and returning after an absence of less than two years, or they are returning during the period of a limited leave which has been granted for a long-term purpose such as work or study.

### Television Licences

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations his Department has received recently over free or concessionary television licence fees for pensioner households.

**Mr. Mellor:** Since 16 July 1986, when my hon. Friend the Member for Pudsey (Mr. Shaw) replied to a similar question from the hon. Member at column 508, 101 hon. Members and 198 members of the public have written, and two petitions have been received, about concessionary licences for retirement pensioners.

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement of his intentions regarding the High Court decision on 23 January involving concessionary television licences for pensioners who are visited by housing stewards.

**Mr. Mellor:** My right hon. Friend is considering the court's judgment in this case and its implications.

### Police Widows

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the

Police Federation and other organisations representing police officers regarding the preserved rate pension for police widows whose former husbands retired before 1956.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** My right hon. Friend has received about 180 letters in recent weeks expressing disappointment with his decision not to implement an increase recommended by the Police Negotiating Board. As I indicated in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, East (Mr. Atkinson) on 19 December, at column 732, my right hon. Friend shared the regret of these correspondents that he was unable to implement the recommendation. To do so would have been a breach of the long-standing principle that entitlement under public service schemes should not be improved retrospectively, and might have had very costly repercussions in other schemes.

### Wapping (Disturbances)

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many press and public relations officers were involved in the preparation and mounting of the Metropolitan police's press conference following the incidents outside the News International plant on 24 January.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand that the press conference on the afternoon of Sunday 25 January was organised by the area press and publicity officer alone.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has about the number of demonstrators injured outside the News International plant in Wapping on 24 January; and how many received hospital treatment.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the police are aware of 40 members of the public being injured, of whom 29 attended hospital. There will have been others whose injuries did not come to police attention.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to who authorised the spraying of indelible dye on demonstrators outside the News International plant in Wapping on 24 January; and how many people stained with dye were subsequently arrested;

(2) what is his policy on the spraying of dye by the Metropolitan police; what guidelines exist covering its use; on how many occasions dye spraying has been used in the past 12 months; where it was used; and how many people stained wih dye were subsequently arrested.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that dye is not sprayed by his force in situations of disorder and never has been. I understand that a tin of red paint was thrown by a demonstrator at Wapping on 24 January.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to who was the officer in direct overall charge of police operations outside the News International plant in Wapping on 24 January; and where the officer in charge was between 7 pm and 9 pm on that evening.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that between 7 pm and 9 pm on 24 January, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Jones, the officer in charge of police operations at Wapping, spent some time in the control room at Leman Street police station and some time at various locations in the vicinity of Virginia Street.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many police officers were present in Wapping in connection with the News International dispute on 24 January.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that 1,018 officers were deployed.

### Government Data Network

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the statement of service requirement for the provision of computers for the Government data network.

**Mr. Brooke:** I have been asked to reply.

I am placing a copy of the service requirement in the Library of the House. This is the version being distributed within Government. It is identical to that sent to the potential contractors, save that it does not contain the detailed information on traffic volumes and locations contained in the technical annexes. This information is commercially confidential and is being restricted on a need-to-know basis to minimise any risk to the security of applications planned to run on the network.

## TRANSPORT

### EC (Shipping Arrangement)

62. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals the Government have to harmonise shipping arrangements with the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** It is for the European Commission to produce such proposals. The final Transport Council of the United Kingdom presidency last month, on which I reported in my reply to the hon. Member for Harwich (Sir J. Ridsdale) on 17 December, welcomed the Commission's programme to this end and invited it to submit appropriate proposals as rapidly as possible.

### Vehicle Excise Duty

**Mr. Anderson** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what efforts he is making to bring about the imposition of higher financial penalties for offences of evasion of vehicle excise duty.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The sentences imposed in individual cases are a matter for the courts. We have made known to the Magistrates Association and other court representatives our concern about the generally low level of penalties imposed for VED offences, and are currently considering what further measures might be taken.

### Estuarial Crossings

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) in relation to (i) the Severn bridge, (ii) the Humber bridge and (iii) the Avon bridge what was *(a)* the length of time between the final grant of planning permission and opening of the bridge, *(b)* his Department's estimate at the time of the final grant of planning permission, of the date of opening, *(c)* the actual cost of construction, including all associated costs, *(d)* the actual cost of construction converted into constant prices at a convenient date close to the final grant of planning permission and *(e)* the cost of construction estimated by his Department at the time of the final grant of planning permission;

(2) if his Department has prepared an analysis of the difference in construction time *(a)* of the Humber bridge *(b)* the Severn bridge and *(c)* the Avon bridge between that estimated at the time of the final grant of planning permission and outcome;

(3) if his Department has prepared an analysis of the difference in cost *(a)* of the Humber bridge, *(b)* the Severn bridge and *(c)* the Avon bridge between that estimated at the time of the final grant of planning permission, and outcome.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Not all the information is readily available. The Department has not prepared analyses in the form requested. The procedures and powers used for authorisation of construction were not the same in all cases. The information that we have is as follows:

*(a) Humber Bridge*
Constructed under Humber Bridge Act 1972.
1972 estimate of cost of overall project, at then current prices, was £28 million.
Actual cost of construction approximately £97 million (including approach roads), £80 million approximately for the bridge itself.
Construction commenced 1973, bridge opened 1981 (three and a half years later than estimated).

*(b) Severn Bridge*
Statutory order fixing line of bridge 1947 under Trunk Roads Act.
Contract for construction of foundations and approach viaducts awarded 1961 and for the superstructure 1962.
Bridge opened 1966.
Estimated cost about £11 million.
Actual cost £9·8 million.

*(c) Avonmouth Bridge*
Estimated construction time three years from 1969.
Opening date May 1974 (that is two years overrun).
Tender price £4·2 million.
Actual construction costs £10 million.

## Marine Pollution

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport which noxious liquid substances Her Majesty's Government intend to provide reception facilities for, on implementation of MARPOL (international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships), Annex II, on 6 April.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Reception facilities will be required on the entry into force on 6 April 1987 of annex II of the MARPOL convention. The requirement for these facilities is restricted to those chemical cargoes designated in the convention as being of category A and a restricted range of cargoes categories B and C which have high viscosity or low melting points.

The Government policy for complying with these requirements are set out in the Merchant Shipping Prevention of Policy (Reception Facilities) Order 1984. This order imposes the duty to provide these reception facilities upon harbours and terminals at which these substances are unloaded.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport on what day in April he intends to introduce the requirement to ensure provision of reception facilities in United Kingdom ports for residues and mixtures of noxious liquid substances first proposed within the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The Merchant Shipping, Prevention of Pollution (Reception Facilities) Order 1984 contains the requirement to ensure the provision of reception facilities, in relevant harbours or terminals for residues and mixtures for noxious liquid substances. It is the intention that this requirement will take effect from the 6 April 1987.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport at what day in July 1984 the requirement was introduced to ensure provision of reception facilities in United Kingdom ports for oily waste proposed within the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The requirement to provide reception facilities for oily waste from ships in United Kingdom ports, the Prevention of Pollution (Reception Facilities) Order 1984, came into operation on 25 July 1984. That order gave effect to the relevant provisions of annex I of the international convention and the protocol to that convention, known as MARPOL 73/78.

## Radioactive Material (Sea Transport)

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what research projects his Department has sponsored in the last three years to ensure that the marine transportation of radioactive substances and wastes is carried out in a safe way.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My Department has sponsored a project, which is currently being undertaken by the National Radiological Protection Board. This is designed to provide information on radiation doses to crew and passengers, and to review the segregation provisions for radioactive materials transported by sea. The report is expected shortly.

In addition, the Transport Committee on the Safe Transport of Radioactive Materials (ACTRAM), in response to a recommendation from the Environment Select Committee, is currently considering whether changes in practice are needed to ensure the greater control and safety of the transport of radioactive materials through the English channel.

## Drunken or Reckless Driving

**Mr. Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will consider the compulsory re-testing of all drivers convicted of drunken or reckless driving.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The possible wider application of retraining programme and driving tests for a range of traffic offences, including drinking and driving and reckless driving, is being considered by the Road Traffic

Law Review, under the independent chairmanship of Dr. Peter North. The review's report is expected within the next few months.

### British Airways

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will instruct the British Airways share opportunity office to send full information, including a prospectus, to every member of the British forces posted overseas who requests it.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** No problem will arise if they are able to provide a United Kingdom address, but I have no assurance that distribution of such material would be permissible within the relevant foreign legal jurisdictions, and cannot therefore permit distribution there.

### Road Schemes

**Sir Richard Body** asked the Secretary of State for Transport in what circumstances he decides to make a compulsory purchase order in respect of land needed for a road scheme without first negotiating for its purchase with its owner at an agreed price.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** This depends on the particular circumstances of cases. We are always willing to negotiate for the purchase of land required for road schemes. Frequently it is found expedient to make a draft compulsory purchase order at an early stage so as to expedite the processing of schemes. This does not in any way prejudice a negotiated settlement. In most cases the land is acquired by agreement. Terms of compensation, on which there is a right of appeal to the Lands Tribunal, are not affected.

### Aircraft (Safety)

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what information he has as to which civil aircraft have wind-shear warning and safety devices fitted as standard and as to the dates when such safety devices were fitted; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The Civil Aviation Authority has informed me that wind-shear warning and safety devices have only lately become available on the market and that the authority has not yet been asked to approve them for use on UK-registered aircraft. There are therefore no aircraft on the UK-register fitted with these devices.

### Speed Limits

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how frequently his Department agrees to the introduction of speed limits on principal roads in advance of any personal injuries arising from traffic accidents; and what is his policy towards introducing such limits to prevent accidents taking place.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Orders to impose or amend speed limits on principal roads in England require the consent of the Secretary of State for Transport. Each case is judged against the general criteria and considerations set out in the Department's circulars to local authorities numbered Roads 1/80 and Roads 4/83 issued in February 1980 and August 1983 respectively.

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what are the specific factors which have led him to reject the application from Leicestershire county council and Essendine parish council for a 40 mph speed limit on the A6121 road in Essendine; and in what ways the application fails to meet departmental criteria.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Accident records and speed readings give measured criteria used in determining right speed limits. At Essendine the measured speeds were just within the recommended criterion for a 40 mph speed limit. Since 1 January 1983 there have been no recorded injury accidents. The accident criterion of more than two all-injury accidents per million vehicle miles was not met.

The Department advised Leicestershire county council against proceeding with a formal application for a 40 mph limit. Imposing a lower speed limit does not necessarily make drivers go more slowly.

It is essential that uniform criteria are applied in all cases to ensure that speed limits command the respect of motorists nationwide.

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will list the occasions since 1979 when his Department has been approached by Essendine parish council or by Leicestershire county council acting on its behalf, requesting a 40 miles per hour speed limit on the A6121 road in Essendine in the Rutland district of Leicestershire; and what reply he has sent.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Department was approached by Leicestershire county council twice—in January 1981 and January 1986. In each case we advised against proceeding with a 40 mph limit.

Essendine parish council approached the Department directly in July 1981 asking for reconsideration of the earlier advice. The Department confirmed our willingness to reconsider if the situation changed and if a fresh request came from the highway authority, Leicestershire county council.

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the number of requests which his Department has accepted in 1986 for speed limits to be introduced on principal roads running through villages where no limit had existed before; and how many requests were refused.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** My right hon. Friend gave his consent to the making of 43 such orders during 1986 and refused consent to 11.

### A52 Bypass

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he proposes to announce his decision on the public inquiry into the A52 bypass around Bottesford, Leicestershire; and for how long the report of the inspector has been in his possession.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** As I said when I wrote on 7 January, I will announce the decision as soon as possible. We received the inspector's report in July 1986.

### Railway Electrification

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of railway track will be electrified when all schemes so far approved are completed.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** Once the present schemes have been completed, British Rail will have a total of 7,894 electrified track miles, representing some 32 per cent. of the total network. These figures include track for sidings; excluding sidings there will be 7,049 electrified track miles, representing 36 per cent. of the total network.

### Nuclear Power Stations

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he was informed during the severe January weather of the state of the roads leading to nuclear power stations in England and Wales; if his Department will now conduct a review of evacuation arrangements in the event of a nuclear accident; and if he will make a statement on the condition of the roads leading to Bradwell nuclear power station during the severe weather.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** During bad winter weather the Department receives regular reports on the state of the motorways and trunk roads in England. We are not specifically informed as a matter of course about the state of local roads leading to nuclear power stations. These are the responsibility of the local highway authorities. I understand from Essex county council that emergency access to Bradwell power station was maintained, except when severe drifting of snow caused blockages during the 36 hour period from about 8 pm on 14 January.

Questions on emergency planning at nuclear sites are primarily a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy. I would draw attention to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 18 December 1986 at columns 612-13, on the review of contingency plans following a nuclear accident.

## ENERGY

### Flotta Piper Pipeline

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has as to how much oil was spilt from the Flotta Piper pipeline on 26 and 27 November 1986 and as to the cause.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** The quantity of oil spilt from the Piper-Claymore-Flotta pipelines on the 26 and 27 November 1986 was 20,000 barrels. (ca 2,660 tonnes).

Spillage was caused by a crack in a welded branch connection where the Claymore pipeline joins the Piper-Flotta pipeline. No oil reached shore and the slick was dispersed by the North sea.

### North Sea Personnel

**Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many non-European Economic Community personnel were employed offshore in the United Kingdom sector of the North sea during the last full year foı which figures are available.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** The latest figures available are from the Inland Revenue's annual survey of the offshore work force, taken on 30 September 1985. On that day the total number offshore was 15,248, of whom 1,065 were non-European Economic Community personnel. The survey covers construction workers and personnel on fixed installations, mobile drilling rigs, service vessels and support barges. In reporting their survey, the Inland Revenue's practice is to multiply the total counted by 1·9 to allow for shift working and seasonal variations.

### Electricity

**Mr. Eadie** asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what was the total import of electricity in megawatts from Scotland by the Central Electricity Generating Board in each day of January to the nearest available date; and what was the cost;

(2) how many megawatts of electricity were imported from France in each day of January to the nearest available date; and what was the cost.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I shall ask the Central Electricity Generating Board to reply to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Eadie** asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what was the highest total megawattage generated in January from indigenous power stations; and what was the margin of share capacity in each day of January;

(2) how many power stations were out of commission on any dates between 11 January and 18 January, if he will name them; and what is their capacity in megawatts;

(3) how many power stations are at present out of commission; and if he will name them.

**Mr. Goodlad:** The operation of the integrated power generation and transmission system in England and Wales is the responsibility of the Central Electricity Generating Board. I have accordingly asked the board chairman to write to the hon. Member. Ministerial responsibility for the Scottish electricity boards and Northern Ireland Electricity rests with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

### North Sea Rigs

**Mr. Eadie** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what information he has about the practice of leaving functioning North sea oil rigs unmanned overnight or for longer periods; what assessment has been made of the safety implications of allowing the first helicopter when the rig is reoccupied to land without the benefit of a helicopter landing officer or standby fire fighting cover; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** Unmanned platforms, of which there have been a number in the North sea from the beginning of the production phase in 1968, are designed to operate in that way and safety is taken into account during design. Both equipment and working procedures are considered for each individual platform in accordance with its functions. Such platforms are constantly monitored by telemetry from a nearby installation or from onshore. Those responsible for this monitoring are in communication with any aircraft landing or taking off.

The persons who are first off the helicopter, and last on for the return journey, are trained for this work and will provide the helideck control of the landing officer and will man the fire-fighting equipment.

### Nuclear Power Stations

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list, for each civil reactor in Britain and Wales, the megawattage supplied by the reactor to the national grid between 1 January and 16 January; and if he will place beside it the megawattage they were first designed to supply.

**Mr. Goodlad**: The operation of the integrated power generation and transmission system in England and Wales is the responsibility of the Central Electricity Generating Board. I shall ask the board to write to the hon. Member. Ministerial responsibility for the Scottish electricity boards rests with my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

### Civil Nuclear Power

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Leeds West (Mr. Meadowcroft), *Official Report*, 19 November 1986, column 233, if he will set out the nature of the sensitivity of information to which he refers; and what are the aspects of the national interest that any revelations of information on the civil nuclear programme are likely to damage.

**Mr. Goodlad** [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 January 1987, c. *80*]: It is well known that the civil and military nuclear power programmes had common origins. The records in question contain sensitive information concerned with national security, the disclosure of which would be contrary to the public interest.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether there have been any delays in the dispatch of spent nuclear fuel from nuclear plants in the current year due to snow and ice on the rail network.

**Mr. Goodlad** [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 January 1987, c. *653*]: I am informed by the CEGB that one flask has been delayed in dispatch from Dungeness and one from Bradwell.

## SCOTLAND

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the latest information he possesses on unemployment in Dundee and Tayside by social class.

**Mr. Lang**: Information by social class is not available, but an analysis by socio-economic group of the usually resident population of Dundee city and Tayside who were economically active but not in employment is given in table 46 of "Census 1981 Scotland: Report for Tayside Region, Volume 2", which is available in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Robert Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current unemployment rate in the Aberdeen travel-to-work area.

**Mr. Lang**: On 11 December 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the unemployment rate in the Aberdeen travel-to-work area was 8·9 per cent.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the net change in the number of people unemployed to date in Greenock and Port Glasgow by district council ward since the present system of unemployment counting came into operation.

**Mr. Lang**: The change in the number of unemployed claimants in each electoral ward of the Greenock and Port Glasgow parliamentary constituency between 6 March 1986 (the date the current method of compiling the unemployment statistics came into operation) and 11 December 1986 (the latest date for which information is available) was as shown in the table.

*Greenock and Port Glasgow Parliamentary Constituency*

| *Ward Name* | *Change* | *Percentage Change* |
|---|---|---|
| Bellville | −46 | −8·14 |
| Blairmore | −60 | −12·12 |
| Bow | −46 | −7·38 |
| Broomhill | −18 | −5·17 |
| Clune Brae | 2 | 0·31 |
| Gateside | 5 | 1·50 |
| Gibshill | −92 | −10·09 |
| Greenock East Central | −10 | −1·42 |
| Greenock South | −10 | −1·83 |
| Greenock West Central | 8 | 2·38 |
| Greenock West End | 52 | 26·67 |
| Larkfield | −2 | −0·35 |
| Port Glasgow East | −13 | −1·56 |
| Port Glasgow South | −13 | −2·01 |
| Port Glasgow West | 29 | 7·69 |
| Upper Larkfield | −66 | −8·67 |
| Totals | −280 | −3·15 |

This information is available in the Library.

### Students

**Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total public expenditure on student financial support in Scotland in 1982-83; and what was the figure in 1985-86.

**Mr. John MacKay**: Responsibility for financial support for students who are Scottish residents is divided among the Scottish Education Department, education authorities, research councils and other Government Departments. Information is available only for the students allowances scheme, administered by the Scottish Education Department and for education authority bursaries paid by regional councils, as follows:

*Maintenance, and so on allowances and fees paid to or on behalf of Scottish students*

|  | *Session 1982-83 £ million* | *Session 1985-86*[1] *£ million* |
|---|---|---|
| Students' Allowances paid by Scottish Education Department | 99·10 | 99·30 |
| Education Authority Bursaries | 19·91 | 28·37 |
|  | 119·01 | 127·67 |

[1] Provisional.

**Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many students studying for the higher national certificate are eligible for bursaries rather than grants but are not eligible for child benefit.

**Mr. John MacKay**: In session 1985-86, about 1,570 Scottish students were undertaking full-time courses leading to higher national certificates at Scottish educational establishments; some 1,200 of these students received assistance from local authorities. I have no information about how many of these students were eligible for child benefit.

### Babies (Congenital Malformations)

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what plans he has to monitor the proportion of congenital malformations among babies born to women living in those parts of Scotland which were subject to rises in radiation levels following the nuclear accident at Chernobyl; and what plans he has to publish the information.

**Mr. John MacKay** [*pursuant to his reply*, 23 January 1987]: The information services division of the Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service already maintains information about certain congenital malformations occurring in babies born to women in Scotland. Any significant variation in the number of specific malformations occurring should be identifiable. It is not likely to be possible to determine which individual cases might be associated with increases in radiation levels arising as a result of the Chernobyl incident.

### Prison Officers

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now make it his policy that, before prison officers are accepted for service in Scottish prisons, they should be in possession of a professional qualification equivalent to a higher national certificate in prison studies; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: There is at present no higher national certificate in prison studies or any equivalent qualification in Scotland. Consideration is currently being given to the possibility of introducing such a certificate in the Scottish prison service, but this would be for serving personnel, to enhance their career prospects. To make possession of such a certificate a prerequisite for entry to the prison officer grade would debar otherwise well qualified and motivated candidates from pursuing a career in the prison service.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Pilkington plc

12. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received calling for the proposed takeover of Pilkingtons to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

**Mr. Channon:** I received a number of representations to that effect. Hon. Members will know that BTR has abandoned its bid. The matter has therefore been determined speedily and effectively by the market.

### Northern Region

13. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what further proposals he has to attract industry to the northern region.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The Government's economic policies are promoting jobs and wealth creation nationally, and our regional industrial policy measures positively encourage investment and employment in the assisted areas, including much of the North East region. In addition, creation of UDCs in Tyne and Wear and Teesside will encourage industrial development.

### Manufacturing Output

14. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the latest manufacturing output figures.

22. **Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the latest manufacturing output figures.

**Mr. Butcher:** The latest figures on manufacturing output are very encouraging and the prospects are good. In the three months to November output was 1½ per cent. higher than in the previous three months, 14 per cent. above the trough in 1981 and well on course to meet the Industry Act forecast of 4 per cent. growth in 1987.

34. **Sir David Price** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the value of the total output of United Kingdom industry in 1986; what was the comparable figure in real terms in 1982; and what was the percentage difference.

**Mr. Butcher:** Manufacturing output in the first 11 months of 1986 was 104·1, based on 1980 equal to 100; this compares with 94·2 in 1982, an increase of more than 10 per cent.

### Japan (Balance of Trade)

15. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the current balance of trade between the United Kingdom and Japan.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** In 1986 the United Kingdom had a visible trade deficit of £3,757 million with Japan.

### European Regional Development Fund

16. **Mr. Hicks** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list those applications, together with the financial amounts involved, that have been made under article 15 of the European regional development fund main regulation and which have been delayed pending a Government decision; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The information is as follows:

*Intended applications by United Kingdom public bodies wholly or mainly under article 15 of the main European Regional Development Fund Regulation (Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1787/84), at present lodged with Government Departments*

| *Applicant* | *ERDF (Article 15) aid sought £000* |
|---|---|
| 1 Birmingham City Council | 527·00 |
| 2 Cornwall County Council | 641·25 |
| 3 Cornwall County Council | 298·50 |
| 4 Coventry County Council | 180·00 |
| 5 Sheffield City Council | 3,629·00 |
| 6 Tyne and Wear County Council | 340·00 |
| 7 South Glamorgan County Council | 120·50 |
| 8 Brecknock Borough Council | 35·00 |
| 9 Gwent County Council | 34·50 |
| 10 Gwynedd County Council | 54·00 |
| 11 Gwynedd County Council | 60·00 |
| 12 Mid Glamorgan County Council | 18·30 |
| 13 Mid Glamorgan County Council | 49·30 |
| 14 Mid Glamorgan County Council | 18·60 |

| Applicant | ERDF (Article 15) aid sought £000 |
|---|---|
| 15 Mid Glamorgan County Council | 17·50 |
| 16 Mid Glamorgan County Council | 136·00 |
| 17 Mid Glamorgan County Council | 19·80 |
| 18 Dyfed County Council | 28·90 |
| 19 Dyfed County Council | 65·80 |
| Total | 62,373·95 |

This list does not include applications which are not in an advanced form.

I hope that we shall be able to reach a conclusion on this problem soon.

### Power Plant Industry

17. **Mr. Nicholas Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his policy on the maintenance of a domestic workload for the United Kingdom power plant industry; and what measures he has taken towards its implementation.

**Mr. Butcher:** The domestic workload of the power plant industry is substantially dependent on the ordering programme of the electricity boards, which is not within the control of the Department of Trade and Industry; there are therefore no measures directly available to my Department to maintain this workload.

### Gin Exports

18. **Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his estimate of the impact of a 200 per cent. tariff increase on gin exports to the United States of America on the British gin industry.

56. **Mr. Sumberg** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his estimate of the impact a 200 per cent. tariff increase on gin exports to the United States of America would have on the British gin industry.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The Government estimate that a 200 per cent. tariff would have the effect of largely eliminating sales on the United States market of British-bottled gin.

19. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with United States authorities concerning their proposals to impose a 200 per cent. increase on duty on gin from this country.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The Government take every opportunity to tell the United States Administration how seriously we are seeking a negotiated solution and how important we believe it to be to avoid counter-productive and mutually damaging conflict affecting trade in gin and other goods.

53. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has made to the United States Government concerning their proposed 200 per cent. tariff increase on gin imports.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The Government have taken and will continue to take every opportunity to tell the United States Administration how seriously we are seeking a negotiated solution and how important we believe it to be to avoid counter-productive and mutually damaging conflict affecting trade in gin and other goods.

**Mrs. McCurley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will raise the United States Government's announcement of a 200 per cent. tariff increase on British gin exports under the terms of the general agreement on tariffs and trade.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The Community is negotiating with the United States under the terms of GATT about appropriate compensation for the trade consequences of accession of Spain and Portugal. The proposal by the United States Administration to impose prohibitive duties which would affect $400 million worth of Community exports including British gin is excessive and would oblige the Community to take counter-measures against certain United States exports. We fully support the Council's determination to secure a negotiated settlement to this dispute.

### United States (Defence Appropriations Policy)

20. **Mr. Galley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he is taking to challenge the Mattingly amendment which incorporates buy America provisions into United States defence appropriations policy.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The European Commission has made formal representations to the United States Administration, stressing that this measure breaches United States obligations under the GATT Government procurement code and reserving the Community's rights to consultations under the code. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry also made clear our concern when he met the United States trade representative last month.

### British Leyland Trucks

21. **Mr. Stan Thorne** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement regarding the future of British Leyland Trucks.

44. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the latest position over negotiations for the future of Leyland Trucks Ltd.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** I have nothing to add to my right hon. Friend's statement on 2 December 1986. Commercial discussions are continuing with both Paccar and DAF.

### Share Dealings

23. **Mr. O'Brien** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on progress on current investigations into share dealings in the City.

48. **Mr. George Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on progress into current investigations into share dealing in the City.

**Mr. Howard:** All the investigations are being pursued as rapidly as possible, but I cannot estimate how soon they will be completed. It would not be desirable to report on the progress of investigations before they are completed.

The inspectors appointed to investigate certain dealings by Mr. Geoffrey Collier have submitted their report to my right hon. Friend and a summons has been served on Mr.

Collier. As announced on 7 January, Mr. Brooke and Mr. Kennedy have been asked, in the light of the report, to investigate other possible contraventions.

### Monopolies and Mergers Commission

24. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to expedite decisions from the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in cases where companies have been the subject of hostile takeover bids.

**Mr. Howard:** Collecting and evaluating the evidence is a complex process and it is important that the Commission has sufficient time to do justice to all aspects of a case. I am encouraged, however, to see that the MMC has recently succeeded in shortening the time taken for some of its investigations. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State also considers whether there are circumstances in which the Commission might be asked to report in a shorter period. In the case of the Gulf Resources-IC Gas reference, the Commission was asked to report within five months.

36. **Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to complete his review of the method of referring matters to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

**Mr. Channon:** My Department is still receiving evidence and it will be some time before the review is completed.

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has decided to refer the manufacture of upper and lower limb prostheses in the United Kingdom to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** Under the Fair Trading Act 1973, the Director General of Fair Trading is empowered to make monopoly references to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

If the hon. Gentleman has any evidence of behaviour which might justify investigation by the competition authorities, he may wish to furnish it to the Director General.

### Competition Policy

25. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to conclude his review of competition policy; and if he will make a statement.

43. **Mr. Wrigglesworth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to publish the review of competition policy.

**Mr. Channon:** My Department is still receiving evidence and it will be some time before the review is completed.

### Manufacturing Trade

26. **Mr. Terry Lewis** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will indicate the nature and size of the current deficit in the balance of trade in manufactured goods.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The balance of trade in manufactures was in deficit by £5·9 billion for 1986.

32. **Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his current estimate of the deficit for 1987 in the balance of manufacturing trade.

50. **Mr. Clelland** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his current estimate of the deficit for 1987 on the balance of manufactured trade.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his autumn statement estimates that the deficit for 1987 in the balance of trade in manufactures will be £7½ billion.

### Guinness plc

27. **Mr. Bill Walker** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of the current situation concerning his Department's inspectors' investigation of Guinness plc.

**Mr. Howard:** The inspectors are getting on with their task as quickly as possible. It would not be in the public interest to give details of their inquiries.

### Multi-fibre Arrangement

28. **Mr. James Lamond** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will monitor the imports of textiles and clothing into the United Kingdom under the recent multi-fibre arrangement.

35. **Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements he has made to monitor imports of textiles into the United Kingdom since agreement was reached on the multi-fibre arrangement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The MFA bilateral agreements provide for import quotas for sensitive products which are administered by the issue of import licences against valid export certificates issued by the authorities of the country of origin. Import levels for those textile and clothing products not under restraint are regularly monitored through customs import statistics and action in accordance with the arrangement taken where appropriate.

### Import Substitution

29. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the pace of development in encouraging import substitution and entry by foreign manufacturers into the United Kingdom economy.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The bulk of imported goods procurement is in the hands of the private sector. Our objective is to bring home to retailers and other businesses the advantages of well designed, well made and competitively priced British goods. My Department also operates a number of support schemes designed to help put United Kingdom manufacturers in a position in which they can compete more effectively in the home market as well as overseas.

The available statistics on net capital expenditure in the United Kingdom by foreign companies up until 1983 show no consistent trend. However, the Invest in Britain Bureau within my Department reported three record years from 1983 to 1985 in attracting inward investment into the United Kingdom. During that period, the IBB estimates that more than 280 investment decisions to establish new manufacturing plant were made by foreign-owned companies and many more decided to expand their existing facilities in Britain.

### EC (Eighth Directive)

30. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received in response to his Department's consultative document on the European Economic Community eighth directive; whether he will publish these responses; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** To date, my Department has received 68 responses to the consultative document and more are expected before the closing date for comments on 31 January. It is not my Department's practice to publish responses to consultative documents of this kind and I do not propose to do so in this case.

### Northumberland

31. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received from local authorities in Northumberland about assisted area status.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** Since the beginning of this Session I have received representations on the Alnwick and Amble and Morpeth and Ashington travel-to-work areas from Northumberland county council. The council wrote with the support of five other local authorities. I have also received a submission on the Alnwick and Amble TTWA from Alnwick town council.

### British Sugar Corporation

33. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, in considering the recommendations of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission with regard to the British Sugar Corporation, he will make it his policy to consider the implications of any decision for Third world sugar producers.

**Mr. Howard:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has discretion to take action following a merger report only if the commission finds that a proposed merger might be expected to operate against the public interest. Until the commission's report is published, I cannot comment on the outcome of the report.

### Inward Investment

38. **Mr. Forth** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action his Department is taking to encourage inward investment into the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The Invest in Britain Bureau in my Department has a promotional budget of £1·142 million for the purpose of encouraging inward investment into all parts of the United Kingdom. This budget is used for a programme of seminars and promotional work backed by advertising and printed publications and for carrying out research into the attitudes and needs of potential investors. In addition, a sum of £2·2 million is available for grant-in-aid to the five English regional development organisations, which carry out programmes of inward investment promotion on behalf of the north east, north west, Yorkshire and Humberside, west midlands and Devon and Cornwall. These programmes, together with those of bodies in other parts of the United Kingdom, have kept this country in the forefront of inward investment. Despite fierce competition, the United Kingdom remains the preferred location for inward investment into Europe.

### Rural Postal Deliveries

39. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if, when he next meets the chairman of the Post Office, he will discuss the question of rural postal deliveries.

**Mr. Butcher:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State meets the chairman of the Post Office from time to time to discuss matters of current interest. I am not aware of any developments affecting rural postal deliveries generally which need to be raised with him.

### United States Special Trade Representatives

40. **Mr. Ashdown** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next proposes to meet the United States special trade representatives.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** My right hon. Friend plans to visit the United States and to meet his counterparts within the next few months.

### Research and Development (Funding)

41. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet the National Economic Development Council to discuss research and development funding.

**Mr. Butcher:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State hopes to attend the next meeting of NEDC on 4 February 1987. The council has from time to time discussed R and D funding and I anticipate that it will be discussed at future meetings since R and D is an issue which is of great importance to improving the United Kingdom's industrial performance.

59. **Mr. Rogers** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the current situation as regards research and development funding from his Department.

**Mr. Butcher:** My Department expects to spend £383 million on support for research and development in 1986-87 and plans to spend £412 million, £436 million and £445 million in the three succeeding years.

### Austin Rover

42. **Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement about the future of the Austin Rover motor company.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** Austin Rover is part of the Rover group, whose corporate plan was received by the Government on 22 December 1986. The plan is now being considered. Once that process of consideration is complete, my right hon. Friend will announce the Government's response. Until then it would be inappropriate to comment on any aspect of the plan's content.

### Extraterritoriality

45. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether any progress was made towards a common European position on extraterritoriality during the recent period of United Kingdom presidency.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The European Community has made clear its objections to attempts by the United States to extend its laws and regulations extraterritorially. During the United Kingdom presidency, the opportunity was taken to reiterate this position in Community representations on fresh United States export control proposals.

### British Steel

46. **Mr. Richard Page** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next plans to meeet the chairman of British Steel to discuss the future prospects of the industry.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** My right hon. Friend and I meet the chairman frequently to discuss future prospects.

### Imported Goods (Safety)

47. **Mr. Gregory** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the value in 1986 of goods imported which come within the scope of the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986; and if he is in a position to make any estimate for 1987.

**Mr. Howard:** The scope of the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986 is restricted to products covered by consumer safety legislation—namely, toys, cosmetics, certain textiles, domestic electrical appliances, and miscellaneous other goods. It would not be possible accurately to discover the total value of goods in these categories imported during 1986 or likely to be imported during 1987. But the provisions in the Act will, if the proposal for a general safety requirement in the Consumer Protection Bill currently before Parliament is enacted, apply to all consumer goods supplied in the United Kingdom with the exception of food and drink, controlled medicines, road vehicles and tobacco. The value of such consumer goods imported annually into this country is approximately £28 billion.

### Airbus Programme

49. **Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to make a decision about Government involvement in the A330 and A340 Airbus programme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher:** The Government are at present aiming to reach a decision on British Aerospace's application for launch aid in respect of the proposed Airbus A330 and A340 programme by the end of the first quarter of this year.

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his estimate of the number of jobs currently arising out of the existing Airbus industry projects as related to the United Kingdom and specifically in British Aerospace; and if he proposes to give launch aid to the new Airbus A330/A340 projects.

**Mr. Pattie:** On the information presently available, it is estimated that the number of jobs in the United Kingdom currently attributable to the existing Airbus Industrie programmes is in the region of 8-9000 of which British Aerospace accounts for some 4,500. British Aerospace's application for A330/A340 launch aid is being carefully considered and the Government are at present aiming to reach a decision by the end of the first quarter of this year.

### Japan (Scotch Whisky Exports)

51. **Mr. Pollock** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he last discussed with the Japanese Government the question of exports of Scotch whisky to that country; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made strong representations to the Japanese Government against their discriminatory treatment of imported alcoholic drinks when he visited Tokyo in November. The proposed reforms announced by Japan in December failed to satisfy Community concerns and action under the GATT continues.

### Manufacturing Industry

54. **Mr. Caborn** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he next intends to meet the Trades Union Congress to discuss investment in manufacturing industry.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** I meet the TUC regularly at the National Economic Development Council, where matters relevant to improving industrial performance are discussed. I have no plans for a separate meeting on the subject of investment in manufacturing industry.

58. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the most recent figure for output in manufacturing industry; and what was the comparable figure for the same month seven years ago.

**Mr. Butcher:** The hon. Member will appreciate that monthly data can be erratic. However, since the trough of the recession in 1981, manufacturing output has increased by 14 per cent. to reach a level of 105·7 in November 1986, based on 1980 equal to 100. This was some 4 per cent. lower than the level of output in November 1979.

### United States (Import Taxes)

55. **Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact of the decision by the United States Government to impose import taxes on selected products emanating from the European Economic Community with effect from 30 January.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The measures announced by the United States Administration are intended to reduce Community exports to the United States by $400 million. Of the products selected, the additional duty on gin is likely to have highly damaging consequences on United Kingdom manufacturers.

### Vehicle Exports

57. **Mr. Roger King** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total number of United Kingdom produced vehicles exported to the United States market in 1986; what was their value; and what is his estimate for 1987.

**Mr. Butcher:** Figures are available for the 11 months to November 1986. For that period it is estimated that the United Kingdom exported 25,700 vehicles to the United States of America valued at £495 millions. Estimates of the proportion of these produced in the United Kingdom are not available. Vehicles have been defined as standard international trade classification revision 2 sub-groups 781.0, 782.1, 782.2, 783.1 and 783.2. No projections of exports for 1987 are available.

### English Industrial Estates

60. **Mr. Freeson** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will review his policy with regard to English Industrial Estates to enable it to become more involved in urban regeneration in inner city areas including inner London, as well as in regional assisted areas; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher:** I am not contemplating any major change in English Industrial Estates role on behalf of my Department in the foreseeable future. I expect it to continue to operate principally as an instrument of our regional industrial policy (which concentrates on providing support for industry in the assisted areas). These areas, of course, include a number of inner city areas.

### Hearing Aid Council

61. **Mr. Pavitt** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish in the *Official Report* his appointment to the Hearing Aid Council of the four persons replacing those due to retire in December 1986.

**Mr. Howard:** The information requested is as follows:

Dr. D. N. Brooks
Mr. A. J. Douglas
Mr. D. P. Ormerod
Miss A. Spokes

### Textile Imports

**Mr. Waller** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what were the tonnages of imports of synthetic filament fabric from *(a)* Korea and *(b)* Taiwan up to the latest available date in 1986 compared with the respective quotas relating to that category for the full year for each country.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** Details are given in the following table:

| | *Tonnes '000s* |
|---|---|
| *South Korea* | |
| 1986 United Kingdom quota for goods imported direct from South Korea | 1,421 |
| Quota adjusted by use of flexibility provisions in the EC-South Korea agreement | 1,520 |
| United Kingdom imports direct from South Korea, January to November 1986 | 1,480 |
| United Kingdom import licences issued against 1986 quota, January to December 1986 | 1,403 |
| United Kingdom imports from South Korea on free circulation via other EC countries, January to November 1986, not counted against United Kingdom quota | 449 |
| *Taiwan* | |
| 1986 United Kingdom quota for goods imported direct from Taiwan | 362 |
| Quota adjusted by use of flexibility provisions | 382 |
| United Kingdom imports direct from Taiwan, January to November 1986 | 512 |
| United Kingdom import licences issued against 1986 quota, January to December 1986 | 344 |
| United Kingdom imports from Taiwan on free circulation via other EC countries, January to November 1986, not counted against the United Kingdom quota | 2,147 |

*Note:*

1. The quotas relate to goods exported from the supplying country in the year in question, provided they arrive in the United Kingdom before the end of the following March. Import figures for a calendar year therefore include products covered by the previous year's quota.
2. Import figures exclude imports for re-export.

### Merchant Shipping

**Sir Edward du Cann** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will set out in the *Official Report* the tonnage of merchant ships ordered world wide for United Kingdom registration in each year since 1983, together with the latest available figures for 1986.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The following is the information requested in terms of the tonnage of merchant shipping reported to have been for United Kingdom registration when first ordered.

| | [1]*Orders Gross Tonnage* |
|---|---|
| 1983 | [2]303 |
| 1984 | 149 |
| 1985 | 263 |
| [3]1986 | 65 |

[1] Includes all vessels of over 100 gross tonnes for United Kingdom registration.

[2] For 1983 tonnage refers to gross registered tons; subsequent figures refer to the new measurement system of gross tonnes.

[3] January to September.

### Privatisation

**Mr. Trotter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which companies with headquarters in Tyne and Wear have been privatised since 1983; what steps he takes to promote *(a)* their compliance with the terms of the agreement which established them and *(b)* their commercial performance; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** A year ago, the Secretary of State gave his consent for British Shipbuilders to sell Swan Hunter Shipbuilders Limited to its management. The purchasers have fully complied with the terms of the sale. I congratulate the company on its first year and wish it a long and successful future.

Other privatisation of Tyne and Wear companies in the Secretary of State's area of responsibility since 1983 were the sales by British Shipbuilders of the following subsidiaries: British Shipbuilders (Training, Education and Safety) Limited, K and L Marine Equipment Limited, Sunderland Forge Limited, Tyne Shiprepair Limited and Wallsend Slipway Engineers Limited. I understand that in some of these cases British Shipbuilders has agreed to variations in the terms of sale where this was in its commercial interest. The greatest assistance to the commercial performance of all these companies is their freedom, now that they are in the private sector, to respond to the market.

### Cement Imports

**Mr. Allen McKay asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effect of the decision of the European Commission on phasing out imports of state subsidised cement from Greece on *(a)* the**

British cement industry and (*b*) the British coal industry; what steps he took to attempt to procure a ban on such imports; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The decision will result in a reduction in the level of subsidy by 1 January 1988 from 17 per cent. of export price to 3·6 per cent. It will also enable safeguard action to be taken if the remaining subsidies threaten to cause market disruption. These arrangements should be of considerable benefit to the British cement industry and its supplier, British Coal. There are no grounds for considering a ban on imports.

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many jobs exist in the United Kingdom arising out of the cement industry, what is the tonnage of imports of cement into the United Kingdom and from which countries for each of the years from 1980; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** According to statistics collected by the Department of Employment, about 12,000 people were employed by the British cement industry in September 1986. The information on imports is as follows:

*United Kingdom imports of Portland and white Portland cement (000 tonnes) by country*

| | *1980* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *Year ended November 1986* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| France | — | 3 | — | — | — | 1 | 6 |
| Belgium/Luxembourg | — | 5 | 2 | — | 1 | — | — |
| Netherlands | — | 20 | 36 | 120 | 110 | 75 | 74 |
| Germany | — | 10 | 25 | 84 | 86 | 50 | 30 |
| Irish Republic | 92 | 120 | 126 | 83 | 59 | 104 | 106 |
| Denmark | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | 2 |
| Spain | — | — | — | 7 | 43 | 48 | 44 |
| East Germany | — | — | 18 | 42 | 39 | 52 | 77 |
| Poland | — | — | — | 16 | 56 | 56 | 98 |
| Greece | — | — | — | — | — | — | 18 |
| Norway | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| Japan | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — |
| Portugal | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 |
| Total | 92 | 158 | 209 | 352 | 395 | 391 | 456 |

## Trade Descriptions Act

**Mr. Colvin** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make a statement on the future of the Trade Descriptions Act.

**Mr. Howard:** The Consumer Protection Bill, which is currently being considered in another place, makes provision for the repeal of the Trade Descriptions Act 1972. The repeal is necessary for reasons of European Community law. The Government are consulting interested parties on the scope for introducing successor arrangements by order under the Trade Descriptions Act 1968. The Consumer Protection Bill also makes new provisions with respect to the giving of price indications and in consequence repeals section 11 of the Trade Descriptions Act 1968.

## Saudi Arabia (Visit)

**Mr. Watts** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his recent visit to Saudi Arabia.

**Mr. Channon:** My visit to Saudi Arabia between 16 and 19 January was my third in as many years and my first as Secretary of State.

I had useful talks with Ministers and senior officials on a wide range of trade topics. All my interlocutors agreed that United Kingdom-Saudi relations were excellent. This satisfactory position owes much to exchange visits and other events in recent years culminating in the very successful visit last November of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales and the impending state visit of King Fahd. Saudi Arabia is our largest market outside western Europe and north America. In 1986 our exports to the kingdom were £1,507 million, an all-time record. The latest available figures also suggest that our share of OECD exports to Saudi Arabia has improved dramatically from 8·6 per cent. in 1985 to 14 per cent. in the seven months to July 1986. This encouraging performance, combined with the very positive Saudi reaction to my visit, enables me to commend with confidence the massive opportunities which this market presents, despite reduced oil revenues, for a wide range of British exports.

I urge those companies with an established presence in the market to examine with particular care opportunities for partnership with the Saudi private sector in joint venture operations to serve both the Saudi home market and those of other GCC member states. The strong enthusiasm of the Saudi Government for such partnerships is reflected in the generous incentives available to foreign investors. It is highly desirable, with the prospect of renewed growth within two to three years, that British firms should take an early opportunity to explore these possibilities to safeguard their competitive position. My Department and the commercial staff of our embassy in Riyadh stand ready to assist both exporters and potential British joint venture partners in every possible way.

## United States (Balance of Trade)

**Mr. Alex Carlile** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the latest figures on the balance of trade between the European Community and the United States of America.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** In the 12 months to August 1986, there was a surplus of 21 billion ECUs (about £13 billion) on the European Community's visible trade with the United States.

**Mrs. McCurley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has about the latest figures for the balance of trade between the European Economic Community and the United States of America.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** In the 12 months to September 1986, there was a surplus of just over 20 billion ecus (or nearly £13 billion) on the European Community's visible trade with the United States.

**Mrs. McCurley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is satisfied with progress to resolve the current trade dispute between the European Economic Community and the United States of America; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Further negotiations have taken place between the Community and the United States Administration during the last few days. On 26 January the Council agreed, with the full support of the United Kingdom Government, that these should continue with the aim of securing early settlement of the dispute.

52. **Mr. Livsey** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the latest figures on the balance of trade between the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

**Mrs. McCurley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what are the latest figures for the balance of trade between the United States of America.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The United Kingdom's trade with the United States for 1986 is estimated to be in surplus by approximately £2 billion on an overseas trade statistics (OTS) basis.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Yorkshire and Humberside

63. **Mr. Patchett** asked the Paymaster General what is the net loss in manufacturing jobs in the Yorkshire and Humberside region since 1979.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Between June 1979 and June 1986 there was a net decrease of 248,000 employees in employment in manufacturing industries in the Yorkshire and Humberside region. Some of this decrease in the figures will be the result of the reclassification of jobs previously done by manufacturers' own employees and now done by sub-contractors.

This is a developing feature of our economy, so that the move to sub-contracting activities like industrial cleaning and road haulage is steadily exaggerating the move from manufacturing to service sector employment.

### YTS

**Dr. Godman** asked the Paymaster General what is expected to be the average duration of the second year of YTS training.

**Mr. Trippier:** We expect that those who complete their full first year of training in YTS will stay for a further 45 weeks on average in their second year.

### Restart Programme

**Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Paymaster General how many restart counsellors are in post; and what is the full planned complement by the end of March 1987.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** There are currently 1,146 restart counsellors in post. We expect by the end of March 1987 the figure to be 1,156.

**Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Paymaster General how many people have been called for interview under restart to date; and what percentage have gone on to receive full-time employment as a result.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** By 11 December 1986, 912,490 people had been called for interview of whom 689,319 had been interviewed. We have no means of knowing what proportion have gone on to full-time employment as a result. Some have been placed directly following their restart interview, but others have found jobs after taking up one or other of the opportunities offered at the restart interview such as jobclubs or training courses.

### Information and Technology

**Mr. Park** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the information and technology and education centre programme and its current and future financing.

**Mr. Trippier:** Information technology centres, like other providers of two-year YTS, have been funded by the Manpower Services Commission on a filled-place basis since April 1986. During the two-year period to March 1988 transitional arrangements will enable ITeCs to reduce their dependence on income from YTS and to diversify further into other activities, such as adult training, beneficial to their local communities. ITeCs have responded well to the transitional arrangements during 1986-87: details of the arrangements for 1987-88 were announced in December 1986. The Department of Trade and Industry is contributing to the support of ITeCs through its funding of marketing and technical support services.

### Regional Policy

**Mr. Favell** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the employment measures taken to help the north since June 1983.

**Mr. Trippier:** All the employment, training and enterprise measures run by my Departmemt and the Manpower Services Commission have benefited the north. The main measures currently operating are:

Community programme
Enterprise allowance scheme
Voluntary projects programme
Community industry
Restart programme
Jobstart allowance
Jobclubs
Job release scheme
Job splitting scheme
New workers scheme
Travel to interview scheme
YTS
Adult training programmes

Those specifically introduced since June 1983 are the enterprise allowance scheme, the new workers scheme, jobclubs, travel to interview scheme and Restart.

## Labour Statistics

**Mr. Fallon** asked the Paymaster General how many people were placed in work by Darlington jobcentre in each year since 1983.

**Mr. Trippier:** The following table gives the numbers of people placed into employment by the Darlington job centre for each year since 1983. These figures exclude placings made on Government schemes.

| | *Placings* |
|---|---|
| 1983 | 2,972 |
| 1984 | 3,665 |
| 1985 | 3,719 |
| 1986 | 3,640 |

**Mr. Fallon** asked the Paymaster General how many people left the unemployment register in Darlington in the last 12 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Trippier:** Between 12 December 1985 and 11 December 1986 the number of claimants who left the unemployment count in the local authority district of Darlington was estimated at 9,323. This figure is affected by the change in the compilation of the unemployment statistics in March 1986.

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Paymaster General if he will give a breakdown of the latest unemployment figures by ward in the constituency of Enfield, North.

**Mr. Trippier:** The following information is in the Library. The table shows the numbers of unemployed claimants on 11 December 1986 for each electoral ward in the Enfield, North parliamentary constituency.

| *Electoral ward* | *Number of unemployed claimants* |
|---|---|
| Bullsmoor | 436 |
| Bush Hill | 315 |
| Cambridge Road | 343 |
| Chase | 260 |
| Enfield Wash | 408 |
| Green Street | 405 |
| Ordnance | 523 |
| Ponders End | 599 |
| Town | 178 |
| Willow | 224 |

## Professional and Executive Recruitment Service

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General how many staff are currently employed by the professional and executive recruitment service for each Manpower Services Commission region; and how many staff, by region, are planned for 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

**Mr. Trippier:** The number of staff employed by professional and executive recruitment on 1 January 1987 in each MSC region is as follows:

The provisional staffing levels for 1987-88 and subsequent years are shown in brackets.

| | *Number* | |
|---|---|---|
| South East | 43 | (38·5) |
| London | 55 | (52) |
| South West | 17·5 | (14·5) |
| West Midlands | 14·5 | (12) |
| East Midlands and Eastern | 38 | (31·5) |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | [1]61 | (57·5) |
| North West | [2]59·5 | (54·5) |
| Northern | 14 | (13) |
| Wales | 13·5 | (10) |
| Scotland | 19·5 | (16·5) |
| Total | 335·5 | (300) |

[1] Inc. 42 at PER Head Office, Sheffield.

[2] Inc. 14 at PER Head Office Unit, Runcorn.

## Community Programme

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General how many filled places on the community programme are planned for each Manpower Services Commission region for the 12 months from January 1987.

**Mr. Trippier:** It is not yet possible to give a breakdown of the planned allocation of places for 1987-88 by region since this has not yet been finalised by the Manpower Services Commission.

## Training Schemes

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster Ceneral how many people were engaged in the following special employment and training measures: community programme, enterprise allowance scheme, YTS, young workers scheme, community industry, job release scheme and job splitting scheme for each month of June to August 1983, inclusive, and March to October 1984, inclusive; if he will give the same information, with the addition of the new workers scheme, for the end of November 1986 and December 1986; and what were the estimated effects on the numbers of people registered as unemployed for each of the relevant months.

**Mr. Trippier:** The number of people engaged in these employment and training measures and the estimated effect on unemployment for these dates are:

| | *YWS* | *NWS* | *JRS* | *JSS* | *CI* | *CP/CEP* | *EAS* | *YTS* | *Estimated [1]effect* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1983* | | | | | | | | | |
| June | 103 | — | 81 | 0·464 | 8 | 64 | — | 34 | 116 |
| July | 94 | — | 82 | 0·544 | 8 | 73 | — | 57 | 125 |
| August | 95 | — | 83 | 0·578 | 8 | 83 | 2 | 107 | 151 |
| *1984* | | | | | | | | | |
| March | 100 | — | 95 | 0·836 | 8 | 113 | 26 | 240 | 230 |
| April | 92 | — | 94 | 0·859 | 8 | 113 | 28 | 233 | 223 |
| May | 83 | — | 92 | 0·883 | 8 | 116 | 30 | 229 | 222 |
| June | 74 | — | 91 | 0·912 | 8 | 120 | 34 | 244 | 223 |

| | *YWS* | *NWS* | *JRS* | *JSS* | *CI* | *CP/CEP* | *EAS* | *YTS* | *Estimated* [1]*effect* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| July | 68 | — | 90 | 0·935 | 8 | 121 | 38 | 275 | 222 |
| August | 65 | — | 89 | 0·954 | 8 | 123 | 40 | 277 | 218 |
| September | 70 | — | 86 | 0·969 | 8 | 123 | 39 | 287 | 210 |
| October | 71 | — | 84 | 0·990 | 8 | 126 | 39 | 291 | 209 |
| *1986* | | | | | | | | | |
| November | 6 | 28 | 28 | 0·235 | 8 | 246 | 71 | 347 | 297 |
| December | 2 | 31 | 27 | 0·250 | 8 | 248 | 74 | 340 | 298 |

YTS is a training measure and there are no estimates of its direct effect on unemployment.

[1] Estimated effect on unemployment count excluding YTS.

## Employment Measures

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Paymaster General if he will publish in the *Official Report*, in respect of *(a)* the community programme, *(b)* the enterprise allowance scheme, *(c)* the restart scheme, *(d)* the jobclub system, and *(e)* the jobstart scheme (i) the statistical survey title, (ii) the survey date, (iii) the publication date; and if for each item he will show the distinction between surveys of the pilot, participant or follow-up type.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke** [*pursuant to the reply*, 20 January 1987, c. *481*]: In respect of the community programme, there are three regular statistical surveys carried out for which results are published. These are

(i) Sponsors' Survey
(ii) Participants' Survey
(iii) Follow-up Survey

Dates of fieldwork and publication (by the research organisation) for each of the surveys are as follows:

| *Title* | *Fieldwork* | *Publication* |
|---|---|---|
| (i) Sponsor's Survey I | January 84 | April 84 |
| (ii) Participants' Survey I | Autumn 83 | May 84 |
| Participants' Survey II | Spring 84 | August 84 |
| Participants' Survey III | Autumn 84 | June 85 |
| Participants' Survey IV | Autumn 85 | To be published |
| (iii) Follow-up Survey I | Summer 84 | December 84 |
| Follow-up Survey II | Winter 84/85 | November 85 |

For the enterprise allowance scheme, the information requested is as follows:

| *Title of Statistical Survey* | *Survey Date (fieldwork)* | *Publication date* | *Type of survey* |
|---|---|---|---|
| People on the Enterprise Allowance | August/September 1983 | January 1984 | Participant survey of the pilot scheme |
| The Enterprise Allowance Pilot Scheme—18 month Follow-up Survey | Survey of participants who joined between February 1982 and July 1983 eighteen months later | March 1985 | Follow-up survey of the pilot scheme |
| Two years after the Enterprise Allowance | April/June 1985 | December 1985 | Follow-up survey of the pilot scheme |
| Enterprise Allowance Scheme Evaluation first six-month National Survey | March 1984 | May 1984 | Participant survey of National Scheme |
| Enterprise Allowance Scheme Evaluation second six-month National Survey | October 1984 | January 1985 | Participant survey of National Scheme |
| Enterprise Allowance Scheme Evaluation first fifteen-month National Survey | December 1984 | April 1985 | Follow-up survey of National Scheme |
| Enterprise Allowance Scheme Evaluation third six-month National Survey | September 1985 | March 1986 | Participant survey of National Scheme |
| Enterprise Allowance Scheme Evaluation first 18-month National Survey | November/December 1985 | February 1987 | Follow-up survey of National Scheme |

For the jobclub programme, a report entitled "Jobclub Evaluation Report" was produced in March 1986. It studied the pilot jobclubs during the period 5 August 1985 to 7 February 1986. A copy is in the House of Commons Library.

A report on the restart pilots and initial experience of jobstart was made to the MSC on 22 January 1987. A copy is being placed in the House of Commons Library.

### Jobcentres

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Paymaster General what was the target date for completion of computerisation at *(a)* Bolton jobcentre and *(b)* jobcentres in the north-west region; what stage computerisation has now reached in (i) Bolton and (ii) the north-west region; what are the new target dates for completion; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: The Manpower Services Commission's plans for upgrading its computerised system for handling vacancies envisaged installation in Bolton jobcentre by 18 July 1986 and throughout the north-west region by 14 November 1986. The programme has been delayed because of operational problems. The Manpower Services Commission hopes to complete the introduction of the new computerised systems before 1 April 1988 in the north-west region. It is not possible at present, to forecast the completion dates for individual offices.

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Paymaster General how many jobs are likely to be saved by the introduction of computerisation at *(a)* Bolton jobcentre and *(b)* jobcentres in the north-west region; if there will be a reduction in staffing levels prior to the coming into full operation of computers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: There will be gains in operational efficiency and a related reduction in the number of staff required following the introduction of SUPERVACS, an enhancement of the Manpower Services Commission's computerised vacancy handling system. The number of jobs likely to be saved by this development are two at Bolton jobcentre and 71 in the Manpower Services Commission's north-west region. The savings in staff, which were to have been achieved by April 1987 have been postponed, and will now be required by April 1988.

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Paymaster General what are the latest estimated costs of introducing computers in *(a)* Bolton jobcentre and *(b)* north-west region jobcentres; whether these costs will be met from within existing cash limits; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: The latest estimated costs of introducing the planned enhancement of the employment service's computer system at Bolton jobcentre are £61,320. The estimated costs for the north-west region as a whole are £2·92 million. In addition, there will be an annual running cost of £210,000 for the region. These costs will be met from within existing cash limits.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Mauritius

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact on United Kingdom-Mauritius relations of the threat to the supply of Mauritius sugar to the United Kingdom market; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Chalker:** If my hon. Friend is referring to proposals relating to the future ownership of British Sugar plc, he will know that those proposals were referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry is now considering the commission's report. I cannot therefore comment on the issues involved, but I can assure my hon. Friend that we are well aware of the views of the Government of Mauritius, as of other cane sugar suppliers, which will be taken into account in considering the report.

### Miss Elena Gurevich

**Mr. Burt** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise the case of Miss Elena Gurevich of Moscow with the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Renton:** We have made our view very clear to the Soviet authorities that they should respect the right to leave one's country. I raised this and other human rights issues with the Soviet Government during my talks in Moscow on 14 to 16 January.

### Diplomatic Service

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide a breakdown of the universities and type of secondary school attended by ambassadors currently serving Her Majesty's Government.

**Mr. Eggar:** I regret that the information is not readily available in the form requested. I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide a breakdown of the universities and polytechnics from which staff were recruited into the administrative group of the Diplomatic Service during each of the years 1979 to 1986, inclusive.

**Mr. Eggar:** I regret that the information is not readily available in the form requested. I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will provide a breakdown of the universities and polytechnics from which serving staff have been recruited into those grades of the Diplomatic Service broadly equivalent to the administration group of the Home Civil Service.

**Mr. Eggar:** The breakdown of universities from which serving staff have been recruited into the administrative grades of the Diplomatic Service is given in the list. Similar detailed information for polytechnics is not readily available, and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

| *University* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Aberdeen | 6 |
| Aberystwyth | 1 |
| Bath | 2 |
| Belfast | 3 |
| Birmingham | 5 |
| Bristol | 9 |
| Cambridge | 229 |
| Cardiff | 3 |
| Dundee | 1 |

| *University* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Durham | 8 |
| East Anglia | 4 |
| Edinburgh | 14 |
| Exeter | 3 |
| Glasgow | 6 |
| Keele | 4 |
| Leeds | 8 |
| Leicester | 2 |
| Liverpool | 2 |
| London | 44 |
| Manchester | 8 |
| Nottingham | 3 |
| Newcastle | 3 |
| Oxford | 274 |
| Reading | 3 |
| Sheffield | 1 |
| Southampton | 2 |
| St. Andrews | 5 |
| Surrey | 2 |
| Sussex | 9 |
| Swansea | 1 |
| York | 1 |
| Foreign | 44 |
| Unspecified | 8 |

### Visas

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the December 1986 figure for applications and refusals for visitor visas in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Ghana.

**Mr. Eggar:** The full information requested is not yet available; I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Immigration (DNA Testing)

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made on the use of DNA testing as mentioned in his letter to hon. Members of 17 December; and when the results of the pilot scheme will be announced.

**Mr. Eggar:** We hope soon to invite 40 families to take part in a trial using DNA testing in immigration cases. It may be some months before the results are fully assessed.

### Foreign Affairs Council

**Mr. Hanley** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the Foreign Affairs Council held on 26-27 January.

**Mrs. Chalker:** My right hon. and learned Friend the Foreign Secretary and I attended the First Foreign Affairs Council of 1987, which was held in Brussels on 26 and 27 January.

The Commission reported on the continuing negotiations with the United States concerning the trade effects of enlargement under article XXIV.6 of the GATT. The Commission's report showed that the gap between the two sides had been considerably narrowed and that there were hopes of reaching agreement by the end of the month. The Council fully endorsed what the Commission had achieved and gave its strong support to the Commission in its further efforts to bring the negotiations to a fair and successful conclusion. The Council recalled its intention to respond if the United States proceeded with unilateral trade measures on 30 January, but stressed its determination to try to achieve a settlement that would avert the need for such action.

The Council discussed Commission proposals for new financial protocols for some of the Community's Mediterranean preferential partners. Discussion will continue at the February Council.

The Council yesterday approved the text of an implementing regulation for COMPEX (a scheme to compensate non-Lome least developed countries for losses of export earnings on certain agricultural commodities).

The Council had a brief exchange of views on the 1987 budget.

In view of the latest escalation in the Iran-Iraq conflict, Ministers meeting in European Political Co-operation, agreed a statement calling for an immediate ceasefire and the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 582 and 588, and deploring once again the use of chemical weapons. The statement has been transmitted to both sides in the conflict and to the Islamic Conference which has been meeting in Kuwait.

The Council agreed its position in preparation for the Co-operation Council meeting with Israel held on 27 January, at which Israel was represented by the Foreign Minister, Mr. Peres.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### Supplementary Benefit

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will consider giving financial assistance to those persons who have been in receipt of supplementary benefit but on the death of their spouse do not qualify for a single payment to help with funeral costs by virtue of the immediate receipt of widow's pension.

**Mr. Major:** At present the receipt of widow's allowance paid at a higher rate for the first six months of widowhood can mean that a widow, formerly dependent on supplementary benefit, temporarily ceases to be so when her husband dies and is therefore ineligible under the current rules to receive a single payment, including help with funeral expenses. This difficulty should be largely overcome in future by two successive changes introduced by the Social Security Act 1986. These are, from April 1987, the extension of help with funeral expenses under the social fund to those receiving housing benefit or family income supplement (as well as those receiving supplementary benefit), and, from April 1988, the restructuring of widows' benefit to divide initial assistance on widowhood between a weekly benefit and a lump sum. This lump sum, probably £1,000, will be disregarded for funeral expenses purposes.

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a breakdown by ward in the constituency of Enfield, North of the number of supplementary benefit claimants; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lyell:** This information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of supplementary benefit claimants in Enfield, North on 31 December each year since 1979.

**Mr. Lyell:** The constituency of Enfield, North is covered by the Department's local office at Edmonton but its boundaries are not conterminous with those of the constituency. The table shows the number of people receiving supplementary benefit from that office on 10 December 1986 — the nearest available date — and on comparable dates since 1979.

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 11,044 |
| 1980 | 12,488 |
| 1981 | 15,352 |
| 1982 | 16,516 |
| 1983 | 16,667 |
| 1984 | 18,256 |
| 1985 | 17,539 |
| 1986 | 17,721 |

*Source:* 100 per cent count of cases in action.

## Severe Weather Payments

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services *(a)* if he will list for each meteorological station included in the severe weather payments scheme the number of weeks in the past seven winters when the average weekly mean temperature in a seven-day period from Monday to Sunday reached or was lower than (i) 0·0 deg C, (ii) minus 0·5 deg C, (iii) minus 1·0 deg C and (iv) minus 1·5 deg C and *(b)* if he will list for each meteorological station included in the severe weather payments scheme, the number of weeks in the past seven winters when the average weekly mean temperature in any seven-day period reached or was lower than (i) 0·0 deg C, (ii) minus 0·5 deg C, (iii) minus 1·0 deg C and (iv) minus 1·5 deg C.

**Mr. Major:** The information requested in the first part of the question appears in the following table. The Department does not hold the equivalent information for any seven day period.

| *Weather station* | *1979-80*<br>*abcd* | *1980-81*<br>*abcd* | *1981-82*<br>*abcd* | *1982-83*<br>*abcd* | *1983-84*<br>*abcd* | *1984-85*<br>*abcd* | *1985-86*<br>*abcd* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Scotland* | | | | | | | |
| Aberdeen Airport | 0000 | 0000 | 5543 | 0000 | 2221 | 2100 | 3221 |
| Dumfries | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0000 | 2111 | 1000 |
| Edinburgh Airport | 0000 | 0000 | 5555 | 0000 | 2100 | 2221 | 3320 |
| Eskdalemuir (Galashiels) | 3110 | 2000 | 5555 | 1000 | 2211 | 4433 | 7553 |
| Fort William | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2222 | 2110 |
| Glasgow Airport | 0000 | 0000 | 5544 | 0000 | 1100 | 3322 | 3210 |
| Kinloss (Inverness) | 0000 | 0000 | 4442 | 0000 | 2210 | 2221 | 4111 |
| Kirkwall | 0000 | 0000 | 2110 | 0000 | 0000 | 1000 | 0000 |
| Lerwick | 1100 | 1100 | 2211 | 0000 | 0000 | 1100 | 0000 |
| Leuchars (Dundee) | 0000 | 0000 | 5552 | 0000 | 1110 | 2100 | 3000 |
| Machriphanish (Campbeltown) | 0000 | 0000 | 4210 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 |
| Prestwick (Ayr) | 0000 | 0000 | 4433 | 0000 | 0000 | 3220 | 2220 |
| Stornaway | 0000 | 0000 | 2110 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 |
| Whithorn | 1 | 0000 | 1111 | 0030 | 0000 | 1000 | 0000 |
| Wick | 1000 | 1000 | 2222 | 0000 | 1100 | 1111 | 1100 |
| *England* | | | | | | | |
| Aughton (Liverpool) | 0000 | 0000 | 4432 | 0000 | 0000 | 3221 | 3200 |
| Bedford RAE | 1 | 0000 | 5544 | 2100 | 1100 | 3332 | 4444 |
| Binbrook (Hull) | 0000 | 0000 | 4433 | 1000 | 1000 | 3321 | 4432 |
| Birmingham Airport | 1 | 1 | 5544 | 2000 | 1100 | 3332 | 4442 |
| Blackpool Airport | 0000 | 0000 | 4433 | 0000 | 0000 | 3322 | 2200 |
| Boscombe Down (Sarum) | 0000 | 0000 | 3320 | 0000 | 0000 | 3333 | 4432 |
| Boulmer (Berwick) | 0000 | 0000 | 3333 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 1000 |
| Bournemouth Airport | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 3333 | 3320 |
| Bristol | 1 | 1 | 1110 | 0000 | 0000 | 2221 | 2000 |
| Brize Norton (Oxford) | 1000 | 0000 | 4322 | 0000 | 0000 | 3332 | 4432 |
| Carlisle | 0000 | 0000 | 5543 | 1000 | 0000 | 3210 | 2110 |
| Chivenor (Barnstaple) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2221 | 1 |
| Coltishall (Norwich) | 0000 | 0000 | 3321 | 0000 | 0000 | 3332 | 4321 |
| Coningsby (Boston) | 0000 | 0000 | 4444 | 0000 | 1000 | 3211 | 4222 |
| Culdrose (Penzance) | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 |
| Easthampstead | 0000 | 0000 | 3331 | 0000 | 0000 | 3333 | 4442 |
| Eskmeals (Whitehaven) | 0000 | 0000 | 2211 | 0000 | 0000 | 1000 | 1000 |
| Exeter | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 3221 | 2000 |
| Finningley (Sheffield) | 0000 | 0000 | 5444 | 0000 | 2000 | 2222 | 4421 |
| Gatwick Airport (Guildford) | 0000 | 0000 | 3220 | 0000 | 0000 | 3333 | 4332 |
| Heathrow Airport (London) | 0000 | 0000 | 3110 | 0000 | 0000 | 3321 | 3210 |
| Herstmonceux (Brighton) | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 3333 | 4332 |
| Honington (Bury St. Edmunds) | 0000 | 0000 | 4333 | 1000 | 0000 | 4333 | 4442 |
| Leeds Weather Centre | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2200 |
| Leeming (Newcastle) | 0000 | 0000 | 5555 | 0000 | 1000 | 3221 | 5321 |
| Lyneham (Chippenham) | 0000 | 0000 | 4322 | 2100 | 0000 | 3333 | 4443 |
| Manchester Airport | 0000 | 0000 | 4331 | 0000 | 0000 | 3310 | 2200 |
| Manston (Dover) | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 3332 | 4331 |
| Marham (King's Lynn) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0000 | 3333 | 4432 |
| Mount Batten (Plymouth) | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 1000 |
| Okehampton | 1100 | 0000 | 1000 | 2272 | 0000 | 3333 | 4444 |
| St. Mawgan (Truro) | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 1100 | 2100 |

| *Weather station* | *1979-80* abcd | *1980-81* abcd | *1981-82* abcd | *1982-83* abcd | *1983-84* abcd | *1984-85* abcd | *1985-86* abcd |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shawbury (Shrewsbury) | 0000 | 0000 | 5554 | 2000 | 0000 | 3332 | 4431 |
| Southampton Weather Centre | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 3220 | 2000 |
| Stansted | 0000 | 0000 | 4433 | 0000 | 0000 | 3333 | 4443 |
| Tynemouth (Sunderland) | 0000 | 0000 | 4321 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 1000 |
| Watnall (Derby) | 0000 | 0000 | 5444 | 2000 | 1000 | 3222 | 4442 |
| Wattisham (Ipswich) | 0000 | 0000 | 3332 | 1100 | 0000 | 4333 | 4443 |
| Whitby Coastguard | 0000 | 0000 | 2222 | 0000 | 0000 | 1000 | [1] |
| Wyton (Cambridge) | 0000 | 0000 | 5444 | 1000 | 1000 | 3332 | 4443 |
| Yeovilton (Yeovil) | 0000 | 0000 | 1111 | 0000 | 0000 | 3333 | 3200 |
| *Wales* | | | | | | | |
| Aberporth (Aberystwyth) | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 2221 | 3110 |
| Brawdy (Pembroke) | 0000 | 0000 | 1000 | 0000 | 0000 | 2222 | 4220 |
| Cilfynydd (Merthyr Tydfil) | [1] | [1] | 3221 | 2100 | 0000 | 3322 | 4431 |
| Mumbles (Swansea) | 0000 | [1] | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 2210 | 0000 |
| Rhoose (Cardiff) | 0000 | 0000 | 1110 | 0000 | 0000 | 3222 | 4210 |
| Trawsfynydd (Dolgellau) | 1000 | 0000 | 3110 | 1000 | 0000 | [1] | 4431 |
| Valley (Caernarfon) | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 0000 | 2210 | 0000 |

[1] Data not available.
*a* Number of weeks less than or equal to 0·0 deg C.
*b* Number of weeks less than minus 0·5 deg C.
*c* Number of weeks less than minus 1·0 deg C.
*d* Number of weeks less than minus 1·5 deg C.

**Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement as to why the trigger point for severe weather payments to people in Bradford will be determined by a reading taken in a low-lying city centre site in Leeds.

**Mr. Major:** Leeds weather station was chosen in consultation with the metrological office as being reasonably representative of the climatic conditions in the area.

### Occupational Deafness

**Mr. Evans** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will amend the Social Security Industrial Injuries (Prescribed Diseases) Regulations to enable employees who obtain a successful legal settlement against their employer for occupational deafness to be automatically eligible for industrial disablement benefit.

**Mr. Major:** There are no plans to amend the regulations as suggested. Different criteria govern awards of industrial disablement benefit and damages at common law; the question of negligence, for example, is not relevant to the industrial injuries scheme. The occupational deafness provisions have had to be strictly limited to keep the number of claims within the capacity of the audiological services. On the advice of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council, coverage is therefore restricted to certain very noisy occupations. The scope of the scheme has been widened since its inception but any further extension must depend, among other things, on the availability of audiological resources.

### NHS (Surplus Equipment)

**Mr. Alfed Morris** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what system exists for identifying equipment which is surplus to National Health Service requirements but which might be of value in other countries; what contacts he has with other countries in this regard; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** Local health authorities are responsible for deciding what equipment and supplies are surplus to their requirements and for arranging disposal in accordance with guidance issued by the Department in HN(76)2, a copy of which is available in the Library. The normal channel of disposal to other countries would be through the voluntary organisation Equipment for Charity Hospitals Overseas.

### Nurses' Pay

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of nurses whose annual gross earnings fall within a given income band starting from the lowest such income in bands of £10.

**Mr. Newton:** Information in the form requested is not available centrally. The hon. Member may like to refer to the estimates in tables 18 and 19 in part A of the New Earnings Survey 1986, a copy of which is in the Library, bearing in mind that:

(i) the tables relate to a pay period in April 1986 and therefore do not include the 8 per cent. increase on basic rates from 1 July 1986.

(ii) the definition of full-time is normal basic hours above 30 per week whilst the standard contracted week, exclusive of meal breaks, for National Health Service nursing and midwifery staff is 37·5 hours.

(iii) the tables will include some nursing staff working outside the National Health Service.

### Artificial Limbs

**Sir John Farr** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps is he taking to improve the fitting of artificial limbs; and, in particular, if he will ensure that such fittings only take place after the stump has been X-rayed.

**Mr. Major:** A number of initiatives are under way to improve the fitting of artificial limbs in England and Wales. A review of prosthetic training for the longer term is in progress and, in co-operation with the limb firms, we are seeking to ensure that satisfactory arrangements exist to meet the needs of existing prosthetists for mid-career development and training. The centralisation and standardisation of prosthetic training at the London school for prosthetics since October 1985 has contributed to enhanced standards.

We are seeking to negotiate with the limb firms new contractual arrangements which should help raise the level of prosthetic care. We continue to encourage the local fabrication of limbs, both to reduce delivery times and to ensure better fitting sockets, and new casting techniques. Transparent flexible sockets are increasingly used. We are currently negotiating service trials of the computer aided design and manufacture techniques developed by the bioengineering centre to improve socket design. We are planning revised transport and appointments arrangements which will enable prosthetists to spend more time with patients.

The X-ray of a stump before fitting is appropriate only where there is some abnormality or spur. It is the complete stump, in particular the soft tissues, which must be addressed to secure a well-fitting socket. The process of matching the socket to the stump then continues throughout the patient's active life.

We believe that the steps we are taking will lead to a substantial improvement in that process.

### Benefits

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he monitors the speed of response by Department of Health and Social Security offices to supplementary and other benefit claimants.

**Mr. Lyell:** Yes. The average time taken in local offices to take decisions on claims for benefit is monitored.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the latest available figures for the number of households in receipt of child benefit in the Greenock and Port Glasgow constituency.

**Mr. Lyell:** Child benefit is administered centrally and there is no information specific to Greenock and Port Glasgow.

**Mr. Beaumont-Dark** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has about the incidence of people who are actually living in multiple occupation registering as single tenants for the purpose of claiming a higher level of benefit than they are entitled to; and what steps his Department is taking to eradicate this abuse.

**Mr. Lyell:** Supplementary benefit claimants are normally eligible for the householder rate of benefit where they are responsible for housing costs. Housing benefit is payable in respect of accommodation which a person occupies as his home. It is for the relevant local authority to decide whether this condition is met in a particular case. Allegations in recent press articles about this type of abuse are being investigated.

### Pensioners

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the latest available figures for the number of pensioners in receipt of the state pension in the Greenock and Port Glasgow constituency, giving the number of single pensioners and the number of married couples.

**Mr. Lyell:** Statistics on pensioner numbers are not kept by parliamentary constituency, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Milk Tokens

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will extend the use of milk tokens to the purchase of soya milk for those children who have an adverse reaction to cow's milk or where there are indications that the child may develop an adverse reaction.

**Mrs. Currie:** No. Where there is a clinical need, soya-based milks are already available free on prescription.

### Health Statistics

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the latest figures on life expectancy, infant mortality rates, and numbers on sickness benefit as a percentage of working population in the United Kingdom; and what information is available on comparable figures in West Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, and the European Economic Community average.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 15 January 1987, c. *302*]: The information requested about life expectancy and infant mortality rates is given in the table. The figures for countries other than the United Kingdom are taken from Eurostat demographic statistics 1986. Life expectancy figures represent estimates of the expectation of life at birth based on mortality rates for the most recent years available. This information is supplied to Eurostat by the countries concerned and differences in method may account for some of the observed variation. The infant mortality rates are 1984 figures except the European Economic Community average which relates to 1983.

| *Country* | *Life expectancy at birth (years)* | | *Infant deaths per 1,000 live births* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *Male* | *Female* | |
| United Kingdom | 71·4 | 77·2 | 9·6 |
| West Germany | 70·5 | 77·1 | 8·6 |
| France | 71·2 | 79·3 | 8·2 |
| Italy | 70·6 | 77·4 | 11·3 |
| The Netherlands | 73·0 | 79·5 | 8·3 |
| Denmark | 71·5 | 77·5 | 7·7 |
| Belgium | 70·0 | 76·8 | 10·7 |
| EEC | [1]70·6 | [1]77·4 | [2]10·2 |

[1] Excluding Spain and Portugal. Notes on how these figures are estimated are given in the introduction to the Eurostat publication.

[2] Including Spain and Portugal.

Information about numbers receiving sickness benefit is not available in the form requested. On 31 March 1985, 1,074,550 people in Great Britain were receiving sickness or invalidity benefit. This figure does not include those receiving statutory sick pay, about who comparable information is not available. The working population of Great Britain in March 1985 was 26,802,000 (Source: Department of Employment *Gazette*. Information about recipients of sickness benefit in other European countries is not available.

### Cot Deaths

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what statistical information is collected by his

Department regarding the incidence of cot deaths; for how many years information has been collected; what has been the annual number of cot deaths recorded; what information there is on the incidence of cot deaths following vaccination; how many cot deaths have been noted as occurring within *(a)* 24, *(b)* 48, *(c)* 72 and *(d)* seven days following vaccination; and over what period these deaths occurred.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 27 January 1987]: Since 1971 the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys has identified deaths in the first year of life registered in England and Wales where the term "sudden unexpected death in infancy" or "cot death" or similar term was mentioned on the death certificate, or was given as the underlying cause of death. Very few sudden infant deaths occur after one year of age. The number of such mentions each year since 1971 is given in the table.

No information is collected centrally linking sudden infant deaths with vaccinations.

*Cot deaths (any mention) England and Wales*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1971 | 489 |
| 1972 | 771 |
| 1973 | 922 |
| 1974 | 932 |
| 1975 | 912 |
| 1976 | 879 |
| 1977 | 911 |
| 1978 | 971 |
| 1979 | 1,079 |
| 1980 | 1,222 |
| 1981 | 1,265 |
| 1982 | 1,332 |
| 1983 | 1,315 |
| 1984 | 1,242 |
| 1985 | 1,301 |

## WALES

### Housing

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many habitable dwellings will be available in Wales in April 1987; and what was the corresponding figure for April 1985.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Reliable estimates of the numbers of habitable dwellings in April 1985 and April 1987 are not available.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what proportion of total expenditure in Wales was represented by capital expenditure on housing in each of the past 10 years; and what was, in real terms, the capital expenditure on housing in Wales for each of the past 10 years.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The information is estimated to be as follows:

*Net capital public expenditure on housing as a proportion of total net public expenditure within the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Wales*

| | *Per cent.* |
|---|---|
| 1977-78 | 8·2 |
| 1978-79 | 7·2 |
| 1979-80 | 7·4 |
| 1980-81 | 5·6 |
| 1981-82 | 2·8 |
| 1982-83 | 3·9 |
| 1983-84 | 6·8 |
| 1984-85 | 4·5 |
| 1985-86 | 3·8 |
| [1]1986-87 | 4·4 |

[1] Estimated

Because total public expenditure is measured net of receipts and other income, no account has been taken in the calculation of that element of housing capital expenditure which has been financed by receipts.

*Net capital public expenditure on housing in real terms (1985-86 prices)*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1977-78 | 222 |
| 1978-79 | 202 |
| 1979-80 | 211 |
| 1980-81 | 161 |
| 1981-82 | 77 |
| 1982-83 | 109 |
| 1983-84 | 195 |
| 1984-85 | 126 |
| 1985-86 | 105 |
| 1986-87 | 130 |

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information there is as to the proportion of homes in Wales in need of repairs exceeding £7,000 in cost; and whether the Welsh housing survey identifies those occupied by pensioners, unemployed persons, single parent families, disabled people and people with low incomes, respectively.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The available information from the "Welsh House Condition Survey 1981" is given in the following table:

*Dwellings needing repairs exceeding £7,000*

| | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Wales total | 5 |
| Pensioner households | 8 |
| Head of household seeking work | 6 |
| Head of household permanently sick/disabled | 6 |

No information relating to single-parent families or income was collected in the 1981 survey. When the results are available the analysis in the 1986 survey should, however, make it possible to provide this information for all the sectors requested.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table giving, by quarter since their inception, for Wales the numbers of dwellings insulated under local authorities energy conservation programmes, and the number of dwellings insulated under the homes insulation scheme.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The information is shown in the following table:

*Number of dwellings insulated*

| | *Local Authority Energy Conservation Programme*[1] *Number of dwellings* | *Home Insulation Schemes*[2] *Number of dwellings* |
|---|---|---|
| 1978-79: | | |
| 1st quarter | 1,759 | n.a. |

| | *Local Authority Energy Conservation Programme*[1] *Number of dwellings* | *Home Insulation Schemes*[2] *Number of dwellings* |
|---|---|---|
| 2nd quarter | 5,007 | n.a. |
| 3rd quarter | 6,129 | 5,815 |
| 4th quarter | 8,134 | 7,983 |
| Total 1978-79 | 21,029 | n.a. |
| 1979-80: | | |
| 1st quarter | 5,108 | 4,636 |
| 2nd quarter | 9,307 | 2,527 |
| 3rd quarter | 7,340 | 5,085 |
| 4th quarter | 5,245 | 7,644 |
| Total 1979-80 | 27,000 | 19,892 |
| 1980-81: | | |
| 1st quarter | 4,213 | 3,385 |
| 2nd quarter | 4,119 | 2,543 |
| 3rd quarter | 3,089 | 5,951 |
| 4th quarter | 3,653 | 6,632 |
| Total 1980-81 | 15,074 | 18,511 |
| 1981-82: | | |
| 1st quarter | n.a. | 6,192 |
| 2nd quarter | n.a. | 4,656 |
| 3rd quarter | n.a. | 6,751 |
| 4th quarter | n.a. | 7,929 |
| Total 1981-82 | n.a. | 25,528 |
| 1982-83: | | |
| 1st quarter | n.a. | 5,915 |
| 2nd quarter | n.a. | 6,969 |
| 3rd quarter | n.a. | 8,139 |
| 4th quarter | n.a. | 9,720 |
| Total 1982-83 | n.a. | 30,743 |
| 1983-84: | | |
| 1st quarter | n.a. | 6,571 |
| 2nd quarter | n.a. | 6,078 |
| 3rd quarter | n.a. | 7,005 |
| 4th quarter | 1,704 | 4,996 |
| Total 1983-84 | n.a. | 24,650 |
| 1984-85: | | |
| 1st quarter | 176 | 5,280 |
| 2nd quarter | 577 | 3,987 |
| 3rd quarter | 790 | 5,560 |
| 4th quarter | 1,855 | 6,377 |
| Total 1984-85 | 3,398 | 21,204 |
| 1985-86: | | |
| 1st quarter | 391 | 5,065 |
| 2nd quarter | 1,030 | 5,084 |
| 3rd quarter | 718 | 6,052 |
| 4th quarter | 2,731 | 8,647 |
| Total 1985-86 | 4,870 | 24,848 |
| 1986-87: | | |
| 1st quarter | 545 | 5,971 |
| 2nd quarter | 322 | 4,680 |
| Total two quarters 1986-87 | 867 | 10,651 |

[1] The collection of these data was discontinued in 1981-82 and partly reintroduced in 1984.

[2] Homes insulation scheme was introduced in September 1978.

## Marine Nature Reserve

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the proposed Menai Straits marine nature reserve.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The Nature Conservancy Council's consideration of some issues identified in its informal consultations with interested parties is taking longer than anticipated. We understand that the council's formal consultation document is now at an advanced stage of preparation and it is hoped that it will issue in the next few months.

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what proposals he has to designate Skomer as a marine nature reserve.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** My right hon. Friend is considering an application from the Nature Conservancy Council for the designation of a marine nature reserve around Skomer Island.

## Overseas Companies

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many overseas companies were established in Wales between 1970 and 1975, 1975 and 1980 and 1980 and 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** Comprehensive information is not available for all types of developments in Wales by overseas companies. However, estimates of the number of new manufacturing plants opened by overseas companies are as follows:

*Number of new plants opened by overseas companies*

| *Periods* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1970 to 1975 | 54 |
| 1976 to 1980 | 55 |
| 1981 to 1985 | 58 |

## Roads

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the expenditure on new roads in Wales between 1965 and 1970, 1970 and 1975, 1975 and 1980 and 1980 and 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Expenditure on motorway and trunk road improvements at cash prices was as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1965-66 to 1969-70 | 45,849 |
| 1970-71 to 1974-75 | 101,388 |
| 1975-76 to 1979-80 | 261,440 |
| 1980-81 to 1984-85 | 483,729 |

It is not possible separately to identify expenditure by local authorities on road improvements, but this is the main element of their capital expenditure on roads. Over the period their gross capital expenditure on roads was:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1965-66 to 1969-70 | 27,414 |
| 1970-71 to 1974-75 | 94,791 |
| 1975-76 to 1979-80 | 148,988 |
| 1980-81 to 1984-85 | 267,928 |

### Higher Education

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many people in Wales were attending *(a)* higher education, *(b)* universities and *(c)* polytechnics between 1970 to 1975, 1975 to 1980, 1980 to 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The readily available information is given in the following table:

| *Academic year*[1] | *University of Wales*[2] | *Advanced courses in establishments outside the university sector*[3] *Total* | *(of which Polytechnic of Wales)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1976-77 | 18,784 | 13,425 | n.a. |
| 1977-78 | 19,692 | 12,885 | n.a. |
| 1978-79 | 20,508 | 12,959 | (3,307) |
| 1979-80 | 20,789 | 13,142 | (3,466) |
| 1980-81 | 21,667 | 13,890 | (3,993) |
| 1981-82 | 21,300 | 15,135 | (4,245) |
| 1982-83 | 20,888 | 15,824 | (4,482) |
| 1983-84 | 20,050 | 17,617 | (4,923) |
| 1984-85 | 20,486 | 18,181 | (5,255) |
| 1985-86 | 21,316 | 19,240 | (5,465) |

[1] Numbers as at December of each year for the University of Wales and November for other establishments.

[2] Number of full-time, sandwich and part-time students at the University of Wales.

[3] Number of full-time, sandwich, part-time day and evening only enrolements on advanced courses at further and higher education establishments outside the University sector.

n.a. = not available.

### Beach Pollution

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will list the number of polluted beaches at seaside resorts in Wales; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what action he intends to take to clear the polluted beaches in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The quality of bathing waters in Wales has been regularly monitored by the Welsh water authority and the results are incorporated in the authority's annual reports and were summarised in the first report of the Committee on Welsh Affairs, Session 1985-86, vol. II (101-II 92(i)-(iii) session 1984-85) (pages 61-84).

Action to improve the quality of Welsh bathing waters, and thereby improve beaches at seaside resorts, is primarily a matter for the Welsh water authority and the authority's plan 86 noted the need for the spending of some £70 million in a 15-year programme to ensure water standards compliance with the directive's requirements in respect of the 40 waters listed in the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for the Environment, Countryside and Local Government on 18 December 1985, at columns *223-28*.

### Schools (Capital Allocations)

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the capital allocation per pupil in Wales between 1970 to 1975, 1975 to 1980 and 1980 to 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Details of education capital allocations per pupil for the years 1981-82 to 1984-85 are as follows. The arrangements were different for years prior to 1981-82 and comparable information is therefore not available.

| *Year* | *£-pupil*[1] |
|---|---|
| 1981-82 | 55·04 |
| 1982-83 | 62·17 |
| 1983-84 | 64·26 |
| 1984-85 | 51·56 |

[1] Pupil numbers include full-time equivalent pupils and students in maintained schools, higher and further education establishments, adult education and youth centres.

### Welsh Development Agency

**Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what percentage of Welsh Development Agency money has been spent in Preseli district since 1 January 1986; what were the corresponding figures for the last three years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The Welsh Development Agency does not maintain details of expenditure in the form requested.

### Forestry

**Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on his policy for forestry in Wales.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The Government's forestry policy for the whole of Great Britain remains as set out in statements by my right hon. Friend the Member for Ayr (Mr. Younger), on 10 December 1980, at columns *927-28* and, as far as the sale of Forestry Commission land is concerned, on 8 November 1984, at columns *6-7*.

### Regional Aid

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what steps are being taken to monitor the effects on inward investment of the reduction in regional aid in Wales since 1983.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** I refer to the levels of expenditure shown in the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Industry to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy (Mr. Thomas) on 15 January at columns 258-59. All aspects of regional policy are kept under review. Wales continues to be an attractive location for inward investment.

### Radiation

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales further to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy on 15 January, *Official Report*, columns *282-3*, containing tables of public radiation doses, if he can explain why the dose in 1985 was lower than in 1975; whether the dose in 1986 is expected to be lower than in 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The differences in dose to the critical group between 1975 and 1985 reflects the greater proportion of hatchery reared rainbow trout now caught and consumed by anglers compared with 10 years ago, when the lake stock was predominantly the brown trout variety. As levels of radioactivity in fish in the lake are derived from the power station's liquid effluent, rainbow trout have a lower concentration compared with brown trout, owing to their different feeding habits. Shorter residence time is also a factor.

It is too early to assess the dose to the critical group for 1986 since all the analytical data are not yet available. The results will be published later this year in the MAFF report "Radioactivity in Surface and Coastal Waters of the British Isles 1986", copies of which will be placed in the Library of the House.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy on 15 January, *Official Report*, column 283, concerning changes expected to take place concerning maximum exposure to radiation of members of the public, what proportion of the maximum exposure in each recent year is attributable to discharges made in preceding years; what calculations have been made on the likely maximum exposure in each of the three years following a cessation of all discharges, in the case that this was to occur immediately; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Critical group exposure to radiation from consumption of fish from Lake Trawsfynydd includes an element attributable to past discharges from the power station. In the case of radiocaesium, the principal type of activity in terms of dose to the critical group, research has shown a time lag from discharge to uptake in fish of about three to six months. In the event of all discharges ceasing concentrations in fish would decline accordingly.

### Research Expenditure

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his annual expenditure on research for his Department; what percentage this is of his Department's total expenditure for each year since 1980; how much his Department has spent on research concerning industry in the years since 1980 in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

### Homeless People

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his latest estimate for the number of homeless people in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Information on the number of people who are currently homeless is not held centrally. The number of people who were accepted as homeless by local authorities in Wales during 1986 is estimated provisionally to be 15,900.

### Sports Council for Wales

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what grant he is to make to the Sports Council for Wales 1987-88; what grants he has made in each year since 1979; and what the increase for 1987-88 is in real terms.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Subject to parliamentary approval, the 1987-88 grant-in-aid for the Sports Council for Wales will be £3,867,000. Grants-in-aid since 1979 are as follows:

| | *£000* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 1,825 |
| 1980-81 | 2,274 |
| 1981-82 | 2,566 |
| 1982-83 | 2,867 |
| 1983-84 | 2,773 |
| 1984-85 | 2,852 |
| 1985-86 | 3,359 |
| 1986-87 | 3,767 |
| 1987-88 | 3,867 |

The 1987-88 figure is an increase of 23 per cent. over the 1979-80 grant-in-aid in real terms as measured by the GDP deflator at market prices.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Wales on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987]: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers recently given to similar questions by my right hon. Friends, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the Secretary of State for the Environment.

I was associated with the introduction of the legislation and the subordinate legislation referred to in those answers apart from the subordinate legislation referred to in the answer of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science and the second statutory instrument referred to in the answer of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment.

In addition to the legislation and subordinate legislation with which I was associated, I made, together with the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Heather and Grass Burning (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 1983 (SI 1984/1439) which amended the Heather and Grass Burning (England and Wales) Regulations 1983 (SI 1983/425). It was considered that the original regulations did not correctly describe some of the areas of land. The amendment regulations remedied the situation by describing the areas of reference to maps.

I also made the Block Grant (Education Adjustments) (Wales) Regulations 1986 (SI 1986/314) which included a new formula for calculating the contributions of local authorities in relation to expenditure on advanced further education, following the decision of the Divisional Court in R v. Secretary of State for Education and Science ex parte Inner London Education Authority (1985) *The Times* 20 June. This instrument superseded the Block Grant (Education Adjustments) (Wales) Regulations 1984 (SI 1984/284).

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Overseas Investments

64. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about current profits from overseas investments.

**Mr. MacGregor:** United Kingdom residents received gross earnings (net of tax) of £6·7 billion from direct investment in subsidiaries and branches abroad, and £6·3 billion from portfolio investment in overseas securities, in the year ending September 1986.

### Capital Gains Tax

**Mr. Colin Shepherd** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he estimates would be the cost to the Exchequer if husband and wife were to be able to be assessed separately for the purposes of capital gains tax.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** If husband and wife were each entitled to an annual exempt amount of £6,300, and if unused amounts were transferable to the other spouse, the cost would be of the order of £50-100 million.

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many individuals paid capital gains tax on the sale of shares for the year 1985-86; and what was the total yield in capital gains tax for 1985-86 from such sales of shares;

(2) how many individuals paid £750 or more capital gains tax on the sale of shares for 1985-86; and what was the total yield in capital gains tax from such individuals.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his reply,* 26 January 1987]: It is estimated that about 80,000 to 90,000 individuals will pay capital gains tax on chargeable gains from disposals of shares in 1985-86, with some 50,000 to 60,000 paying more than £750 on such disposables. In both cases, the total amount of capital gains tax paid on disposal of shares is estimated to fall within the range £500-£600 million.

### European Community

**Mr. Gould** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what rate of exchange between the European currency unit and the United States dollar has been assumed for the 1987 European Economic Community budget; and how this compares with (i) the rate assumed for the 1986 budget, (ii) the average realised rate in 1986 and (iii) the current rate.

**Mr. Brooke:** The rate of exchange for the United States dollar to the European Currency Unit (ecu) assumed in the 1987 European Communities draft budget was 1 dollar to 1·1 ecus. The rate assumed in the draft 1986 budget was 1 dollar to 1·2 ecus. This was subsequently amended to 1 dollar to 1·1 ecus. The average outturn rate for 1986 was 1 dollar to 1 ecu and the rate on 23 January 1987 was 1 dollar to 0·9 ecus.

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest figure for the proportion of the European Commission budget spent on *(a)* all agriculture support, *(b)* social fund and *(c)* regional fund.

**Mr. Brooke** [*pursuant to his reply,* 27 January 1987]: The figures from the 1986 budget as adopted, the latest available, are:

| | *per cent.* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* agricultural support | 65·1 |
| (of which) guarantee (titles 1 and 2) | 62·9 |
| guidance (title 3) | 2·2 |
| *(b)* social fund (chapters 60 and 61) | 7·2 |
| *(c)* regional fund (chapters 50 and 51 | 6·7 |

The Community has not yet adopted a budget for 1987.

### Anonymous Payments

**Mr. Robert Sheldon** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been the annual amount of "conscience money" paid in 1957, 1965, 1975 and at the latest date to the Inland Revenue anonymously by taxpayers who had not declared their full tax liabilities.

**Mr. Lawson:** The earliest information available is in respect of the financial year 1977-78. In that year £6,700·38 was paid anonymously to the Inland Revenue. The amount paid anonymously in 1985-86 was £40,971·49.

### Mortgage Tax Relief

**Mr. McCrindle** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received recommending the increase in the ceiling for mortgage tax relief to *(a)* £35,000 or *(b)* £40,000; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** A number of representations have been received. The ceiling for mortgage interest relief has to be fixed each year and will be considered in framing the budget proposals.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what has been the value of mortgage interest tax relief per private dwelling in Wales for each year from 1978-79 to 1986-87 in outturn terms and at 1986-87 prices;

(2) what has been the value of mortgage interest tax relief per mortgagor in Wales for each year from 1978-79 to 1986-87 in outturn terms and at 1986-87 prices.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his replies,* 22 January 1987, c. *708*]: The latest estimates are given in the table below. Estimates for years up to 1982-83 have been derived from the results of the survey of personal incomes. Following the introduction of MIRAS in April 1983, regional information on the cost of mortgage interest relief cannot be extracted from Inland Revenue records and the estimates give for 1983-84 onwards are therefore subject to wide margins of error.

*Value of mortgage interest relief in Wales (£)*

| | *Average value per owner-occupied dwelling* | | *Average value per mortgagor receiving relief* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Year* | *outturn prices* | *1986-87 prices*[2] | *outturn prices* | *1986-87 prices*[2] |
| 1978-79 | 65 | 125 | 175 | 335 |
| 1979-80 | 80 | 130 | 215 | 360 |
| 1980-81 | 100 | 145 | 290 | 415 |
| 1981-82 | 115 | 145 | 315 | 410 |
| 1982-83 | 115 | 135 | 295 | 350 |
| [1]1983-84 | 145 | 165 | 310 | 355 |
| [1]1984-85 | 180 | 200 | 380 | 415 |
| [1]1985-86 | 230 | 235 | 475 | 490 |
| [1]1986-87 | n/a | n/a | 465 | 465 |

[1] Including option mortgages which were subsumed in the MIRAS scheme from 1983-84 onwards.

[2] Expressed in 1986-87 prices using the retail prices index.

### Personal Wealth

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of personal wealth was represented by the top 2, 10 and 20 per cent., respectively, of the British population in 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his reply*, 27 January 1987]: Estimates for 1985 are not yet available but figures for the years 1982 to 1984 are published, on various bases, in tables 4.7, 4.8 and appendix D2 of Inland Revenue Statistics 1986, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

### Valuations of Assets

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many valuations of assets at 6 April 1965 prices, for the purposes of capital gains tax and corportion tax on capital gains, were carried out in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will estimate the costs incurred by the Inland Revenue in connection with those valuations.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his reply*, 27 January 1987]: I regret that information is not available on which to base a satisfactory answer.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Shooting Incidents (Investigations)

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will now make a statement on the killing of Michael Tighe and the wounding of Martin McCauley at Ballyneery on 24 November 1982;

(2) what evidence the Royal Ulster Constabulary has of Michael Tighe's connections with the Irish Republican Army; and when the report claiming such a link was first noted in his Royal Ulster Constabulary file;

(3) what listening devices were in use at the hayshed where Michael Tighe was killed on 24 November 1982; what warnings were given to him before shots were fired; and why the tape recording was never made available to the courts or to Mr. John Stalker during his inquiry;

(4) at what level in the Royal Ulster Constabulary approval was given for issuing the Royal Ulster Constabulary press release on the shooting of Seamus Grew and Roderick Carroll on 12 December 1982 at Mullacreevie Park and on the shooting of Eugene Toman, Gervasie McKerr and Sean Burns at Tullygally Road, Lurgan, on 11 November 1982;

(5) if he will now make a statement on the shooting of Eugene Toman in November 1982;

(6) what report he has received on the forensic evidence in the Grew and Carroll shootings in December 1982.

**Mr. Tom King:** The facts concerning the incidents to which the hon. Member refers are the subject of investigation by Mr. Colin Sampson. The first part of his report was submitted to the Chief Constable of the Royal Ulster Constabulary on 22 October and covers the incident of 24 November 1982 in which Mr. Michael Tighe was shot dead. A copy was also submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland. The second part is expected to be completed shortly.

As I have told the House before, I shall at the earliest appropriate time make a statement on any matters arising from the report that fall within my responsibility. I do not yet know how soon that will be.

### Mobile Support Units

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what training is received by headquarters mobile support units in the Royal Ulster Constabulary;

(2) what training and instructions are given to Royal Ulster Constabulary headquarters mobile support units on how to shoot at targets.

**Mr. Tom King:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Informers

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will make a statement on his policy concerning the use of informers and their application by the Northern Ireland special branch;

(2) what instructions have been given to Royal Ulster Constabulary officers concerning the use of informers; and to whom the Home Office guide lines have been circulated in the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

**Mr. Tom King:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Infant Deaths

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list for all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland which were conducted by *(a)* caesarian section and *(b)* instrumental delivery the number and rate per 100 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths, and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1500 g, 1500 to 1999 g, 2000 to 2499 g, 2500 to 2999 g, 3000 to 3499 g, 3500 to 3999 g, 4000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(2) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the number and rate per 1000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1500 g, 1500 to 1999 g, 2000 to 2499 g, 2500 to 2999 g, 3000 to 3499 g, 3500 to 3999 g, 4000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(3) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the number and rate per 1000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1500 g, 1500 to 1999 g, 2000 to 2499 g, 2500 to 2999 g, 3000 to 3499 g, 3500 to 3999 g, 4000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(4) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1000 of still births and perinatal deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(5) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the number and rate per 1000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759); and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories, under 1500 g, 1500 to 1999 g, 2000 to 2499 g, 2500 to 2999 g, 3000 to 3499 g, 3500 to 3999 g, 4000 plus and unstated birthweight;

(6) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(7) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(8) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(9) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(10) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(11) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(12) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(13) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759); and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(14) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(15) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(16) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of births an the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(17) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths ad infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(18) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(19) if he will list for: *(a)* first twins and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(20) if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will

tabulate the data according to whether the mother had had *(a)* no, *(b)* one, *(c)* two, *(d)* three and *(e)* four or more pregnancies resulting in a registrable birth;

(21) if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents in Northern Ireland and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, post neonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabluate the data according to the age of the mother in the following age ranges: under 16 years, 16 years to 19 years, 20 years to 24 years, 25 years to 29 years, 30 years to 34 years and 35 plus years.

**Mr. Needham:** The information is not available in the form requested.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Thursday 29 January 1987*

## TRANSPORT

### Marine Pollution

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list which annexes of the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships Her Majesty's Government has not yet ratified; and i. he will make a statement as to the reasons for not ratifying in each particular case.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** In common with many other countries, Her Majesty's Government have not ratified annex IV of the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships 1973. There are some major areas of concern for many countries which will need detailed discussion at the International Maritime Organisation. Ratification will be considered when the review of this annex is complete.

### M4-A4 (West London)

**Mr. Coombs** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to receive his consultants' report on provision of increased capacity in the M4-A4 corridor in west London; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Consultants were appointed last March to look at options for improving travel by all modes, including road, between Heathrow and Central London over the next 20 years. We expect to receive their report in the spring.

### Severe Weather (Road Clearance)

**Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement as to the relative effectiveness of individual London boroughs in acting as his agents in clearing roads for traffic during the recent cold spell.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I have congratulated London boroughs, and local authorities generally, on coping well in extremely difficult conditions. We shall be taking stock with them of any lessons from the recent experience.

### Acid Spillage (Prosecutions)

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many cases of acid spillage on the public highways, sufficient to warrant prosecution, have occured over the last three years for which records are available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** No central records are kept.

I understand that one or two recent cases have led to police prosecution.

### Air Service Agreements (Contravention)

**Mr. Sheerman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to curb the activities of foreign airlines which increase frequencies of flights to the United Kingdom in contravention of air service agreements.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Our normal practice is to include in the operating permit issued to a foreign airline any specific limitations on the frequency or capacity of its services for which provision is made in the relevant bilateral arrangements with the other country concerned.

### Driving Tests (Delays)

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will investigate the reasons for the delays experienced by persons in the Banff and Buchan constituency wishing to take a driving test; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Waiting times for driving tests throughout Scotland are too long. We have reduced queues on average in Scotland from 19 weeks to 14 weeks and we aim by continuing recruitment to bring them down to 11 weeks during this year. The waiting list at Banff had shown the same downward trend until very recently. A sharp increase occurred this month, because one of the two examiners covering Banff from Peterhead was expected to be unavailable to conduct tests for three weeks of next month. The traffic area office has since arranged a temporary replacement examiner. Tests initially postponed until April have been advanced to February-March.

### Climatic Variability

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to implement the recommendations relating to his responsibilities in the Report, "Social and Economic Responses to Climatic Variability" in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Moore** [*pursuant to his reply*, 27 January 1987]: My Department is considering the report, and I shall write to the hon. Member in due course.

## WALES

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the last available figure in the fall in employment in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The latest available estimate of employees in employment in Wales shows an increase of 6,000 between March 1986 and June 1986, following a fall of 23,000 between June 1985 and March 1986. In making such comparisons it should be borne in mind that employment is affected by seasonal factors.

**Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Wales by how much unemployment has increased in Ceredigion since May 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** Information on the number of people unemployed in the district of Ceridigion in May 1979 is not available. A close approximation is the aggregate total of 1,875 unemployed registrants in the three travel-to-work areas, as they were defined at the time, of Aberystwyth, Cardigan and Lampeter. Comparisons between 1979 and the present are difficult to make because of changes in the method of collection and compilation of the data and changes to the boundaries of the travel-to-work areas. The aggregate total of unemployed claimants in the travel-to-work areas of Lampeter and Aberaeron, Aberystwyth and Cardigan, as currently defined, was 4,260 in December 1986.

### Roads (Expenditure)

**Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will increase the expenditure on roads in Wales in the next five years to allow for more motorway construction; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The plans for motorway construction up to the end of 1990 are set out in "Roads in Wales 1985". The programme for the 1990s is under consideration.

### M4 (Parking Areas and Facilities)

**Sir Raymond Gower** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what progress has been made in providing parking areas and facilities along the M4 in Wales; and what plans he has for the next five years.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Parking areas and other facilities are provided at the motorway service areas at Sarn Park and Pont Abraham. It is our policy to encourage the provision of such areas at 25 to 30-mile intervals on the M4 in Wales. Where any proposed service area requires direct access to or from the motorway it is for intending developers to put forward proposals for consideration. There are no plans to provide parking and other facilities outside motorway service areas.

### New Homes

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what policies he has to protect Welsh people, who buy new homes, from defective workmanship; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The National House-Building Council, an independent non-profit making body approved by successive Governments, has successfully encouraged high standards in the house-building industry and offers considerable protection to purchasers through its 10-year structural warranty scheme. It would be prudent for any purchaser buying a new house not covered by a NHBC warranty to seek professional advice.

### Empty Council Houses

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many empty council homes there are in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** There were 2,804 vacant council dwellings in Wales on 1 April 1986. Our programme of priority estates projects has shown that efficient, locally-based housing management can eliminate the problem of long-term empty dwellings on council estates, and lead to quicker re-letting of newly-vacated properties.

### Education Act 1980

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list those voluntary projects, organisations and bodies he has funded in Wales since 1979 along with the amount allocated, other than those which he has financed under section 21 of the Education Act 1980, listing those Welsh language projects, organisations and bodies separately.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards** [*pursuant to the reply*, 22 January 1987, c. *684*]: Those voluntary bodies, organisations and projects in receipt of financial assistance in 1985-86 along with the amounts allocated, are listed in the following table (table 1). For the years 1979-80 to 1984-85 I refer the hon. Gentleman to earlier replies given in the *Official Report* on 14 July 1980, 22 December 1982, 13 March 1984, 22 December 1985 and 6 February 1986.

Grants given to voluntary bodies, organisations and projects for Welsh language purposes since 1979, other than those financed under section 21 of the Education Act 1980, are listed in the following table (table 2).

*Table 1*
*Voluntary bodies in receipt of Welsh Office grant. in 1985-86*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit | 85,000 |
| Age Concern | 44,500 |
| Antur Waunfawr | 51,847 |
| Arfon Shop Project | 30,779 |
| Arts for Disabled | 12,533 |
| Ash in Wales | 4,021 |
| Association of Crossroads Care Attendant Schemes | 8,550 |
| Barnardos | 121,820 |
| Boys Brigade | 6,535 |
| Boys Clubs | 28,900 |
| British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering | 39,170 |
| British Trust for Conservation Volunteers | 15,467 |
| Capital Grants to Voluntary Youth Services Village Halls and Community Centres | 200,000 |
| Cardiff Universities Social Services | 176,619 |
| Catholic Childrens Society | 25,700 |
| Christ College, Brecon | 62,117 |
| Church in Wales Provincial Youth Services | 10,664 |
| Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust Ltd. | 85,500 |
| Clwyd Voluntary Services Council | 57,282 |
| Coleg Harlech | 559,948 |
| Community Services Volunteers | 10,350 |
| Council for the Protection of Rural Wales | 10,000 |
| Council of Wales for Voluntary Youth Services | 28,136 |
| Drive | 42,590 |
| Dyfed Archaeological Trust Ltd. | 108,840 |
| Dyfed Association of Voluntary Services | 63,391 |
| Family Planning Association | 7,000 |
| Farming and Wildlife Trust | 1,500 |
| Girl Guides | 10,220 |
| Glamorgan Community Services Council | 17,395 |
| Grant in Aid to Voluntary Organisations under Opportunities for Volunteering Scheme | 190,000 |
| Gwent Community Services Council | 31,642 |
| Gwent and Glamorgan Archaeological Trust Ltd. | 111,437 |
| Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Ltd. | 86,600 |
| Gwynedd Drugs Council | 4,673 |
| Gwynedd Rural Council | 73,816 |
| Gwynedd Social Care Project | 25,875 |
| Howells School, Llandaff | 132,972 |
| INSTEP/CETYCW | 5,835 |
| Intermediate Treatment Scheme | 81,198 |
| International Youth Year | 7,940 |
| Llandovery College | 38,280 |
| Mencap (Pengwern Hall) | 24,170 |
| Mencap in Wales | 70,600 |
| Mid Glamorgan Steering Group | 4,500 |
| Mind | 43,167 |
| Monmouth School for Boys | 181,642 |
| Monmouth School for Girls | 68,761 |
| Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin | 119,400 |

| | £ |
|---|---|
| National Children's Homes | 29,160 |
| National Council on Alcoholism | 6,600 |
| National Gypsy Council | 1,100 |
| North Wales Naturalist Trust | 2,500 |
| Penrhos College Colwyn Bay | 81,090 |
| Playboard | 50,000 |
| Powys Community Support Scheme | 25,827 |
| Powys Rural Council | 61,232 |
| Presbyterian Church in Wales (Youth Services) | 3,700 |
| Pre-School Playgroups Association (Wales) | 127,310 |
| Prince of Wales Committee | 10,300 |
| Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents | 80,000 |
| Rydal School Colwyn Bay | 67,769 |
| South Glamorgan Intervol | 13,869 |
| South Wales Planning Aid Services | 7,212 |
| Standing Conference of Voluntary Organisations | 23,480 |
| St. John's Ambulance Brigade | 15,709 |
| Swansea Accommodation for Single Homeless | 3,500 |
| Trinity College | 1,996,000 |
| TS Indefatigable | 11,819 |
| Ty Nyth Hostel | 2,730 |
| Under Fives Initiative | 93,412 |
| Union of Welsh Independents | 2,170 |
| Urdd Gobaith Cymru | 62,236 |
| Wales Council for the Blind | 11,550 |
| Wales Council for the Deaf | 14,900 |
| Wales Council for the Disabled | 46,850 |
| Wales Council for Voluntary Action | 130,000 |
| Wales Youth Work Partnership | 48,009 |
| Welsh Association of Youth Clubs | 51,332 |
| Welsh Chess Union | 4,600 |
| Welsh Housing Aid | 21,300 |
| Welsh Housing Association Council | 4,000 |
| Welsh National Council of YMCAs | 20,698 |
| Welsh Scout Council | 12,100 |
| Welsh Women's Aid | 56,050 |
| West Glamorgan Community Services Council | 32,827 |
| Women's Institute | 6,210 |
| Woodland Trust | 10,000 |
| Workers Educational Association | 269,821 |
| Young Farmers Clubs | 11,960 |
| Youth Hostels Association | 12,032 |

*Table 2*

*Assistance for the Welsh Language (S. 26 Development of Rural Wales Act 1976)*

| | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Publishing—Welsh Books Grant (Via University of Wales Press Board) | 91,000 | 109,000 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Publishing—Welsh Books Council | 55,000 | 68,000 | 285,000 | 300,000 | 318,000 | 335,000 | 345,000 |
| Publishing—Schools Book Club (Via Welsh Books Council) | — | — | — | 10,000 | 21,500 | — | 17,500 |
| Publishing—Schools Book Club (Exhibitions Officer) | — | — | — | — | 5,000 | 5,000 | — |
| Publishing—Welsh National Centre for Childrens Literature | — | — | — | — | 13,000 | 14,000 | 16,000 |
| Publishing—Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Magazines) | 15,000 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (Groups) | 25,000 | 30,000 | 165,000 | 180,000 | 190,000 | 200,000 | 210,000 |
| Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales | 70,000 | 120,000 | 157,000 | 170,000 | 180,200 | 150,000 | 232,000 |
| Bwrdd Ffilmiau Cymraeg | 20,000 | 24,000 | 67,000 | 34,100 | 80,000 | 7,000 | — |
| Nant Gwrtheyrn | — | — | 5,000 | — | 15,000 | — | — |
| Celtic Film Festival | — | — | 2,000 | — | — | — | — |
| Papurau Bro (Via Regional Arts Associations) | — | — | — | 15,750 | 18,000 | 21,350 | 21,000 |
| Yr Academi Gymreig | — | — | — | 500 | 21,600 | 30,000 | 21,500 |
| Welsh Joint Education Committee | — | — | — | 12,000 | — | — | — |
| National Language Unit/Word Processor | — | — | — | 7,000 | — | — | — |
| University College of Wales Aberystwyth Resource Centre | — | — | — | 15,500 | — | — | — |
| Clwyd Science Survey | — | — | — | 250 | — | — | — |
| School Broadcasting Council for Wales | — | — | — | 10,000 | — | — | — |
| Young Farmers Clubs | — | — | — | — | 3,340 | 3,500 | 4,000 |
| Place Names Advisory Committee (Honoraria) | — | — | — | — | 600 | 600 | 600 |
| Welsh Language Information Technology Pilot Project | — | — | — | — | 5,000 | — | 3,750 |
| Cwmni Theatr Cymru | — | — | — | — | 25,000 | 25,000 | — |
| Welsh National Opera | — | — | — | — | 500 | 374 | — |
| Herched Y Wawr | — | — | — | — | — | 10,000 | 11,500 |
| Y Cymro | — | — | — | — | | — | 300 |
| — | | | | | | | |
| Sunday Schools Council | — | — | — | — | — | — | 13,000 |
| Womens Institute | — | — | — | — | — | — | 7,000 |
| 400th Anniversary of Translation of Bible into Welsh | — | — | — | — | — | — | 5,000 |
| Bangor and Gwynedd Samaritans | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| BBC Sioe Siarad | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Welsh Schools Basketball Association | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| St. John Ambulance | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Welsh Scout Council | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Urdd Gobaith Cymru—Llangrannog | — | — | 140,000 | 145,000 | — | — | — |
| Urdd Gobaith Cymru—Glanllyn | — | — | — | — | 80,000 | 180,000 | 196,000 |
| Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin (HQ) | 70,000 | 87,000 | 94,000 | 98,000 | 102,000 | 110,350 | 119,400 |

| | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Urdd Gobaith Cymru (HQ) | 35,134 | 41,597 | 53,260 | 55,497 | 56,496 | 57,626 | 62,236 |
| International Youth Year | — | — | — | — | — | 2,670 | — |
| Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Capital) | 32,939 | 6,352 | 5,022 | — | — | — | — |
| TOTAL | 414,073 | 485,949 | 973,282 | 1,053,827 | 1,135,236 | 1,152,770 | 1,285,486 |

## ENVIRONMENT

### Common Land

**Mr. Soames** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on his policy towards the future of common land.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** My right hon. Friend and the Secretary of State for Wales received the report of the Common Land Forum last September. It set out more than 100 recommendations, including detailed proposals for further legislation on common land. The report is agreed by a wide range of various organisations covering a multitude of different interests. We warmly congratulate the chairman and members of the forum both on the comprehensiveness of their suggested reform and on the breadth of the consensus they have achieved.

The Government accept the case for future legislation based broadly on the forum's report and intend to introduce a Commons Bill at a suitable opportunity when parliamentary time permits. A consultation paper has accordingly been published today so that all those interested in common land matters should be given an early opportunity to express their views on the forum's report. I will arrange for copies to be placed in the Library. The responses, which should be submitted by 1 May, will then be taken into account in the preparation of the legislation.

### Environmental Pollution

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list all private, corporate or governmental sources of polychlorinated biphenyls presently being discharged into any of the United Kingdom's freshwater, estuarine or marine ecosystems; and if such a practice is prohibited.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** There are no authorised discharges of polychlorinated biphenyls to water in the United Kingdom. There has been a ban on all unconfined uses of these materials since 1980 and there is now a ban on any new uses.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will list the projects funded by his Department in 1983, 1984 and 1985 to research and develop waste and emission treatment technologies to reduce wastes and emissions to the environment in general;

(2) if he will list the projects funded by his Department in 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 to research and develop waste and emission treatment technologies to reduce wastes and emissions to the aqueous environment.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The Department is currently funding some 70 research and development projects on waste and emission treatment technologies to reduce wastes and emissions to the environment in general. The bulk of these are concerned with radioactive waste management; other work is undertaken on the treatment of land wastes and air pollution. I will write to the hon. Member listing these projects and those undertaken additionally in 1983-84 and 1984-85, and will indicate which projects cover the reduction of wastes and emissions to the aqueous environment.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much was spent in 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 on research designed to examine and improve knowledge on sedimentation processes and accumulation, as well as on remobilisation of hazardous substances in the aquatic environment.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Research expenditure by my Department in this subject area was as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1983-84 | 556,000 |
| 1984-85 | 567,000 |
| 1985-86 | 542,000 |

### North Sea

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what, in research terms, are the main priority areas being tackled by Her Majesty's Government to improve scientific knowledge of the North sea.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Much of the ongoing research undertaken by the Fisheries Departments and the marine science programmes of the research councils is relevant.

Examples of some areas of particular relevance to the North sea are: monitoring coastal discharges, dumping sites and North sea oil and gas installations; monitoring plankton productivity and studying factors that influence it; modelling water sediment movements to gain an understanding of nutrient and pollutant transfer.

The outcome of the North sea conference next November will influence future priorities.

### Environmental Research

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what, in research terms, are the main priority areas being tackled by Her Majesty's Government to improve knowledge of aquatic ecosystems.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The priority areas of research being tackled by my Department to improve knowledge of aquatic ecosystems are:

1. Effects of pollutants in water.
2. Sediment processes and heavy metals in estuaries.
3. Disposal of sewage sludge to sea and its effects.
4. Nitrate processes in water.
5. Eutrophication processes.
6. The role of acid deposition in freshwater quality.

I understand that the Agriculture Departments' research priority areas in this field are:

1. Benthic populations and their relationship to environmental quality.
2. The origins, fate and effects of contaminants, particularly heavy metals.

3. The role of sediments in understanding the effects of contaminants.
4. Marine food-chains in relation to the productivity of Fisheries.

The NERC and high education institutes undertake much of this research on behalf of my and the other Departments and undertake additionally, related basic research both on freshwater and marine ecosystems, particularly on studies of deep ocean ecosystems.

## Rates

**Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for Environment (1) if he will show for each year since 1979 what was the rate poundage for Brighton borough council and East Sussex county council;

(2) what has been the rate level in each year since 1974 for Brighton borough council and East Sussex county council; and what has been the Brighton share of the county council rate in each year;

(3) what proportion of East Sussex county council revenue has been raised from Brighton ratepayers in each year since 1974; and what proportion of the county's expenditure in each year has been spent on services for Brighton residents.

**Mr. Chope:** The following is the available information on rate poundages in Brighton and East Sussex from 1974-75, and Brighton's percentage of East Sussex's precept income. No information is held centrally on the proportion of county council expenditure on services in individual districts.

**Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the rate support grant for Bradford metropolitan district council in 1986-87 and 1987-88, showing the percentage increase; and if he will also make a statement on the effects of this on the 1987-88 rate.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend announced on 13 January his firm intentions for the 1987-88 rate support grant settlement, and for the first supplementary rate support grant report for 1986-87. On the basis of these intentions, if Bradford metropolitan district council increases its current expenditure next year by 5¼ per cent. it stands to receive £137·706 million block grant, which is £10·426 million (8·2 per cent.) more than in 1986-87. If the council raises its spending in line with the rate of inflation, it stands to receive £138·414 million block grant, an increase of £11·133 million (8·7 per cent.) on 1986-87. These increases could enable Bradford to reduce the local rate by 7·3 per cent. or by 12 per cent. respectively. On the basis of the Secretary of State for Education and Science's proposals on teachers' pay, Bradford could receive a further £3·4 million in grant and the rate reductions would be about 2 per cent. less.

**Sir Geoffrey Finsberg** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what effect his recent statements on the rate support grant and rate limitation will have upon ratepayers in the London borough of Camden in the coming financial year.

**Mr. Chope:** The Local Government Finance Bill will allow the London borough of Camden to levy a local rate for 1987-88 of no more than 120·7p in the pound, an increase of 1·5 per cent. on 1986-87. The second largest element in Camden rate bills, the ILEA precept, will be limited to an increase of no more than 3·2 per cent.

| | *Brighton's local rate* | *East Sussex county precept* | *Brighton's precept payment to East Sussex as percentage of East Sussex's precept income* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *(p)* | *(p)* | |
| 1974-75 | 18·80 | 41·70 | 25·8 |
| 1975-76 | 23·55 | 48·65 | 24·1 |
| 1976-77 | 27·80 | 55·40 | 23·8 |
| 1977-78 | 30·00 | 63·30 | 24·3 |
| 1978-79 | 31·09 | 68·20 | 24·0 |
| 1979-80 | 25·20 | 84·50 | 23·6 |
| 1980-81 | 27·80 | 101·40 | 23·5 |
| 1981-82 | 30·50 | 113·00 | 24·8 |
| 1982-83 | 34·20 | 128·60 | 24·7 |
| 1983-84 | 34·20 | 134·00 | 24·6 |
| 1984-85 | 34·20 | 140·60 | 24·4 |
| 1985-86 | 37·70 | 147·30 | 24·2 |
| 1986-87 | 36·70 | 176·60 | 24·3 |

NB Due to changes in the distribution of the Rate Support Grant between 1979-80 and 1981-82, the rate poundages for the later years are not comparable with the earlier figures.

## Local Authorities (Senior Posts)

**Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek powers to intervene to help those local authorities in London and the south-east which are at present unable to fill a large number of vacant senior posts.

**Mr. Chope:** No. The responsibility lies with the elected councils.

## Sports Council

**Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a detailed breakdown of income over the last 10 years for each of the national sports centres funded by the Sports Council.

**Mr. Tracey:** The following is the information:

| | *Crystal Palace* £ | *Bisham Abbey* £ | *Lilleshall* £ | *Plas Y Brenin* £ | *National Sailing Centre* £ | *Home Pierrepont* £ | *Harrisons Rocks* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1976-77 | [1] 283,558<br>[2] 191,378 | 48,221 | 137,607 | 72,682 | 64,842 | [1] 127,163<br>[2] 99,260 | — |
| 1977-78 | [1] 470,667<br>[2] 235,368 | 121,500 | 191,191 | 112,752 | 104,745 | [1] 173,546<br>[2] 146,253 | — |
| 1978-79 | [1] 574,145<br>[2] 248,431 | 183,548 | 165,267 | 117,310 | 111,091 | [1] 219,366<br>[2] 146,596 | — |
| 1979-80 | [1] 598,478<br>[2] 412,042 | 213,806 | 268,592 | 145,540 | 132,777 | [1] 255,022<br>[2] 140,000 | — |
| 1980-81 | [1] 751,321<br>[2] 457,500 | 262,284 | 338,338 | 206,886 | 168,128 | [1] 293,085<br>[2] 167,808 | [1] 886<br>[2] 580 |
| 1981-82 | [1] 741,392<br>[2] 516,000 | 310,950 | 485,199 | 263,153 | 225,941 | [1] 425,048<br>[2] 187,500 | [1] 599<br>[2] 500 |
| 1982-83 | [1] 803,386<br>[2] 591,000 | 404,695 | 556,875 | 291,826 | 263,751 | [1] 414,969<br>[2] 216,521 | [1] 1,029<br>[2] 300 |
| 1983-84 | [1] 1,066,991<br>[2] 609,500 | 467,569 | 643,306 | 339,879 | 330,107 | [1] 422,329<br>[2] 217,000 | 1,643 |
| 1984-85 | [1] 1,051,867<br>[2] 715,000 | 480,505 | 681,388 | 367,636 | 356,041 | [1] 432,333<br>[2] 221,570 | 1,575 |
| 1985-86 | [1] 1,041,727<br>[2] 857,500 | 501,516 | 734,073 | 379,004 | 297,698 | [1] 349,530<br>[2] 222,240 | 1,800 |
| Total Fees | 7,383,532 | — | — | — | — | 3,112,391 | 7,532 |
| Total [2] | 4,833,719 | — | — | — | — | 1,764,748 | 1,380 |
| TOTAL | 12,217,251 | 2,994,594 | 4,201,836 | 2,296,668 | 2,055,121 | 4,877,139 | 8,912 |

*Sources*: Sports Council Annual Reports

[1] Fees

[2] Local Authority Contribution

**Mr. John Carlisle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the current asset values of the premises and equipment of the national sports centres; and what were those values in 1971.

**Mr. Tracey:** This information is not available in the form requested. A note to the audited accounts of the Sports Council for the year ending 31 March 1986 observed:

> "Market values of the Sports Council Trust's land and buildings have not been determined, as the valuation could not be provided on any recognised meaningful basis".

On a historic cost basis, the figure appearing in the accounts apportioned to exclude assets outside the national centres is £22,398,154 gross before depreciation is accounted for. The equivalent figure at 31 March 1971 was £1,147,449.

**Mr. John Carlisle** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the performance of the Central Council for Physical Recreation of its duties under the 1971 agreement with his Department and the Sports Council.

**Mr. Tracey:** The Department is not a party to the heads of agreement of 1972 under which the Sports Council funds the CCPR.

It is for the council to discuss with the CCPR each year its objectives and performance to ensure that the CCPR is using public funds efficiently and effectively.

**Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the financial controls applied to the staging of international sporting events at the national sports centres funded by the Sports Council.

**Mr. Tracey:** In any international event which is grant-aided by the Sports Council, the council's standard grant conditions apply. These involve proper budgetary control and audit checks where these are considered necessary.

**Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide details of the terms of reference and results to date of work undertaken by Mr. David Teesdale since his appointment to the Sports Council; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** This is a matter for the Sports Council.

## Nitrates

**Mr. Weetch** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will bring before the House legislation to reduce nitrogen emissions by 50 per cent. over a three-year period giving special attention to nitrogen-based fertilisers.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Following the publication of the nitrate co-ordination group report in December I am considering how nitrate concentrations in water may be limited. This includes examination of the practicality and suitability of powers available under existing legislation.

### Loft Insulation Grants

**Mr. John Fraser** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to make new schemes for loft insulation grants.

**Mr. Tracey:** My right hon. Friend will lay the new scheme before Parliament in due course.

### Greenwich (Industrial Improvement Area)

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he received an application from the London borough of Greenwich for the designation of a 111-acre site at Northon Way, SE28, as an industrial improvement area; and when he expects to announce his decision.

**Mr. Tracey:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no locus in the declaration of this improvement area. I understand that a resolution to declare this site at Nathan way, SE28 an industrial improvement area has been passed by the London borough of Greenwich. It takes effect on 4 March.

### Homes Insulation

**Mr. Dover** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has for the future of the homes insulation scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** My hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction announced proposed changes to the homes insulation scheme on 19 December in response to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Devon North (Vol. 107 Col. 756). The new scheme to be laid before Parliament would withdraw the general rate of grant at 66 per cent., but would extend the availability of the 90 per cent. grant to all householders in receipt of housing benefit or supplementary benefit (provided the other conditions of the scheme were fulfilled).

### Planning Applications

**Mr. Macfarlane** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his Department's policy towards calling in planning applications to develop facilities in excess of 10,000 square feet; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** The policy of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is to be very selective about calling in applications for his decision, and in general he will do so only if planning issues of more than local importance are involved. In that context the size of the particular development might be a relevant factor, depending on the circumstances.

### Reema Houses

**Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) whether he has yet received a report from the Building Research Establishment on Reema Conclad houses; and if he will make a statement.

(2) whether he will establish an inquiry into the structural safety of Reema high-rise blocks of flats; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** The building research establishment is undertaking a major study of large panel system flats and houses, including Reema flats and houses. A number of papers have already been published and BRE's major report, on the structural integrity and durability of large panel buildings, should be available later this year.

### BMA (Request for Meeting)

**Mr. Pavitt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, why the Parliamentary Under-Secretary responsible for sports sponsorship refused to meet the secretary and senior officials of the British Medical Association to discuss this matter.

**Mr. Tracey:** As part of the consultation on the new voluntary agreement on tobacco sponsorship in sport, my predecessor met the British Medical Association in February 1985. In response to its request late in 1986 I agreed to a further meeting but it proved impossible to find a mutually convenient date before publication of the agreement. This was explained to the association, which was invited instead to submit any further representations in writing, to which it agreed.

### National Parks

**Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will exempt *(a)* Exmoor and *(b)* other areas where management agreements exist from the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Agriculture and Forestry Development in National Parks etc.) Special Development Order 1986.

**Mr. Tracey:** No. The Government consider that these discretionary controls should apply in all national parks in England and Wales.

### Council House Sales

**Mr. Nicholls** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate for sales of council houses under the Housing Act 1980 during 1987; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** About 82,500 English local authority dwellings are currently forecast to be sold in 1986-87 and a further 72,500 in 1987-88 under the right-to-buy provisions of the Housing Act 1980 and subsequent legislation. Further details about the forecasts of local authority capital receipts from sales of their stock are shown in paragraph 25 of the housing chapter of "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90 Volume II" (Cmnd. 56-II).

**Mr. Roger King** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the total United Kingdom stock of council houses; and how many have been sold to date.

**Mr. Tracey:** More than 1 million local authority, new town and housing association dwellings have been sold in Great Britain since this Government took office and the remaining stock is under 6·5 million.

## Housing Investment Programme

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will rank in descending order the individual housing investment programme allocations for 1987-88 made to all districts and boroughs in England.

**Mr. Ridley:** The initial investment programme allocations for 1987-88 for authorities in England are given in the following table. Some authorities vill also receive special allocations for schemes devised in conjunction with Estate Action, or to help them meet their obligations under housing defects legislation.

*Housing investment programme allocations 1987-88*

| *Local authority* | *£'000* |
|---|---|
| Birmingham | 49,766 |
| Lambeth | 33,069 |
| Southwark | 29,492 |
| Manchester | 28,840 |
| Hackney | 27,742 |
| Camden | 25,559 |
| Islington | 25,002 |
| Liverpool | 24,800 |
| Haringey | 21,671 |
| Lewisham | 21,052 |
| Leeds | 19,861 |
| Brent | 18,744 |
| Newham | 17,574 |
| Sheffield | 17,315 |
| Wandsworth | 16,186 |
| Greenwich | 15,556 |
| Tower Hamlets | 14,997 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 14,483 |
| Salford | 13,608 |
| Bradford | 12,903 |
| Westminster | 12,748 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 12,280 |
| Leicester | 12,000 |
| Nottingham | 11,091 |
| Ealing | 10,593 |
| Sandwell | 10,523 |
| Bolton | 10,280 |
| Kingston upon Hull | 9,939 |
| Bristol | 9,762 |
| Rochdale | 8,605 |
| Oldham | 8,528 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 8,408 |
| Tameside | 8,037 |
| Kirklees | 8,017 |
| Wolverhampton | 7,967 |
| Walsall | 7,709 |
| Plymouth | 7,451 |
| Waltham Forest | 7,205 |
| Hounslow | 6,984 |
| Wirral | 6,902 |
| Wakefield | 6,720 |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 6,648 |
| Blackburn | 6,483 |
| Doncaster | 6,466 |
| Coventry | 6,166 |
| Wigan | 6,148 |
| Middlesbrough | 6,100 |
| Derby | 5,668 |
| Croydon | 5,657 |
| Rotherham | 5,628 |
| Norwich | 5,475 |
| Barnsley | 5,346 |
| Hillingdon | 5,338 |
| Sefton | 5,188 |
| Portsmouth | 5,122 |
| South Tyneside | 5,120 |
| North Tyneside | 5,032 |
| Barnet | 4,926 |
| Brighton | 4,925 |
| Gateshead | 4,800 |
| Enfield | 4,765 |
| Southampton | 4,743 |
| Bromley | 4,735 |
| St. Helens | 4,618 |
| Knowsley | 4,547 |
| Thamesdown | 4,410 |
| Ipswich | 4,301 |
| Barking and Dagenham | 4,152 |
| Oxford | 4,124 |
| Merton | 4,055 |
| Sunderland | 4,016 |
| Havering | 3,930 |
| Redbridge | 3,777 |
| Dudley | 3,700 |
| Calderdale | 3,682 |
| Harrow | 3,676 |
| Reading | 3,660 |
| Easington | 3,620 |
| Bury | 3,511 |
| Trafford | 3,477 |
| Burnley | 3,431 |
| Rugby | 3,376 |
| Preston | 3,360 |
| Stockport | 3,343 |
| Ashford | 3,327 |
| Bexley | 3,297 |
| Langbaurgh | 3,236 |
| Basingstoke and Deane | 3,219 |
| Test Valley | 3,216 |
| Luton | 3,193 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 3,065 |
| Stockton-on-Tees | 3,024 |
| Hartlepool | 2,936 |
| Warrington | 2,909 |
| Swale | 2,830 |
| North Bedfordshire | 2,829 |
| New Forest | 2,768 |
| Hastings | 2,704 |
| Peterborough | 2,684 |
| Cambridge | 2,669 |
| Hyndburn | 2,636 |
| Kings Lynn and West Norfolk | 2,617 |
| Bournemouth | 2,540 |
| Pendle | 2,526 |
| Sedgefield | 2,456 |
| Rushmoor | 2,451 |
| Northampton | 2,443 |
| Breckland | 2,420 |
| Dover | 2,395 |
| Wycombe | 2,358 |
| Aylesbury Vale | 2,344 |
| Huntingdonshire | 2,337 |
| Sutton | 2,298 |
| Allerdale | 2,277 |
| Lancaster | 2,269 |
| East Staffordshire | 2,268 |
| Newbury | 2,246 |
| Waveney | 2,217 |
| Tendring | 2,200 |
| Colchester | 2,195 |
| Canterbury | 2,193 |
| Maidstone | 2,136 |
| Malvern Hills | 2,130 |
| Southend-on-Sea | 2,126 |
| Great Grimsby | 2,122 |
| Hove | 2,104 |
| Horsham | 2,101 |
| Gravesham | 2,092 |
| Thanet | 2,070 |
| Thurrock | 2,069 |
| Worcester | 2,060 |
| York | 2,044 |
| Cheltenham | 2,042 |
| Chester | 2,035 |
| Derwentside | 2,023 |
| Gloucester | 2.020 |
| Mid Suffolk | 2,015 |

| *Local authority* | *£'000* |
|---|---|
| The Wrekin | 1,990 |
| Basildon | 1,988 |
| South Somerset | 1,967 |
| Carlisle | 1,957 |
| Slough | 1,956 |
| Chelmsford | 1,955 |
| Eastleigh | 1,954 |
| Elmbridge | 1,945 |
| Windsor and Maidenhead | 1,944 |
| Guildford | 1,941 |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 1,937 |
| Amber Valley | 1,933 |
| Cherwell | 1,929 |
| Mansfield | 1,924 |
| Halton | 1,916 |
| Braintree | 1,888 |
| East Hertfordshire | 1,881 |
| High Peak | 1,877 |
| Charnwood | 1,876 |
| North Norfolk | 1,875 |
| Medina | 1,870 |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 1,863 |
| Erewash | 1,855 |
| Stevenage | 1,844 |
| Shepway | 1,844 |
| Teignbridge | 1,839 |
| East Lindsey | 1,812 |
| Epping Forest | 1,811 |
| Lichfield | 1,808 |
| Sevenoaks | 1,798 |
| Gillingham | 1,792 |
| Eastbourne | 1,790 |
| Great Yarmouth | 1,790 |
| Wealden | 1,784 |
| Winchester | 1,784 |
| Waverley | 1,784 |
| Durham | 1,784 |
| Woking | 1,781 |
| Reigate and Banstead | 1,780 |
| Chichester | 1,779 |
| St. Albans | 1,777 |
| Crawley | 1,776 |
| Chesterfield | 1,774 |
| Rossendale | 1,774 |
| Broxbourne | 1,769 |
| Tamworth | 1,766 |
| Dartford | 1,755 |
| Rochester upon Medway | 1,754 |
| Barrow-in-Furness | 1,752 |
| Blackpool | 1,746 |
| North East Derbyshire | 1,737 |
| South Oxfordshire | 1,728 |
| Gosport | 1,726 |
| Woodspring | 1,726 |
| Runnymede | 1,720 |
| Forest of Dean | 1,713 |
| Macclesfield | 1,712 |
| Bracknell | 1,710 |
| Crewe and Nantwich | 1,709 |
| North Hertfordshire | 1,706 |
| Milton Keynes | 1,704 |
| Watford | 1,704 |
| Spelthorne | 1,704 |
| Lincoln | 1,697 |
| Hertsmere | 1,696 |
| West Lancashire | 1,685 |
| Shrewsbury and Atcham | 1,644 |
| North Devon | 1,636 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 1,636 |
| Suffolk Coastal | 1,628 |
| Broadlane | 1,624 |
| Darlington | 1,624 |
| Lewes | 1,624 |
| Ashfield | 1,615 |
| Nuneaton and Bedworth | 1,615 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 1,614 |
| Chorley | 1,602 |
| Newark and Sherwood | 1,600 |
| North West Leicestershire | 1,577 |
| Restormel | 1,573 |
| Dacorum | 1,552 |
| Vale of White Horse | 1,552 |
| South Norfolk | 1,549 |
| Stroud | 1,547 |
| Blyth Valley | 1,536 |
| Bath | 1,529 |
| West Oxfordshire | 1,528 |
| Bassetlaw | 1,519 |
| Mendip | 1,513 |
| South Hams | 1,513 |
| South Kesteven | 1,492 |
| Wyre Forest | 1,492 |
| Torbay | 1,491 |
| Kerrier | 1,491 |
| Carrick | 1,490 |
| Copeland | 1,482 |
| South Cambridgeshire | 1,480 |
| Weymouth and Portland | 1,477 |
| Mid Bedfordshire | 1,464 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 1,464 |
| East Hampshire | 1,458 |
| Havant | 1,457 |
| Taunton Deane | 1,436 |
| Penwith | 1,433 |
| Bolsover | 1,424 |
| North Cornwall | 1,416 |
| South Wight | 1,408 |
| Wear Valley | 1,400 |
| Kettering | 1,398 |
| Babergh | 1,395 |
| Harlow | 1,395 |
| Arun | 1,383 |
| Mid Sussex | 1,379 |
| South Lakeland | 1,338 |
| Poole | 1,336 |
| Rushcliffe | 1,327 |
| Broxtowe | 1,322 |
| Sedgemoor | 1,320 |
| Exeter | 1,308 |
| Mole Valley | 1,304 |
| Worthing | 1,304 |
| Caradon | 1,300 |
| Vale Royal | 1,295 |
| West Wiltshire | 1,284 |
| Tewkesbury | 1,278 |
| North Wiltshire | 1,276 |
| Salisbury | 1,273 |
| Solihull | 1,266 |
| Adur | 1,263 |
| Scunthorpe | 1,255 |
| Wansbeck | 1,248 |
| Harrogate | 1,247 |
| Castle Morpeth | 1,240 |
| South Ribble | 1,236 |
| Torridge | 1,230 |
| Rochford | 1,229 |
| St. Edmundsbury | 1,218 |
| Northavon | 1,216 |
| Stratford-on-Avon | 1,206 |
| Mid Devon | 1,197 |
| Fareham | 1,184 |
| Rother | 1,180 |
| Gedling | 1,176 |
| Stafford | 1,176 |
| West Derbyshire | 1,161 |
| Kennet | 1,159 |
| Warwick | 1,153 |
| West Dorset | 1,152 |
| Wokingham | 1,150 |
| Kingswood | 1,139 |
| Wychavon | 1,139 |
| Fenland | 1,137 |
| South Bucks | 1,131 |
| North Kesteven | 1,130 |

| *Local authority* | *£'000* |
|---|---|
| South Derbyshire | 1,129 |
| Cannock Chase | 1,127 |
| Uttlesford | 1,126 |
| Hinckley and Bosworth | 1,104 |
| West Lindsey | 1,096 |
| East Devon | 1,085 |
| Cotswold | 1,070 |
| South Staffordshire | 1,067 |
| Staffordshire Moorlands | 1,057 |
| East Cambridgeshire | 1,052 |
| Alnwick | 1,048 |
| Three Rivers | 1,048 |
| Tandridge | 1,019 |
| Scarborough | 1,016 |
| Hart | 1,015 |
| Surrey Heath | 1,012 |
| South Holland | 1,010 |
| Selby | 980 |
| South Bedfordshire | 977 |
| Wyre | 948 |
| South Herefordshire | 942 |
| Hereford | 936 |
| Beverley | 929 |
| Leominster | 926 |
| Wellingborough | 917 |
| Redditch | 914 |
| Fylde | 908 |
| Wimborne | 900 |
| Chiltern | 897 |
| West Devon | 896 |
| East Northamptonshire | 882 |
| Epsom and Ewell | 880 |
| Tynedale | 860 |
| Harborough | 860 |
| Wansdyke | 845 |
| East Yorkshire | 833 |
| Chester-le-Street | 832 |
| Corby | 817 |
| Berwick-upon-Tweed | 808 |
| Cleethorpes | 803 |
| Congleton | 780 |
| Boston | 762 |
| Glanford | 756 |
| West Somerset | 744 |
| Daventry | 738 |
| Teesdale | 736 |
| Ryedale | 731 |
| Forest Heath | 729 |
| Maldon | 729 |
| North Shropshire | 728 |
| Eden | 727 |
| Boothferry | 726 |
| Purbeck | 720 |
| Melton | 709 |
| Brentwood | 700 |
| Hambleton | 699 |
| South Northamptonshire | 698 |
| Castle Point | 692 |
| Ribble Valley | 686 |
| Ellesmere Port and Neston | 680 |
| North Dorset | 678 |
| Oswestry | 678 |
| South Shropshire | 663 |
| Bromsgrove | 637 |
| Craven | 604 |
| Christchurch | 598 |
| Oadby and Wigston | 580 |
| Bridgnorth | 578 |
| Blaby | 540 |
| Holderness | 509 |
| Richmondshire | 497 |
| North Warwickshire | 486 |
| Rutland | 470 |
| City of London | 334 |
| Isles of Scilly | 165 |

### Assured Tenancies

**Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he plans to alter the prescribed expenditure amounts in respect of improved dwellings to be let under assured tenancies.

**Mr. John Patten:** An order will shortly be made altering the minimum levels of expenditure which must have been incurred on an existing dwelling before it can be let under an assured tenancy. These will be set at £7,000 in Greater London and £5,000 elsewhere in England and Wales. This will replace the existing thresholds of £5,000 in Greater London and £4,000 elsewhere, which were set out in the Assured Tenancies (Prescribed Amount) Order 1986.

### Rating (Rural Communities)

**Mr. Aspinwall** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will seek powers to institute a differential rating scheme for small shops and post offices in rural communities; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope** [*pursuant to his reply,* 19 January 1987, c. *369*]: No. But the revaluation of non domestic properties, which is intended to come into effect from 1990, should ensure that these valuable local amenities then have rateable values which reflect up-to-date rental values.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Telephone Logging

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Lord Privy Seal, pursuant to the answer of 23 January, for what reason the Serjeant at Arms' Department requested printouts from telephone logging equipment on 17 October and 19 November; and to whom the printouts were made available.

**Mr. Biffen:** The printout provided from the telephone logging equipment on 17 October was requested for system management purposes to monitor the use of Palace of Westminster telephone extensions in public places.

The printout provided on 19 November was requested to enable the use of the telephone booths under the staircase leading from the Lower Waiting Hall to the Centre Curtain to be monitored. This was in order to establish the use made of these telephones in the context of an accommodation matter which was being discussed by the Catering and the Accommodation and Administration Sub-Committees of the Services Committee.

In both the above cases the printouts contained information on telephone extensions in public places only. They were made available only to the Serjeant at Arms' office and were destroyed after use.

### Ministerial Telephone Numbers

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will arrange for the compilation of a special up-to-date edition of the ministerial section of the House of Commons telephone directory; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Higgins** asked the Lord Privy Seal, pursuant to his answer of 20 January to the right hon. Member for Worthing, *Official Report,* column *467,* if he will print the pages of the Palace of Westminster telephone directory covering Ministers in both Houses' telephone numbers.

**Mr. Biffen:** I refer to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 26 January 1987, at column 17, in which it is confirmed that new sections of the Palace of Westminster directory will be available in approximately two weeks' time.

## ENERGY

### Solar Energy

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on current research into solar energy utilisation and investment in solar energy.

**Mr. David Hunt:** My Department is supporting a comprehensive research and development programme aimed at providing detailed advice on passive solar design for both domestic and non-domestic buildings in the United Kingdom. The programme has already established that considerable reductions in energy consumption can be achieved by utilising passive solar features in both new and existing houses in the United Kingdom.

An expanded programme is now under way, with expenditure expected to increase from £500,000 in 1985-86 to £2·5 million a year by 1988-89. A number of United Kingdom companies are collaborating with my Department in this work and are making substantial investments in both the research and development and product development. This expanded programme has four main elements:

—dissemination of research and development results including evaluation of new techniques to improve technical transfer.

—a broadly based programme of design studies.

—a series of proving trials and demonstrations of passive solar design.

—a continuing programme of assessment studies and generic development work to support these activities.

The Department's renewables R and D programme has also examined both active solar water heating and photovoltaics but despite substantial R and D work, particularly on active solar systems these were proved to be convincingly uneconomic for United Kingdom conditions. A number of United Kingdom companies have however invested in these solar energy technologies with a view to their export potential. Copies of the final report on the Department's active solar programme are in the Libraries of the House.

### North Sea (Pollution)

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what percentage of the results of monitoring of waste discharged from oil production and drilling platforms under the United Kingdom jurisdiction reported to Her Majesty's Government in 1984-85 and 1985-86 contained more than 40 mg of oil per litre as a monthly average.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** The target standard of 40 mg of oil per litre of water, as a monthly average, applies to water discharged offshore after separation from the produced oil. In 1984, 1985 and 1986 the percentage of reports recording discharges which exceed 40 mg per litre of oil in water on a monthly average were 24 per cent., 25 per cent. and 22 per cent. respectively.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many offshore installations are within his jurisdiction in the North sea; and how many have informed him that they have appointed an offshore installations manager.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** There are 317 offshore installations registered in the register of offshore installations kept in accordance with the Offshore Installations (Registration) Regulations 1972 (S.I. 1972/707).

The number of installations within the Secretary of State's jurisdiction varies since some of them are mobile and operate, from time to time, outside controlled waters. For the period 14 January 1987 to 21 January 1987 the total number of offshore installations within his jurisdiction was 163 (95 fixed and 68 mobile).

The owner of each offshore installation which is in controlled waters is required, by section 4 of the Mineral Workings (Offshore Installations) Act 1971, to appoint a manager to the installation and to inform the Secretary of State of the appointment. All owners have done so.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many inspectors are employed to ensure compliance with regulations for the prevention and reduction of oil pollution at present; and if he will give details of the last five years of any fluctuations in the number of personnel so employed.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** There are at present two inspectors employed by my Department to ensure compliance with regulations for the prevention and reduction of oil pollution.

From January 1982 to June 1982 there were two inspectors, from June 1982 to April 1983 one, from April 1983 to October 1985 two, and from October 1985 to January 1986 one.

### Nuclear Accidents (Compensation)

**Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what arrangements exist to compensate those who suffer loss as a result of an accident in any nuclear reactor; and what is the extent of that compensation.

**Mr. Goodlad:** The Nuclear Installations Act 1965 (as amended) makes the operator of a nuclear installation liable to pay compensation up to specified limits (usually £20 million) in respect of injury or damage arising from a nuclear accident. The operator must provide financial security, by insurance or otherwise, to meet such claims. Claims in excess of the operator's liability and up to the sterling equivalent of 300 million SDR (currently about £250 million) would be met from public funds. Beyond that, the Act provides that claims shall be satisfied to such extent and out of funds provided by such means as Parliament may determine.

### Nuclear Materials

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Livingston (Mr. Cook) of 17 July 1986, *Official Report*, column *567*, if he will estimate the cost of provision of the information on nuclear materials which he states could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I have nothing to add to my previous answer.

### Nuclear Accidents

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, East, (Mr. Strang) on 10 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *196*, if he will now make it his policy to publish all papers connected with emergency plans for nuclear installations.

**Mr. Goodlad:** No. However, the detailed emergency plans for each civil nuclear site have been, or are about to be, published by the operators.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to his reply of 12 December 1986 to the hon. Member for Yeovil, (Mr. Ashdown) *Official Report*, columns *245-246*, if he will list those areas of information on civil plutonium arising from Magnox reactors on which it is current policy not to provide information on grounds of *(a)* commercial confidentiality and *(b)* national security.

**Mr. Goodlad:** The reprocessing and storage of spent nuclear fuel from Magnox reactors is subject to contractual agreements between commercial partners. In common with the practice in other areas of business, confidential information arising under such agreements is not disclosed without the agreement of the partners.

Information is not provided on national security grounds where to do so would permit inferences to be drawn about classified information on, for example, non-civil operations. In this connection, I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 28 January 1987.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy why he will not place in the Library copies of the account records on the accident at Sellafield on 23 January 1986 to which he referred in his reply to the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy of 23 July 1986, *Official Report*, column *283*.

**Mr. Goodlad:** A detailed analysis of the incident in question was published in the Health and Safety Executive's safety audit of BNFL Sellafield 1986, volume 2, a copy of which is in the Library of the House. As I said in my reply to the hon. Member on 18 December 1986, at column 620, the nuclear installations inspectorate has access to any information relevant to nuclear safety. However, detailed information on reprocessing operations is not made publicly available for reasons of commercial sensitivity and national security.

## Companies (Annual Reports)

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy how many limited companies make annual reports to his Department; and if he will list them.

**Mr. Buchanan-Smith:** As a shareholder my right hon. Friend currently receives the annual reports of Amersham International Ltd., British Gas plc, British Nuclear Fuels plc, and UK NIREX Ltd.

Under an accounts direction given by my right hon. Friend to British Coal he receives the annual reports of NCB (Ancillaries) Ltd. and Coal Products Ltd.

## Coal-fired Power Stations

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether there are any currently active consents in force for the development of coal-fired power stations in Wales and England.

**Mr. Goodlad:** Consent under section 2 of the Electric Lighting Act 1909, as amended, was given in 1973 for a 2,000 MW coal-fired power station at West Burton B. This station has not been built and the associated planning permission has since lapsed.

## Hartlepool Nuclear Power Station

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) if, in relation to Hartlepool nuclear power station, his Department will conduct an inquiry into *(a)* measures to ensure that in the event of an accident in severe weather conditions, emergency service personnel do not spend sufficient time within the disaster area to receive a fatal radiation dose and *(b)* the effects of such weather conditions on the mobility of fire engines; and if he will make a statement on the adequacy of current arrangements for a nuclear accident;

(2) what assessment has been made as to whether, under severe weather conditions, the emergency plan for Hartlepool nuclear power station could be successfully extended beyond the immediate area for which a detailed plan exists in the event of a worst case reactor accident; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** In view of the numerous protective measures and safeguards embodied in the design, construction and operation of nuclear plant in the United Kingdom the likelihood of an accident of such severity that significant doses of radiation would be received by any onsite personnel is extremely remote.

It is for the relevant emergency services themselves to ensure their capability for responding to any civil contingency within the added difficulties which severe weather conditions would impose.

## Radioactive Waste

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy, pursuant to the replies to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) of 2 May 1986, *Official Report*, columns *502-503*, and to the hon. Member for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) of 12 January, *Official Report*, column *505*, if he will now make it his policy to inform the Governments of Italy and Japan that despite there being no contractual agreement at present it is intended that all of the low-level radioactive waste arising *(a)* from imported spent Magnox fuel from the Italian Latina reactor and the Japanese Tokai Mura reactor and *(b)* indirectly from contaminated material arising from the reprocessing of this spent Magnox fuel at Sellafield, will be returned in full to the respective countries for disposal.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I have nothing to add to my previous answers on this subject.

# TRADE AND INDUSTRY

## Power Stations

**Mr. Allen Adams** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the country's capacity to produce any kind of power station exclusively in the United Kingdom

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The United Kingdom power generation equipment industry has a comprehensive manufacturing capability which has in the past been able to meet the electricity supply industry's requirements for power stations and will, I am sure, continue to do so in the future.

### Manufactured Goods

**Mr. Welsh** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he will make a statement on the balance of payments in relation to manufactured goods.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** The balance of trade in manufactures was in deficit by £5·9 billion in 1986.

### Gerald Ronson (Share Dealing)

**Mr. Robin Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what reports he received in 1985 or 1986 recommending an inquiry into share-dealing by Gerald Ronson or his companies.

**Mr. Howard:** My right hon. Friend does not disclose individuals or companies mentioned in reports of this nature unless he decides to appoint inspectors under sections 432, 442 or 446 of the Companies Act (in which case their report will normally be published); or unless criminal proceedings are instituted.

### Palestinian Produce

**Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the volume of Palestinian produce that has left the West Bank and Gaza for Europe subsequent to the recent concession; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Council regulation (EEC) No. 3363/86 of 27 October 1986 on the tariff arrangements applicable to imports into the Community of products originating in the occupied territories entered into force on 16 November 1986. Information on subsequent trade is not available.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to introduce amending legislation to *(a)* legislation introduced since June 1979 because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Butcher** [*pursuant to his reply,* 26 January 1987, c. *82*]: Of approximately 60 public Acts and 1,100 statutory instruments within the field of responsibility of my Department and its predecessors which have been passed or have come into effect since June 1979, I am aware of only four items of legislation which may be considered to fall within the terms of the hon. Member's question. The details are as follows.

As a result of the judgment of the European Court of Justice in case 207/83 (Commission v. United Kingdom), when the Commission of the European Communities successfully challenged the United Kingdom Trade Descriptions (Origin Marking) (Miscellaneous Goods) Order 1981 (S.I. 1981/121) on the grounds that it had equivalent effect to a quantitative restriction on imports contrary to article 30 of the treaty of Rome, that order was revoked on 8 March 1986. Also, in the light of a reasoned opinion of the Commission to the effect that maintenance in force of the Trade Descriptions Act 1972 (which imposes requirements as to origin marking for certain categories of goods) is a breach of article 30, the Government by what is now clause 48(2)(a) of the Consumer Protection Bill intends to provide for the repeal of that Act.

Secondly, the Insurance Companies (Advertisements) (Amendment) Regulations 1983 (S.I. 1983/48) contained a defective and inoperable definition of the advertisements to which the Regulations were to apply. This was drawn to my Department's attention by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments. The regulations were therefore revoked (without ever coming into effect) on 12 April 1983 by the Insurance Companies (Advertisements) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1983 (S.I. 1983/396), and replaced by new provisions which came into force on 1 May 1983.

Lastly, the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments reported in February 1986 (eleventh report, Session 1985-86) that there was doubt about the *vires* of the Consumer Credit (Exempt Agreements) (No. 2) (Amendment No. 2) Order 1985 (S.I. 1985/1918). As a result of that report, the enabling powers in section 16(1) of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 were amended by section 22 of the Housing and Planning Act 1986.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Project Zircon

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General on what date he asked the Metropolitan police to carry out an investigation into matters arising from information given to Mr. Duncan Campbell about project Zircon; and what precise lines of inquiry he suggested to the police.

**The Attorney-General:** On Friday 23 January 1987 the Director of Public Prosecutions, at the request of the Attorney-General, asked the Metropolitan police to investigate possible breaches of the Official Secrets Act 1911 arising out of the publication in the *New Statesman* magazine of a report entitled "The Parliamentary bypass operation". It is the policy of both the Attorney-General and the Director of Public Prosecutions not to give details of advice provided to police about the conduct of current investigations.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Local Authority Expenditure

**Mr. Radice** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what has been the total level of local authority expenditure on education in each year since 1978-79 in 1986-87 prices.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** The table shows actual outturn expenditure (both current and capital) by local education authorities in England from 1978-79 to 1984-85, provisional outturn for 1985-86, and estimated outturn for 1986-87. The figures have been revalued to 1986-87 prices using the GDP (market prices) deflator.

| *Financial Years* | *£ million at 1986-87 prices* |
|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 12,872 |
| 1979-80 | 12,563 |
| 1980-81 | 12,885 |
| 1981-82 | 12,791 |
| 1982-83 | 12,706 |
| 1983-84 | 12,820 |
| 1984-85 | 12,766 |
| 1985-86 | 12,472 |
| 1986-87 | 13,479 |

### Departmental Expenditure

**Mr. Radice** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what has been the total level of his Department's expenditure in each year since 1978-79 in 1986-87 prices.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** The table shows actual outturn expenditure by the Department of Education and Science from 1978-79 to 1985-86 and estimated outturn for 1986-87. The figures have been revalued to 1986-87 prices using the GDP (market prices) deflator.

| *Financial Years* | *£ million at 1986-87 prices* |
|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 2,194 |
| 1979-80 | 2,309 |
| 1980-81 | 2,391 |
| 1981-82 | 2,314 |
| 1982-83 | 2,463 |
| 1983-84 | 2,475 |
| 1984-85 | 2,466 |
| 1985-86 | 2,441 |
| 1986-87 | 2,474 |

### School Closures

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list the number of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools which were closed in January in each of Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Norfolk and Lincolnshire; and how many school days were lost in each sector in each of the listed counties.

**Mr. Dunn:** This information is not collected centrally.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### West Winds Primary School

**Mr. John David Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the permanent toilets in West Winds primary school, Newtownards became inoperative; how many days this school has been closed due to lack of toilet facilities; whether a report has been received about the subsidence of the grounds in the school precincts; whether the foul sewage system at the school has been fractured; when a permanent toilet facility will be restored at the school; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr. Mawhinney:** The permanent toilets became inoperative on 6 October 1986. The school has been closed for seven days in all—five days in October 1986 and two in January 1987. A consultant's report on the subsidence was received by the South-Eastern education and library board on 15 January 1987. Some of the connections to the main drains at the school site have been fractured. A precise date for the restoration of the permanent toilet facility cannot be given at present, but the board is urgently drawing up a schedule of works with a view to determining what remedial action can be taken. In the meantime 20 per cent. of the permanent toilet block has been restored to use and the board has made additional provision in the form of temporary toilets to ensure that sufficient facilities are available for the staff and pupils.

### Local Councils (Powers)

**Sir Philip Goodhart** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what additional powers have been given to local councils in Northern Ireland since may 1979.

**Mr. Needham:** Since May 1979 district councils in Northern Ireland have been given the additional powers described in column 1 of the table and contained in legislation listed in column 2.

|  | *Column 1* | *Column 2* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Control over the use of certain building materials | Building Regulations (1970 Order) (Commencement No. 1) Order (Northern Ireland) 1979 |
| 2. | Control over the use of premises for the purposes of a food business | The control of Food Premises (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 |
| 3. | Preparation and revision of waste disposal plans | Pollution Control and Local Government (Northern Ireland) (1978 Order) (Commencement No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 1980 |
| 4. | Granting of waste disposal licences |  |
| 5. | Control of disposal of hazardous waste |  |
| 6. | Provision for waste reclamation |  |
| 7. | Production and disposal of heat and electricity from waste |  |
| 8. | Research and publicity about atmospheric pollution |  |
| 9. | Control of movement and disposal of hazardous waste | Pollution Control (Special Waste) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1981 |
| 10. | Development of certain industrial estates (Belfast City council only) | Local Government Planning and Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 |
| 11. | Empowered to charge fees for building control functions | Building (Prescribed Fees) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982 |
| 12. | Enforcement of European Community provisions on the water content of frozen poultry | The Poultry Meat (Water Content) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1982 |
| 13. | Control of dogs | Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 |

| | Column 1 | Column 2 |
|---|---|---|
| 14. | Protection of public rights-of-way, creation of new public paths and long-distance routes and securing public access to areas of open country for recreational purposes | The Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 |
| 15. | Enforcement of European Community provisions on the exploitation and selling of natural mineral waters | The natural Mineral Waters Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1985 |
| 16. | Provision of nature reserves | Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 |
| 17. | Issue of amusement permits to provide gaming by means of amusement-with-prizes gaming machines | The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 |
| 18. | Extension of entertainment licensing powers | The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 |
| 19. | Licensing of sex establishments | |
| 20. | Making of closing orders with respect to premises supplying meals or refreshments | |
| 21. | Control of encampments of travelling people | |
| 22. | Control of acupuncture, tattooing, ear-piercing and electrolysis | |
| 23. | Provision of crematoria | |
| 24. | Removal of graffiti | |
| 25. | Power to sell advertising space on council property | |
| 26. | Power to sell surplus computer capacity | |
| 27. | Erection of bus shelters | |
| 28. | Determination of registration fees for sellers of poisons under the Poisons (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 | |
| 29. | Ancillary powers | |

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Hong Kong

**Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many former senior civil servants in Hong Kong, in receipt of Government pensions have taken employment in the private sector *(a)* in Hong Kong, or *(b)* elsewhere with companies involved in commerce with Hong Kong in each of the last 10 years; and what advice is given in this subject to retiring Hong Kong senior civil servants.

**Mr. Renton:** Former Hong Kong civil servants in receipt of Government pensions are required under section 16 of the Hong Kong pensions ordinance to seek prior approval from the governor before taking up post-retirement employment or business, if the principal part of the employment or business is in Hong Kong. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the cessation of their pensions.

The general criteria for considering such applications are that the officer should not have unfair advantage over competitors, or be in a position either to use official information improperly or to exert influence over his former department. Retiring officers are advised of these criteria which are stipulated in the Hong Kong Civil Service Regulations.

The records available show that in the last 10 years the numbers of approved applications in respect of former senior officers (branch secretaries and heads of departments) wishing to accept post-retirement employment while on pension were:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1976-77 | 2 |
| 1977-78 | 3 |
| 1978-79 | — |
| 1979-80 | 2 |
| 1980-81 | 1 |
| 1981-82 | 2 |
| 1982-83 | 1 |
| 1983-84 | — |
| 1984-85 | 3 |
| 1985-86 | 5 |

### Test Ban Treaty

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the reply of 20 January by the hon. Member for Mid-Sussex (Mr. Renton) *Official Report,* column 524, whether, on his visit to Moscow, in addition to the emphasis on the importance of verification in arms control, his hon. Friend also exchanged views on the detailed outstanding problems that hold up the verification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

**Mr. Renton:** The main focus of my talks on arms control in Moscow was the prospects for reductions in nuclear weapons and for strategic defences.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have made available to the appropriate technical authorities within the United States Government their current views on outstanding problems of verification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

**Mr. Renton:** We are in regular contact with the United States authorities on the full range of nuclear testing issues.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what detailed information he has on the joint plans of the Australian and Swedish Governments to set up a network of seismic stations to monitor compliance with a verifiable comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

**Mr. Renton:** We are aware only of a press report on this subject.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his Department has to prepare any new technical policy papers on new developments in verification measures for the ad hoc group of scientific experts on nuclear test ban verification which meets in March under the auspices of the United Nations conference on disarmament.

**Mr. Renton:** The value of producing a further paper is kept under review. But so far there has been only one technical paper directly responding to the United Kingdom's paper CD/610 of July 1985. Meanwhile we look forward to participating fully in the work of the ad hoc group of scientific experts in Geneva.

### Five Continents Peace Initiative

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the reply of 20 January by the hon. Member for Meirionnydd Nant Conwy, *Official Report*, column 524, on the five continents peace initiative, whether Her Majesty's Government have formally replied to messages from the President and Foreign Minister of Mexico.

**Mr. Renton:** Yes.

### Project Zircon

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Answer of 26 January if he will now specify the precise dates on which *(a)* investigations were first initiated to identify the source or sources of information given to Mr. Duncan Campbell about Project Zircon and *(b)* these investigations were intensified.

**Mr. Renton:** Initial inquiries were begun by GCHQ in the summer when the Government first became aware of the BBC's plans for one or more programmes. More detailed investigations were initiated by GCHQ in the week beginning 6 October, when the intention to include specific material on a secret defence project in the BBC series "The Secret Society" became known. These investigations were intensified as further details became available about what information Mr. Campbell might have obtained, and in particular in the week beginning 19 January. Since the police investigation began, GCHQ has handed over responsibility to them and is providing them with full assistance.

### Nigeria

**Mr. Sheerman** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps Her Majesty's Govenment are taking to bring pressure to bear on the Nigerian Government in order that they cease to delay the repatriation of funds by British companies to the United Kingdom.

**Mrs. Chalker:** Even in normal circumstances, the procedures for foreign companies to repatriate funds from Nigeria can take time to complete owing to stringent Nigerian exchange control regulations. But where undue delays arise, we are prepared to make representations to the Nigerian authorities on behalf of British companies. This was one of the subjects which I raised with Nigerian Ministers during my recent visit to Lagos.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### West Germany

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will publish in the *Official Report* (i) a table showing a total trade in food, drink and tobacco between the United Kingdom and West Germany in the latest period of 12 months for which figures are available and (ii) a table showing trade with West Germany in common agricultural policy products.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Information on total trade in food, drink and tobacco between the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany is given in the following table. It would involve disproportionate cost to extract the data required for the many commodities covered by the common agricultural policy.

*Total trade in food, drink and tobacco between the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany—December 1985 to November 1986*

| *Commodity* | *United Kingdom Imports* | | *United Kingdom Exports* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Tonnes* | *£ '000* | *Tonnes* | *£ '000* |
| Food[1] | 598,090 | 426,214 | 1,273,340 | 405,446 |
| Drink | 251,572 | 166,512 | 24,060 | 44,093 |
| Tobacco[2] | 13,668 | 61,269 | 1,154 | 9,901 |

[1] Includes live animals for food and feedingstuffs.

[2] Includes cigars, cigarettes and other manufactured tobacco.

Source—HM Customs and Excise Overseas Trade Statistics.

### EC (Food Surplus)

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what has been the financial cost to Britain for maintaining EEC food surpluses in the last three years.

**Mr. Jopling:** The United Kingdom contributes to the EC budget as a whole (rather than to specific schemes) at approximately 20 per cent., abated by the Fontainebleau mechanism. Community expenditure on public intervention storage has been:

| | *MECU* |
|---|---|
| 1984 | 1,056 |
| 1985 | 1,342 |
| 1986 | 1,424 |

The cost of storing products in public intervention in the United Kingdom, not including financing costs, and related receipts from the EAGGF, is:

*(£ million)*

| | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* |
|---|---|---|---|
| IBAP expenditure | 58 | 125 | 129 |
| Receipts from EAGGF (including notional financing costs) | 82 | 157 | 221 |

*Sources:*

EC expenditure: 1984-85 EC Commission Financial Reports, 1986 Budget

Storage in United Kingdom: Supply Estimates and outturn figures.

### Battery Hen Cages

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why an action is being taken against the European Council in the European Court, case 131/86, as regards Directive 86/133/EEC on battery hen cages.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The Government are taking this action against the Council of Ministers because it considers that the directive was not adopted on the correct legal base in the treaty of Rome and in view of procedural irregularities in its adoption. The case has nothing to do with the animal welfare merits of the directive.

### Milk Quotas

**Mr. Speller** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action will be taken to deal with the knock-on effect of milk quotas on the beef market.

**Mr. Jopling:** In taking decisions on milk in December the Agriculture Council acknowledged that the consequences for the beef sector were likely to be significant. The decisions on beef as a whole were reached with this in mind and in particular the Commission has allocated a sum of 435 mecu (£290 million) to meet extra beef market management costs which might arise. In the United Kingdom, the retention of the beef variable premium, the green pound devaluation, and the harmonisation of steer and young bull intervention buying-in prices will do much to encourage stable market conditions. We shall, of course, continue to monitor the situation carefully.

### Green Pound

**Mr. Speller** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will seek to negotiate a further devaluation of the green pound; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jopling:** The level of the green pound is kept under review. The recent devaluations for beef and sheepmeat show that we do not hesitate to act when necessary. It is too early to predict what further action may be appropriate at the price fixing.

### Suckler Cow Premium

**Mr. Speller** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will seek a further substantial increase in the suckler cow premium; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jopling:** The maximum rate for the suckler cow subsidy was considered in the course of the discussions on beef support arrangements in the Agriculture Council which concluded on 16 December, 1986. The United Kingdom pressed for a substanital increase, and the Council's agreement included a 10 ecu increase in Community funding for the suckler cow premium. The current rate of suckler cow premium in the United Kingdom is £24·74. Following the December agreement it would be possible to raise this by 35 per cent. to £33·40 in 1987-88. I hope to announce shortly the actual rate which will be paid.

### New Zealand (Import Quota)

**Mr. Speller** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will seek to negotiate a substantial reduction in the import quota for lamb and dairy products from New Zealand; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jopling:** No. Imports of butter at reduced levy from New Zealand now stand at 76,500 tonnes, less than half of their level in 1973 when the United Kingdom joined the Community. This figure compares with surplus butter stocks in the Community of 1·3 million tonnes.

New Zealand has voluntarily restricted its sendings of lamb to the Community to levels which reflect traditional levels.

### Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance

**Mr. Speller** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food why hill livestock compensatory allowance payments have not been increased for the current year; if he will now index these scales for inflation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jopling:** I explained in the written reply I gave to my hon. Friend on 17 December 1986, at column *598*, why we decided that the rates of hill livestock compensatory allowances would not be increased for 1987. Many factors are taken into account in our annual autumn review of economic conditions in the hills and uplands, in the light of which we determine the level of HLCA rates, and it would be inappropriate simply to take account of movements in the inflation indices. This Government's commitment to the hill livestock sector is well illustrated by the fact that HLCA payments in this country have almost doubled since 1979.

### Food Aid

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what organisations have been recognised for the purpose of the food aid from European Community intervention stocks; what arrangements have been made for the distribution to individual elderly and needy people in their own homes; and what is the estimated value of food to be distributed in the United Kingdom, the cost of distribution and the extent and duration of the scheme.

**Mr. Janner** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what method is being used to allocate European Economic Community food charity.

**Mr. Jopling:** The relevant Community legislation provides for distribution of certain foods to the most needy through charitable organisations. In the United Kingdom the following organisations have agreed to co-operate:

Age Concern.
British Red Cross Society.
Church Army.
Help the Aged.
National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations.
Royal Association of Disability and Rehabilitation.
Royal British Legion.
Salvation Army.
Social and Pastoral Action (RC Diocese of Westminster).
Catholic Bishops' Conference, England and Wales.
Women's Royal Voluntary Service.
Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility.
National Catholic Social Care Commission.
Society of St. Vincent de Paul (Belfast).
Bryson House (Belfast).

These organisations are themselves arranging distribution to the most needy, whether in their own homes or at other locations. The arrangements will last until the end of March 1987. I am not in a position to estimate the value of the food to be distributed or the total cost of distribution until the likely uptake by charitable organisations becomes clear.

### Oslo Convention

**Mr. Gregory** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he is satisfied with the protection afforded to the marine environment of the north-east Atlantic and North sea by the Oslo convention; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** The Oslo convention, which the United Kingdom joined as a founder member in 1972, continues to provide an invaluable and highly effective international framework, underpinned by expert scientific advice, on which its members can base their policies for the protection of the marine environment from the harm that might otherwise be caused by the unregulated dumping of waste. We set great store by the commission set up by the convention, in which we continue to play an active part, and give effect to its recommendations by means of the licensing system operated under part II of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. However, the convention does not at present extend to dumping activities carried out in the internal waters of its members, that is, maritime waters to landward of their base lines. Nor is it covered by other international agreements. Such activities are liable to affect the marine environment adversely unless they are closely regulated, as they are in the United Kingdom. The Government have therefore taken the lead in seeking the agreement of our partners that the convention should be extended to cover internal waters. Legal experts from the convention countries met on 7 and 8 January to prepare proposals for the extension of the scope of the convention in this respect which will be considered by the Oslo commission at its next session in Cardiff in June.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Perthshire

Q122. **Mr. Bill Walker** asked the Prime Minister if she has any plans to visit Perthshire.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### Engagements

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 29 January.

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 29 January.

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 29 January.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 29 January.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I attended a presentation about the Government's programme for action for jobs. I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

### Moscow (Visit)

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Prime Minister whether she has any plans to raise specific outstanding problems of verification of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty during her visit to Moscow in the spring.

**The Prime Minister:** I look forward to discussing a wide range of issues, including arms control subjects.

### Diplomatic Missions (Electronic Surveillance)

**Mr. Madden** asked the Prime Minister if she will refer to the Security Commission the matter of the policy of Her Majesty's Government on conducting electronic surveillance on the diplomatic missions in London of European Community states.

**The Prime Minister:** In accordance with long-established practice, I am not prepared to comment on intelligence matters.

### Republic of Ireland (Embassy)

**Mr. Madden** asked the Prime Minister what representations Her Majesty's Government have received from the Government of the Republic of Ireland about the facilities and conditions of the Irish embassy in London.

**The Prime Minister:** The only recent representation received was a letter from the Irish ambassador in July 1986 about the embassy's parking facilities.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Metropolitan Police

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Metropolitan police have considered adopting the local authority management information system; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the Metropolitan police have a computerised financial information system which is due for replacement in the 1990s. It is too early to say which system would best suit the needs of the force when the time for replacement becomes due.

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how he exercises budgetary control over the Metropolitan police; how he ensures that the objectives and priorities agreed with the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis are implemented most cost-effectively; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will make a statement on the procedures and criteria used in fixing the cash limit for the Metropolitan police.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Descriptions of the responsibilities for planning and controlling Metropolitan police resources and the rules and procedures which govern expenditure at all levels are contained in the finance and manpower code. A copy of the code is in the Library.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list those occasions since 1984 when the Metropolitan police have received assistance from other police forces *(a)* within the United Kingdom and *(b)* outside the United Kingdom;

(2) if he will list the occasions since 1984 when the Metropolitan police have seconded or otherwise provided officers to assist other police forces *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* outside the United Kingdom;

(3) if he will list those occasions since 1984 when the Metropolitan police have provided mutual aid to other police forces in the United Kingdom; stating the numbers and ranks of officers involved and the reason given for each occasion, naming the aided force.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I shall reply as soon as possible.

### Parkhurst Prison (Incidents)

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what incidents of violence between prisoners have occurred at Parkhurst prison since 31 December; if any racial element was involved in any of these incidents; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** Between 1 and 25 January, there were three incidents of violence between prisoners at Parkhurst prison:

1. On 4 January, there was fighting among a group of black inmates, in which no white prisoner was involved.
2. On 6 January, three Israeli and one Turkish prisoners were involved in a fight with a number of other inmates.
3. On 21 January, there was a fight between two white prisoners.

I understand that there is no evidence to suggest that any of these incidents had a racial basis.

### Prisons

**Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce proposals for minimum standards in prisons.

**Mr. Mellor:** No. We do not consider that a code of minimum standards for prisons would contribute to the programme the Government have in hand for improving prison conditions.

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give the ratio of prison officers to prisoners for each of the past five years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The ratio of prison officers to prisoners in England and Wales on 1 January each year was as follows:

| | *Ratio* |
|---|---|
| 1982 | 1 : 2·56 |
| 1983 | 1 : 2·51 |
| 1984 | 1 : 2·41 |
| 1985 | 1 : 2·51 |
| 1986 | 1 : 2·51 |

### Chemical Weapons

**Mr. Roger King** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ensure that training in protection against chemical weapons is given in special courses at the Civil Defence college, Easingwold.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** This subject is already covered in several of the courses available at the college. The college programme is kept under review, but at the present time there are no proposals for change.

### Street Violence (Books)

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to seek to restrict the publication or sale of books teaching the techniques of street violence; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** It is an offence to solicit or incite another to commit a crime, whether or not the solicitation or incitement has any effect. A person who publishes a book inciting the use of violence against people in the streets is thus liable to be charged with a criminal offence. We have no plans to introduce any further form of restriction.

### Community Radio

**Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he now expects to publish the Government Green Paper on community radio.

**Mr. Mellor:** We hope to do so shortly.

### Terrorism

**Mr. Hayward** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will seek the renewal of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hurd:** A draft order was laid on 27 January under section 14(10) of the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act 1984. If the draft order is approved by Parliament, the Act will continue in force for a further 12 months. I have received the report from Lord Colville of Culross on the operation of the Act in 1986, and copies have been placed in the Library. The Act continues to play an important part in our defences against acts of terrorism in this country and I shall study carefully Lord Colville's comments on its operation from this point of view.

### Life Sentences

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are currently serving life sentences in Her Majesty's prisons for a conviction of two or more murders.

**Mr. Mellor:** I shall reply as soon as possible.

### Wapping Dispute

**Mr. Spearing** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will state the number of persons prosecuted by the Metropolitan police in connection with the Wapping dispute where offences were alleged to have taken place *(a)* in the immediate proximity of the plant, *(b)* elsewhere in east London and *(c)* in other locations; and, in respect of *(b)* above, if he will indicate the nature of the charges made.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that up to 27 January 1987 1,337 persons had been charged with offences in connection with the dispute following arrests in the Leman street division. Information about offences committed in other areas of London in connection with the dispute is not centrally available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Racial Incidents (London)

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide figures showing the number of racial incidents in the Metropolitan police district, by borough, for each year since 1983 by offence providing a clear-up rate and number of arrests for each category and for each year.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to his question on 4 December 1986, at columns *711-14*, which set out the available information.

### Female Prisoners

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what facilities are available for those female prisoners who are held in police cells, who would otherwise have been remanded in prison;

(2) if he will list the number of female prisoners held in police cells, in each of the last six months, who would otherwise have been remanded in prison; which police stations they were held in; and for how long.

**Mr. Mellor:** The number of female prisoners held in police cells in England and Wales on each Friday since 1 August was as follows. Full details of where each was held and for how long and of the facilities available at each location are not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. We are conscious that prisoners in police cells do not receive the full range of entitlements that would apply were they in prison custody; nevertheless, the police are doing their best to provide whatever facilities they can under very difficult circumstances.

| *Date* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 31 July-1 August | 62 |
| 7-8 August | 33 |
| 14-15 August | 45 |
| 21-22 August | 38 |
| 28-29 August | 41 |
| 4-5 September | 40 |
| 11-12 September | 39 |
| 18-19 September | 46 |
| 25-26 September | 57 |
| 2-3 October | 55 |
| 9-10 October | 66 |
| 16-17 October | 61 |
| 23-24 October | 72 |
| 30-31 October | 73 |
| 6-7 November | 83 |
| 13-14 November | 70 |
| 20-21 November | 87 |
| 27-28 November | 87 |
| 4-5 December | 93 |
| 11-12 December | 110 |
| 18-19 December | 116 |
| 25-26 December | 59 |
| 1-2 January | 65 |
| 8-9 January | 74 |
| 15-16 January | 107 |
| 22-23 January | 89 |

### Fresh Start Programme

**Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any intention of imposing the fresh start programme upon prison staff; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** My right hon. Friend explained his position fully when he addressed chief officers in the prison service on 23 September last year. A copy of these remarks is being sent to the hon. Member and we are placing another in the Library. We very much hope that the current discussions with the Prison Officers' Association will lead to an agreed basis for the implementation of fresh start, and our officials are continuing to work to this end.

### AIDS

**Mr. Bermingham** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has now issued the Government leaflet on AIDS to all prisoners currently serving a sentence in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; and whether he plans to make available any other advice to prisoners on the dangers and risks of AIDS.

**Mr. Mellor:** The leaflet "AIDS: Don't Die of Ignorance" will be distributed to prison service establishments in England and Wales in the course of the next few days for issue to all prisoners currently on the nominal roll. Governors and medical officers are being asked to continue to make the leaflet and other suitable educational material available to prisoners by displaying copies in the reception area, the prison hospital and other appropriate locations. A prisoner who wishes to receive personal advice may consult the medical officer in confidence.

Practice in Northern Ireland is a matter for my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

### Police Widows

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons are in receipt of the police widows' preserved rate pension in each county of the United Kingdom; what is the average age of the recipients; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when the last increase in benefits was paid to recipients of the police widows' preserved rate pension; what was the value of the increase; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what is the present weekly payment to recipients of the police widows preserved rate pension; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hogg:** The payments vary according to the late husband's rank as follows:

| *Rank* | *Rate per week (£)* |
|---|---|
| Below Inspector | 14·04 |
| Inspector | 18·29 |
| Above Inspector | 21·97 |

In common with all state and public service pensions the rates were last increased by 1·1 per cent. from 28 July 1986. The next increase is due in April.

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional revenue was gained by the police widows' preserved rate pension fund in each of the years since 1982 when the contribution from male police officers was increased from 7 per cent. to 11 per cent.; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** There is no such fund either for the preserved rate widows or for the police service generally. The net costs of the police pension scheme—estimated in 1985-86 at £186 million for England and Wales—are met from general rate fund revenue.

### Customs Clearance (Dundee)

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what provision exists for immigration control and customs clearance for individuals arriving aboard ship at Dundee and subsequently leaving their ship;

(2) if he will make a statement on the discovery of four people who arrived by ship at Dundee on or about 20 January and came ashore without immigration control or customs clearance.

**Mr. Waddington:** I will shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Prisoners (Blood Tests)

**Mr. Bermingham** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any prisoners on remand or sentenced are required to submit to blood tests during the course of a medical or other examination.

**Mr. Mellor** [*pursuant to his reply,* 16 January 1987, c. *337*]: Blood tests are carried out only for medical purposes and then only where such a course is clinically indicated and the prisoner gives informed consent. There is no class of case for which the Director of Prison Medical Services has recommended testing as a matter of routine.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Pike** asked the Paymaster General what percentage of those available for work in 1979 in the north-west had been previously employed in manufacturing industries; and what is the latest comparable figure.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The available information from the labour force survey indicates that 42 per cent. of those without a job who were available for work in the north-west region in the spring of 1979 and whose previous industry could be identified had previously left a job in manufacturing industry. The latest labour force survey estimate, for spring 1985 was 30 per cent. although this is not fully comparable.

### European Community

**Mr. Amess** asked the Paymaster General how many European Economic Community nationals are currently employed in Britain; and how many British nationals are employed in other European Economic Community nations.

**Mr. Lee:** It is estimated from the labour force survey that there were 362,000 European Community nationals, excluding United Kingdom nationals, in employment resident in Great Britain in the spring of 1985. The latest readily available estimates from the labour force surveys conducted in other countries of the European Community refer to 1984. It is estimated that at that time about 95,000 United Kingdom nationals were employed in other countries of the European Community.

### Earnings

**Mr. Prescott** asked the Paymaster General if he will publish a table showing the proportion of full-time employees in Great Britain who, in the new earnings survey 1986, are paid less than £50, £60, £70, £80, £90, £100, £110, £120, £130, £150 and £200, respectively, when overtime earnings are excluded, for *(a)* all adults, *(b)* all males and *(c)* all females, and sub-divided into (i) manual and (ii) non-manual males and females.

**Mr. Lee:** The information requested is published in table 39 of part B of the report on the new earnings survey 1986, a copy of which is in the Library. The data relates to full-time adults working a full week whose pay was not affected by absence.

**Mr. Prescott** asked the Paymaster General if he will publish *(a)* the latest estimates of the number of part-time female and male workers and *(b)* the estimated proportion of part-time male workers being paid less than (i) £2·00, (ii) £3·00, (iii) £3·20, and (iv) £3·40 an hour in April 1985 and April 1986.

**Mr. Trippler:** The available information is as follows:

*(a) Numbers of part-time employees*

*Great Britain thousand*

| | *Males* | *Females* |
|---|---|---|
| March 1985 | 792 | 3,899 |
| March 1986 | 819 | 3,866 |
| September 1986 | 868 | 3,973 |

*(b) Percentage of part-time adult male employees earning specified amounts*

*April Great Britain*

| | *1985 Percentage* | *1986 Percentage* |
|---|---|---|
| With earning less than: | | |
| (i) £2·00 per hour | 26 | 17 |
| (ii) £3·00 per hour | 68 | 69 |
| (iii) £3·20 per hour | 71 | 73 |
| (iv) £3·40 per hour | 73 | 75 |

### Power Industry

**Mr. Allen Adams** asked the Paymaster General if, following the announcement on Sizewell B, he will estimate the effect of that decision on jobs in the power industry.

**Mr. Lee:** I will await my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Energy's decision on the development of Sizewell B before making any comment on the matter.

### Enterprise Allowance

**Mr. William Powell** asked how many persons in Northamptonshire are in receipt of the enterprise allowance to the latest convenient date.

**Mr. Trippier:** On 27 January 1987, 538 people were receiving the enterprise allowance in Northamptonshire.

### Greenock (Earnings)

**Dr. Godman** asked the Paymaster General what information he has concerning the number of workers in the Greenock travel-to-work area who now earn less than the Council of Europe's decency threshold.

**Mr. Lee:** Information on earnings is not available for individual travel-to-work areas.

## Scott Lithgow

**Dr. Godman** asked the Paymaster General what discussions his Department has had with the Scott Lithgow company concerning its future plans in the light of the effect on the services provided by his Department of the redundancies now taking place in its Port Glasgow yard; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** Discussions have taken place between the local jobcentre staff and management of Scott Lithgow about the best ways of letting those being made redundant know of the full range of help and assistance available to them through the Government Action for Jobs programme. This includes job placing services, information about jobs available locally and in other districts; advice on a wide range of employment matters and Manpower Services Commission schemes; and advice on and assistance with training and retraining. The Manpower Services Commission has increased training provision and made available special local courses to increase the versatility of those made redundant and to improve their prospects of re-employment. Recruitment to the courses is currently under way.

## Underpayment

**Mr. Janner** asked the Paymaster General what action is being taken to enforce legislation against underpayment.

**Mr. Trippier:** Wages inspectors investigate all complaints and check compliance with the wages orders issued by the wages councils by making routine checks at a proportion of establishments on the wages inspectorate's register each year. Prosecution action is considered in cases where there is evidence of deliberate or repeated underpayment of workers.

## Low Pay

**Mr. Janner** asked the Paymaster General if he has taken steps to monitor the effects of the Wages Act on low pay; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** No. The most significant determinant of low pay is poor economic performance. The Wages Act will improve economic performance by increasing pay flexibility, but it is unlikely that its particular contribution can be identified.

## British Telecom (Dispute)

**Mr. Bendall** asked the Paymaster General if he has received any request from the National Communications Union for public funds for a postal ballot in connection with the current strike of British Telecom engineers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Neither I nor the certification officer has received such a request.

## Regional Fraud Teams

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Paymaster General if he will estimate the sum of money saved as a result of the visit to Hove unemployment benefit office of his Department's regional fraud team between 30 June 1986 and 15 August 1986, for each week of the team's visit, the numbers of claimants directly and indirectly affected by the visit, the number of home visits and office visits by week, and the cost to his Department of staffing, transport, accommodation and expenses for the regional fraud team between those dates.

**Mr. Lee:** Details of the weekly amount of public money saved and the number of claimants who were interviewed at their home or in the unemployment benefit office at Hove during the regional fraud team exercise are only available at disproportionate cost. Information about the numbers of claimants indirectly affected by the visit is not available as there is no way to determine why some claimants cease to sign. However, I can confirm that 359 people had their claims to benefit investigated during the exercise and 76 claimants subsequently withdrew their claims. The savings resulting from the exercise at Hove amounted to £79,249·94 and the total cost of the exercise was £11,450·46—ie, a net saving of £67,799·48.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Paymaster General if he will provide details of his Department's evaluation and value for money studies of the activities of regional fraud teams and show their effectiveness region by region.

**Mr. Lee:** The work of regional fraud teams is monitored in detail including their cost effectiveness in achieving benefit savings. The following figures show the net benefit savings of regional fraud teams for the six months between 1.4.86 and 30.9.86, having taken into account the costs incurred in regional fraud team work.

| *Region* | *Net Benefit Savings* £ |
|---|---|
| Northern | 246,679 |
| Yorks and Humberside | 393,260 |
| Eastern | 900,173 |
| Southern | 1,495,809 |
| South West | 916,804 |
| Wales | 643,559 |
| Midlands | 1,016,761 |
| North West | 242,061 |
| Scotland | 313,565 |

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Paymaster General if he will detail the number of claimants who have left the unemployment register voluntarily in each region as a result of the regional fraud teams investigations; and if he will provide details of the number of claimants who left the register who subsequently re-registered within *(a)* one month, *(b)* two months, *(c)* three months, *(d)* four months and *(e)* five months.

**Mr. Lee:** The following figures show how many claimants withdrew their benefit claims voluntarily as a result of regional fraud teams' investigations, for the six months between 1 April 1986 and 30 September 1986. There are no figures available to show the number of claimants who subsequently re-registered.

*Number of Claims Withdrawn*

| *Regions* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Northern | 344 |
| Yorks and Humberside | 521 |
| Eastern | 1,102 |

| *Regions* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Southern | 1,721 |
| South West | 1,185 |
| Wales | 1,003 |
| Midlands | 1,286 |
| North West | 470 |
| Scotland | 427 |

### Community Programme

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Paymaster General (1) pursuant to the answer of 23 January regarding the community programme plans in 1987-88, if he will list the areas considered to be most in need; how he anticipates the allocation in these areas will compare with those in 1986-87; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how the total provision of community programme places in 1987-88 compares with that for 1986-87; what is the percentage change; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Enterprise Allowance Scheme

**Mr. Sheerman** asked the Paymaster General what has been the gross and net cost of the enterprise allowance scheme in each year of its operation and as a total to the most recent date.

**Mr. Trippier:** Gross and net costs of the enterprise allowance scheme in each year of its operation since its introduction nationally in August 1983 are as follows:

| | *Gross million* | *Net million* |
|---|---|---|
| 1983-84 | 25·0 | 7·8 |
| 1984-85 | 79·6 | 23·9 |
| 1985-86 | 108·6 | 33·8 |
| 1986-87[1] | 105·3 | 33·5 |
| Total | 318·5 | 99·0 |

[1] To December.

### Youth Training

**Mr. Freud** asked the Paymaster General what was the number of school leavers entering youth training schemes in 1986 from each education authority; and if he will express these figures as a proportion of the number of students in secondary education in each authority.

**Mr. Trippier:** I regret that the information is not readily available in the form requested and could only be obtained at a disproportionate cost.

## SCOTLAND

### Housing

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has about the number of completion of units of accommodation by Inverclyde district council in *(a)* 1981, *(b)* 1982, *(c)* 1983, *(d)* 1984, *(e)* 1985 and *(f)* 1986.

**Mr. Ancram:** Inverclyde district council completed 26 houses during 1982. No houses were completed by the district council in any of the other years concerned.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has about the number of completions of privately owned units of accommodation in the Greenock and Port Glasgow constituency in *(a)* 1981, *(b)* 1982, *(c)* 1983, *(d)* 1984, *(e)* 1985 and *(f)* 1986.

**Mr. Ancram:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him on 16 December 1986 at column 506. Provisional information shows 242 private dwellings completed in Inverclyde district during 1986.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has about the number of units of accommodation owned by Inverclyde district council between 1981 and 1986.

**Mr. Ancram:** The information requested is set out in the table.

*Number of dwellings owned by Inverclyde District Council*

| *Year* | *Number of dwellings (at 30 September)* |
|---|---|
| 1981 | 19,716 |
| 1982 | 19,690 |
| 1983 | 19,471 |
| 1984 | 19,355 |
| 1985 | 18,990 |
| 1986 | 18,623 |

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has about the number of units of accommodation sold by Inverclyde district council in *(a)* 1980, *(b)*1981, *(c)* 1982, *(d)* 1983, *(e)* 1984, *(f)* 1985 and *(g)* 1986.

**Mr. Ancram:** The information requested is set out in the table:

*Inverclyde District Council house sales*

| *Year* | *Number of dwellings sold* |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 63 |
| 1981 | 94 |
| 1982 | 97 |
| 1983 | 182 |
| 1984 | 104 |
| 1985 | 316 |
| 1986 | 224 |

### Forestry

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if, pursuant to his answer of Wednesday 14 January, *Official Report*, column 250, he will provide a detailed breakdown of his estimate of the number of jobs provided by the forestry industry in Scotland.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The figure of 40,000 which I gave in reply to the right hon. Member for the Western Isles (Mr. Stewart) on Wednesday 14 January 1987; Vol. 108, column 250, in fact related to Great Britain, and not to Scotland alone. I have apologised to the right hon. Member for this error. The estimated figures for Scotland are as follows:

| | *Number employed* |
|---|---|
| Forestry Commission | 3,600 |
| Private Estates | 3,300 |

| | Number employed |
|---|---|
| Forestry Management Companies | 1,950 |
| Timber Merchants | 850 |
| Wood Processing Industries | 2,600 |
| Total | 12,300 |

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects to make an announcement on the outcome of the Forestry Commission's review of its regional advisory committees.

**Mr. John MacKay:** My right hon. and learned Friend hopes to receive the recommendations of the Forestry Commissioners fairly soon.

## Home Improvements and Repairs

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures he is taking to promote home improvements and repairs in the Strathclyde region; and how much is planned to be spent in 1986-87 and 1987-88.

**Mr. Ancram:** In the private sector, home improvement and repair work, in Strathclyde region as elsewhere in Scotland, may be eligible for mandatory or discretionary grant assistance from district and islands councils, met from their non-HRA allocations. Non-HRA allocations of £60·7 million were issued to the Strathclyde authorities for 1986-87. The proportion which is spent on home improvement and repair grants is for individual authorities to decide. The provisional non-HRA allocations issued to the Strathclyde authorities for 1987-88 amount to £69·8 million.

## Homeless Persons

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his estimate of the number of homeless persons in the Inverclyde district.

**Mr. Ancram:** Estimates of the numbers of homeless persons are not available. Twelve households were housed in temporary accommodation at 30 September 1986 under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977.

## AIDS

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if the pamphlet on AIDS is being distributed to prisoners in Scottish prisons and to those serving sentences in young offenders institutions.

**Mr. Lang:** Yes.

## Local Government Expenditure

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of expenditure by Inverclyde district council and Strathclyde Regional council, respectively, has been provided by rate support grant in each year since 1975.

**Mr. Ancram:** The figures below show the proportion of relevant expenditure including loan charges, provided by rate support grant for Inverclyde district council and Strathclyde regional council in each year since 1975. The grant figures for 1986-87 are based on the Rate Support Grant (Scotland) (No. 4) Order 1985. No adjustment has been made for grant penalties since they will be restored if authorities bring their expenditure down to guideline on outturn.

| | *Strathclyde Rate support grant as percentage of expenditure* | *Inverclyde Rate support grant as percentage of expenditure* |
|---|---|---|
| 1975-76 | 64·6 | 46·7 |
| 1976-77 | 67·3 | 52·5 |
| 1977-78 | 67·2 | 53·5 |
| 1978-79 | 65·4 | 48·1 |
| 1979-80 | 63·8 | 48·5 |
| 1980-81 | 62·2 | 47·1 |
| 1981-82 | 59·7 | 40·2 |
| 1982-83 | 59·1 | 39·8 |
| 1983-84 | 59·0 | 40·8 |
| 1984-85 | 55·0 | 39·9 |
| 1985-86 | 55·3 | 26·1 |
| 1986-87 | 53·1 | 27·4 |

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give for each local authority in Scotland the average weekly expenditure on the provision of meals for each resident in its homes for the elderly.

**Mr. John MacKay:** This information is not available from local authority financial returns.

## Sheltered Accommodation

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many units of sheltered accommodation have been built by each district council in Strathclyde region, both directly and in co-operation with housing associations or trusts, in each year since 1979; and what are the projected figures for each council until 1987-88.

**Mr. Ancram:** The information requested is not readily available and could not be extracted except at disproportionate cost.

## Scott Lithgow

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions his office has had with the Scott Lithgow company concerning its future plans in the light of the redundancies now taking place at the Port Glasgow yard; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** The Industry Department for Scotland has frequent contacts with Scott Lithgow on a variety of matters, and these have continued since the announcement of the redundancies which are currently being implemented.

## Labour Statistics

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many people were placed in employment by the jobcentres in Greenock and Port Glasgow in each year since 1982.

**Mr. Lang:** The numbers of people placed in employment by the Greenock and Port Glasgow jobcentres in each year since 1982 were as shown in the table.

| *Year (to March)* | *Numbers placed in employment* |
|---|---|
| 1982-83 | 4,240 |
| 1983-84 | 4,752 |
| 1984-85 | 4,887 |
| 1985-86 | 4,056 |
| 1986-87 (1 April 1986 to 9 January 1987) | 3,212 |

**Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the percentage change in the level of unemployment in the district of East Lothian, using the most convenient figures available, since April 1979.

**Mr. Lang:** The information is not available in the precise form requested. The number of unemployed claimants in East Lothian district on 9 June 1983 and on 11 December 1986 (the earliest and most recent dates for which such information can be provided) was 3,621 and 4,156 respectively. As a result of the change in the timing of the count in March 1986, these figures are not comparable and no meaningful percentage change can therefore be calculated.

This information is available in the Library.

### Conservation

**Mr. Kennedy** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what measures his Department is pursuing to ensure that uplands in the Highlands due to be ploughed for the purposes of the afforestation are fully surveyed for the purposes of protecting the local archaeological heritage prior to such activity; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** The principal role in archaeological survey in Scotland lies with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland. In certain instances of imminent threats to sites the Scottish Development Department may also commission surveys. Archaeological sites of national importance may be afforded protection through scheduling under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The Scottish Development Department maintains close liaison with the Forestry Commission in relation to proposals for afforestation.

**Mr. Kennedy** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will introduce legislation to extend the provisions of part 2 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 to Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** My right hon. and learned Friend has no proposals at present to bring part II of the Act into force in Scotland.

**Mr. Kennedy** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will detail and define the respective functions and responsibilities within his Department as they affect the interface between conservation and afforestation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** Within the Scottish Office, the main responsibility for advising my right hon. and learned Friend and myself on conservation matters rests with the Scottish Development Department. Regular contact is maintained between the Department and the Forestry Commission about the interaction between forestry and conservation.

### Torness Power Station

**Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now reply to the letter sent to him on 19 December 1986 by the hon. Member for East Lothian on the subject of safety precautions at Torness power station.

**Mr. Lang:** I replied to the hon. Gentleman in a letter dated 27 January.

### Personal and Property Registers

**Mr. Craigen** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the future of the section of the department of the registers of Scotland concerned with the searching of personal and property registers; and what will be the effect on services to house buyers.

**Mr. Lang:** From 31 January the Department of the Registers of Scotland will accept requests for departmental searches of the Register of Sasines and the Personal Register only in those areas to which the Land Register has been extended. In the remaining areas searches of the Sasines and Personal Registers will be carried out by the private search firms which already cater for more than 90 per cent. of the market. The other search activities of the Department, including the free provision of reports from the Land Register, will not be affected. The staffing and other resources released by this change will be redeployed to property registration, expanding the Department's capacity to extend the Land Register. This extension will lead to reduced registration charges from which house buyers have more to gain than they have from continuation of the Department's searches.

### Kymmene-Stromberg

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions have taken place with the Kymmene-Stromberg company about grants for building its new paper mill in Irvine; what value of grants is estimated to be available; if any undertakings have been given that the principal machinery will be manufactured in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** Extensive discussions took place between my officials and representatives of Kymmene-Stromberg leading to an offer of grant under the Government's regional policy to assist in the building of a pulp and paper mill at Irvine. For reasons of commercial confidentiality it is not normal practice to disclose the amounts of grant offered although the amounts paid are published in "British Businesss" in the quarter after payment is made. As part of that offer of regional support Kymmene-Stromberg has agreed to give United Kingdom equipment suppliers full and fair opportunity to bid for the supply of capital equipment for the project.

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has about grants by the Finnish Government to the Kymmene-Stromberg company for the purchase of Finnish-made machinery for the new paper mill in Irvine; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** I am assured by the company that it is not in receipt of any grants from the Finnish Government for the purchase of Finnish-made machinery for its new pulp and paper mill in Irvine.

### Golden Wonder

**Mr. Robin Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what development grants have been paid in the most recent 10 years to Golden Wonder, or its parent companies, in respect of its Broxburn plant; and whether any parallel payments have been made from European Community funds.

**Mr. Lang:** It is a long-standing practice that, in the interests of preserving commercial confidentiality, comprehensive information on grant payments is not made public. Details of individual payments in excess of £25,000 are published quarterly in "British Business" and I would refer the hon. Gentleman to that publication.

I am not aware of any recent payments to the firm from EC funds but I will look further into that matter and write to the hon. Member.

### Urban Motorways (Litter)

**Mr. David Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the amount of debris and litter on urban motorways in Scotland; and what he intends to do about it.

**Mr. Ancram:** Scotland's only urban motorways are in Glasgow. They are the responsibility of Strathclyde regional council, and not of my right hon. and learned Friend.

### Sexual Assault (Report)

**Mrs. McCurley** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when the second report of his Department's research on sexual assault will be published.

**Mr. Lang:** The Scottish Home and Health Department has today published the second report of a research study into the processing of sexual assault cases in the Scottish criminal justice system. The first report, "Investigating Sexual Assault", concentrated on the police investigation of such cases. This second volume covers the prosecution and trial stages and examines the final outcome. Copies have been placed in the library. The report has been published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office and is available through Her Majesty's Stationery Office bookshops.

## DEFENCE

### Ammunition

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what increases in rates of ammunition usage and attrition are now anticipated compared to those anticipated prior to Arab-Israeli wars; what corresponding increases of ammunition stock holdings have already been introduced and will be introduced over the next five years; and what is the need for additional equipment to transport this.

**Mr. Stanley:** Information on assumed rates of ammunition usage and stockholdings is classified. Since 1979-80, Army stocks of anti-tank and air defence missiles have have increased considerably, some threefold in the *anti-tank case. Increases have also been made in* other essential stocks, such as artillery and main small arms ammunition, and fuel stocks. Over the next few years, we will be increasing the number of Rapier fire units for BAOR, as well as making further increases in our stocks of Javelin missiles. The Army has a requirement for additional ammunition movement capability in BAOR, to which the procurement of the demountable rack offloading and pickup system will contribute.

### Firearms (Accidental Discharge)

**Sir George Young** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many incidents were recorded in each of the last three years in which soldiers accidentally discharged firearms.

**Mr. Freeman:** This information could be obtained only from military units at disproportionate cost.

### AIDS and Venereal Diseases

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the handout on health hazards referred to in the answer to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras on 22 January, *Official Report*, column *731*.

**Mr. Freeman:** Yes.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Defence on what date the handout on health hazards referred to in the answer to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras on 22 January, *Official Report*, column *731*, was distributed throughout the 1st Battalion Queen's Own Highlanders; and if each private soldier received a copy.

**Mr. Freeman:** The main party of the 1st Battalion Queen's Own Highlanders flew out to Kenya between 21 and 25 October. Each soldier was given a copy of the handout as he embarked. A pre-advance party which had flown out on 11 October had not received copies on embarkation and every effort was subsequently made to give them the same instruction whilst in Kenya. All members of the battalion had received the oral pre-exercise briefing, which is standard procedure for all service men going overseas (not just to Kenya) which covered health hazards, including sexually transmitted diseases.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the nature of the instructions on AIDS as a health hazard given to the 1st Battalion Queen's Own Highlanders before it went to Kenya.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave him on 22 January 1987 at column *731*.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Defence in what way the advice given to the Parachute Regiment before it went to Kenya differed from that given to the Queen's Own Highlanders.

**Mr. Freeman:** It is normal practice for visiting units to brief the staff officers of a subsequent exercising unit. The information given to the Parachute Regiment before it went to Kenya included the same written material, and the oral briefing was based on the same principles as that used for the Queen's Own Highlanders.

## Approved Dealers

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* Mr. Brian Bird of King Edward road, Douglas, *(b)* Alsation Ltd. of Church road, Onken, Isle of Man and *(c)* any other company of which Mr. Bird is known to be a director are, or have been, on his Department's list of approved dealers.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Alsation Limited, Church road, Onken, Isle of Man, is not registered on the defence contractors list, nor has any application been received.

The Department is unaware of any other directorships held by Mr. Bird.

## Anthrax

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if parts of the United Kingdom other than Gruinard were used for testing anthrax in connection with weapon research.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton** [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1987, c. *307*]: Apart from work carried out within the then chemical defence experimental station, Porton Down, a device containing anthrax was tested on the beach at Penclawdd, South Wales, in 1942. Investigations subsequent to this trial revealed no evidence of any residual contamination.

## THE ARTS

### British Library Building

**Dr. Blackburn** asked the Minister for the Arts what is the latest estimate of the cost of stage 1A of the new British Library building at St. Pancras; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce:** The Government have reviewed the future of the first two stages (1AA and 1AB) of this project. Their main features will be air-conditioned storage for the Library's collections, three reading rooms for rare books (including music and fine arts), western manuscripts, and oriental materials; and open access reading rooms for the science reference and information service. The costs of constructing these stages were originally estimated at £116 million in 1979 (the 1986 equivalent using the RPI is £193 million). These estimates, and others made in the intervening period, have proved to make insufficient provision for inflation. The revised estimates, which also cover increases due to changes in VAT regulations, the need to build in a higher risk contingency, and other minor changes, now stand at £218 million at 1986 prices. The Government are reviewing the arrangements for the management of the project, and improved arrangements will be introduced as soon as possible.

In view of the advantages to be gained from these stages of the project in bringing readers, books and staff together in a modern environment, the Government have decided to keep to the present plans for them, and the necessary financial provision is accordingly being made for this purpose. In the three years covered by the public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 56), the additional provision will be £4·1 million in 1987-88, £6·2 million in 1988-89 and £9·2 million in 1989-90. These increases will be met by additions to the arts and libraries programme within unchanged overall public expenditure totals since, although the sums had been anticipated at the time of the 1986 public expenditure survey, they had not been finally agreed pending the outcome of the review.

### Royal Opera House (Land)

**Mr. Fisher** asked the Minister for the Arts (1) what valuation he has received on the land acquired by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of the Royal Opera house;

(2) whether he has received a valuation of the land acquired by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of the Royal Opera house in the last 12 months.

**Mr. Luce:** I have received no valuation. The Arts Council purchased the site in 1975 out of voted funds; joint ownership is currently vested in the council and the Royal Opera house, and valuation is a matter for them.

**Mr. Fisher:** asked the Minister for the Arts whether he will make public the terms of the trust deed covering the land acquired by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of the Royal Opera house in 1974.

**Mr. Luce:** The parties to the trust deed are the Arts Council and the Royal Opera house. I will consult them and write to the hon. Member.

### Royal Court Theatre ("Perdition" Production)

**Mr. Marlow** asked the Minister for the Arts if he will investigate the circumstances leading to the cancellation by the Royal Court theatre of its production of "Perdition"; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Luce** The decision to cancel the performance of this play was taken by the board of the Royal Court theatre, which has responsibility for its artistic programme.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### Overseas Pensioners

**Mr. Lawrence** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the countries in which British pensioners can be resident and receive uprated state pensions in full *(a)* from the United Kingdom Government and *(b)* from the Government of the host country.

**Mr. Lyell:** British pensions are payable at the same rates as in the United Kingdom to pensioners in European Community member States and to pensioners in the following countries:

Austria.
Cyprus.
Finland.
Iceland.
Isle of Man.
Israel.
Jersey.
Guernsey.
Malta.
Sark.
Switzerland.
Turkey.
Yugoslavia.

The most recent information readily available on the rates of pension, under other countries' schemes, to which British residents in countries overseas might be entitled is contained in the following publications which are available in the Library: Section III-V of the Department's publication, "Tables of Social Benefit Systems in the European Communities (Position at 1 January 1986)", and "Social Security Programms Throughout The World—1983", published by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

### Disabled Persons

**Mr. Rowe** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what information he has as to how many local authorities' social services departments take responsibility for the adaptation of premises for disabled persons;

(2) what information he has about differences in practice between local authorities as regards the use of housing department funds, on the one hand, and social service department funds, on the other, to support the adaptation of premises for disabled people; and what is his assessment of the implications of such differences for the achievement of a consistent national policy in this field.

**Mr. Major:** Social services authorities have a duty, under section 2(1)*(e)* of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, to make arrangements for the provision of assistance with, or arranging for the carrying out of, works of adaptation to the home of any disabled person who is ordinarily resident in their area, when they are satisfied that this is necessary in order to meet that person's needs.

Local housing authorities have powers under existing housing legislation, notably the Housing Act 1985, to improve or adapt properties in their own housing stock. They also have powers under the same legislation to make home improvement grants to owner-occupiers, landlords and tenants to help meet the cost of such adaptations.

In the light of these provisions, it is for the local authorities concerned to decide how in practice housing adaptations for disabled people should be funded in their area. The responsibility for such funding, both for local authority and non-local authority housing, will vary from area to area. The most recent available annual figures show that 102 out of 107 local social services authorities had assisted with adaptations to non-local authority property and 47 had also assisted with adaptations to local authority property.

We have no reason to believe that different arrangements in different local authority areas constitute, in themselves, any impediment to the provision of assistance to disabled people.

**Mrs. Shields** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to lay the commencement order for the Disabled Persons (Services Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

**Mr. Major:** I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Members for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) and for Caernarfon (Mr. Wigley) on 26 November 1986 at column *289*.

## Birth Statistics

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes, other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(2) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(3) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(4) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(5) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(6) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(7) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(8) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740 to 759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(9) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(10) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(11) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(12) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated

according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and the unstated gestational age;

(13) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congential malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(14) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(15) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b )* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congential malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age;

(16) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age;

(17) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales in the total number of births and number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congential malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age;

(18) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congential malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age;

(19) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age;

(20) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths, with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759), tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age.

**Mrs. Currie:** I regret that the information is not available in the form requested. Period of gestation is not collected at the registration of live births.

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(2) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(3) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformation (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(4) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(5) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

(6) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759); and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(7) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(8) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(9) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740 to 759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 weeks plus and with unstated gestational age;

(10) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 weeks plus and with unstated gestational age;

(11) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740 to 759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 weeks plus and with unstated gestational age;

(12) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740 to 759) as their underlyirg cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages; 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and with unstated gestational age;

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(14) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759); and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories; under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(15) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories; under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 g to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(16) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories; under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(17) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths tabulated to the following gestational ages; 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks, and unstated gestational age;

(18) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postnenatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759): and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(19) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postnenatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause: and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(20) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postnenatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(21) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age;

(22) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age;

(23) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of

neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age;

(24) if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759), tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age.

**Mrs. Currie:** I regret that the information requested is not available. The data held on computer records of births do not distinguish between first and second twins.

### Severe Weather Payments

**Mr. Foulkes:** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why he has not answered the question about severe weather payments tabled by the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley for written priority answer on 26 January.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him and to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 26 January 1987 at columns *88-89*.

**Mr. Foulkes:** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the cost of advertising of the £5 cold climate allowance; what is the estimated cost of administration of the scheme *(a)* in the current year and *(b)* in January 1987; and what other expenditure has been incurred, apart from the cost of the payments themselves.

**Mr. Major:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

**Mr. Meadowcroft:** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) on what date leaflets on the system of severe weather payments in force prior to the statement to the House on 13 January, were to be available in benefit offices in Leeds;

(2) what steps he is taking to ensure that those entitled to severe weather payments receive them;

(3) by what method claimants for severe weather payments are to initiate their claims;

(4) what information was available at benefit offices on severe weather payments following the statements to the House on 13 and 20 January.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 15 January, at columns *297-98*, which contained details of publicity arrangements for extra help with heating costs because of the exceptionally cold weather.

Standing instructions about the operation of the scheme were issued to the Department's local offices in November 1986. Draft leaflets, which could be reproduced locally if necessary, were included with those instructions. Supplies of the leaflets proper and posters were issued to local offices during the week commencing 12 January 1987.

Leaflets and advertisements in the press include a simple claim form to be taken or sent to the local office. Offices were also instructed to accept claims other than on the special claim form. Offices are taking all steps available to ensure that potential claimants are aware of their entitlement and are giving priority to making payments as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what extra resources he has made available to benefit offices to enable them to process severe weather payment claims without detriment to other work.

**Mr. Major:** An addition equivalent to 300 overtime man-years has been allocated to local offices of the Department to process cold weather payment claims, at a cost of some £4 million. This should also ensure that other work is not affected.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many applications have now been received for the £5 severe weather payments for the week 12 to 18 January; how many had been paid by 26 January; and what is each figure as a percentage of the estimated number of people eligible.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to him and to the hon. Member for Derby, South (Mrs. Beckett) on 26 January 1987 at columns *88-89*.

Local Offices have been asked to give priority to making exceptionally cold weather payments. Because they are concentrating their efforts on this rather than on the statistical records, the further information requested is still not available. Details of the number of applications received and payments made will be provided in due course.

### Benefits

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many recipients of supplementary benefit in Greenock and Port Glasgow in *(a)* 1980, *(b)* 1981, *(c)* 1982, *(d)* 1983, *(e)* 1984 and *(f)* 1985 were one-parent families.

**Mr. Lyell:** I regret that this information would be available only at disproportionate cost.

### Local Offices (Staff)

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many staff are currently employed in local offices of his Department in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Strathclyde region and *(d)* Greenock and Port Glasgow; and how many staff in each off these are planned for 1987-88 and 1988-89.

**Mr. Lyell:** The latest comprehensive information on the number of staff in post in local offices of the Department relates to 1 January 1987 and is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* England and Wales | 57,556 |
| *(b)* Scotland | 7,867 |
| *(c)* Strathclyde Region | 4,450·5 |
| *(d)* Greenock ILO | 173 |
| Port Glasgow ILO | 80 |

*Notes:*

Figures exclude cleaners

ILO = Integrated Local Office

The number of staff planned for 1987-88 and 1988-89 for each of these areas is not yet determined. A review of staffing levels in local offices has just been completed.

Complements will be revised in the light of this review and of the review which is examining all social security tasks to identify further scope for reducing work loads.

### Supplementary Benefit

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give a breakdown by district council ward in the constituency of Greenock and Port Glasgow of the number of supplementary benefit claimants.

**Mr. Lyell:** I regret that the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Information is readily available to show the total number of people receiving supplementary benefit from each of the Department's offices covering the constituency of Greenock and Port Glasgow. On 10 December 1986 — the latest figures available — the position was as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Greenock | 12,195 |
| Port Glasgow | 5,285 |

*Source:* 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

### Wheelchairs

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what would be the estimated cost of providing dual purpose indoor and outdoor powered wheelchairs for all those who would benefit from them;

(2) how many people currently have a Department of Health and Social Security powered indoor wheelchair; what is his estimate of the number who would benefit from a dual purpose chair that could also be used for short distances outside; and how many of these are children.

**Mr. Major:** On 31 December 1986 there were 11,864 powered indoor wheelchairs on issue through the Department's wheelchair service. There are no central records of how many wheelcharis are on issue to different age groups. In total there are over 480,000 powered and non-powered wheelchairs on issue. It is estimated that a considerable number of these users could benefit in varying degrees form a dual purpose powered chair which could be used indoors and outdoors, but there are no reliable figures of how many, nor the likely cost of such provision. In its report the McColl working party suggested that the cost of providing dual purpose powered chairs for 24,000 of those with the greatest need would be over £30 million. This is more than the total annual expenditure on the entire wheelchair service.

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to announce his decisions regarding the recommendations of the McColl committee on dual purpose powered wheelchairs.

**Mr. Major:** We are still considering this major issue in the context of decisions on other important aspects of the artificial limb appliance centre services raised by the McColl report. We will announce our conclusions as soon as possible.

### Hospital Waiting Lists

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many patients in the Brighton health authority area were on the waiting list for each year since 1979; and of those how many had to wait *(a)* more than one month, *(b)* more than three months, *(c)* more than six months and *(d)* more than one year, before receiving treatment.

**Mr. Newton:** I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks in precisely the form requested. The information available centrally is given in the table. The hon. Member may wish to write to the chairman of the Brighton district health authority for the more detailed information requested.

*Cases on in-patients waiting list for admission to NHS hospitals in Brighton district health authoriy at 31 March*

| *Year* | *Urgent cases* | | *Non-urgent cases* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number of urgent cases* | *On list for more than one month* | *Number of non-urgent cases* | *On list for more than one year* | *Total of all cases on the list* |
| 1979 | 1,108 | 810 | 3,407 | 1,414 | 4,515 |
| 1980 | 921 | 700 | 3,329 | 1,346 | 4,250 |
| 1981 | 790 | 613 | 2,980 | 944 | 3,770 |
| 1982 | 617 | 482 | 2,876 | 1,078 | 3,493 |
| 1983 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 1984 | 245 | 158 | 3,614 | 903 | 3,859 |
| 1985 | 379 | 180 | 3,627 | 844 | 4,006 |
| 1986 | 241 | 97 | 3,627 | 707 | 3,868 |

### Alcohol Abuse

**Mr. Allan Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the grants given by his Department to organisations concerned with alcohol abuse in each year since 1979-80.

**Mrs. Currie:** The information requested is set out in the table.

| *Organisation* | *79-80*<br>£ | *80-81*<br>£ | *81-82*<br>£ | *82-83*<br>£ | *83-84*<br>£ | *84-85*<br>£ | *85-86*<br>£ | *86-87 (provisional)*<br>£ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Health Education Council | 24,842 | 216,534 | 194,683 | 263,178 | 310,671 | 217,553 | 400,000 | 494,000 |
| Addictions Community Centre for Education and Treatment | 10,000 | 20,000 | 38,225 | 35,400 | — | — | — | — |
| Alcohol Education Centre | 56,100 | 69,093 | 65,814 | 68,000 | 91,250 | — | — | — |
| Alcohol Hostels | 534,916 | 615,881 | 300,179 | 166,331 | 69,733 | 69,579 | 42,312 | 10,000 |
| Alcohol Concern | — | — | — | — | 69,000 | 310,789 | 486,206 | 501,500 |
| Alcohol Recovery Project | 11,000 | — | 4,000 | 61,750 | — | — | — | — |
| Aquarius | 21,000 | 21,000 | 10,500 | — | — | — | — | |
| Berkshire[1] District Health Authority (DHA) | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2,500 | 28,500 |
| Camberwell DHA[1] | — | — | — | 20,000 | — | — | — | — |
| Exeter DHA[1] | — | — | — | — | 9,601 | 19,052 | 25,100 | 13,889 |
| Federation of Alcoholic Rehabilitation Establishments | 56,000 | 67,800 | 77,400 | 79,580 | 85,200 | — | — | — |
| Greater Manchester and Lancashire Council on Alcohol | — | — | — | 4,000 | 14,000 | 35,550 | 36,256 | 47,156 |
| Hampshire Council on Alcoholism | — | — | — | 3,000 | — | — | — | — |
| Hull DHA[1] | — | — | — | 12,512 | 40,953 | 43,332 | 37,100 | — |
| International Drivers Behaviour Research Association | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2,500 |
| Kent Council of Alcoholism | — | — | 900 | 1,100 | 3,000 | 24,051 | 23,300 | 25,632 |
| Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster DHA[1] | — | 18,965 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Leeds DHA[1] | — | — | — | 3,990 | — | — | — | — |
| Liverpool Alcoholism Services | 6,778 | 16,178 | 18,000 | 26,609 | 34,400 | 31,900 | 20,790 | — |
| Liverpool DHA[1] | — | — | — | 18,839 | 34,771 | 41,891 | 27,000 | 2,250 |
| Medical Council on Alcoholism | 54,250 | 55,950 | 64,600 | 70,300 | 78,070 | — | — | — |
| Medway DHA[1] | — | — | — | — | 575 | 10,517 | 11,750 | 11,750 |
| National Council for Voluntary Organisations | — | — | — | — | 7,600 | — | — | — |
| National Council on Alcoholism | 171,000 | 222,400 | 252,000 | 241,000 | 198,133 | 97,216 | 17,686 | — |
| Norfolk Council on Alcoholism | 32,750 | 27,000 | 25,000 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Plymouth Night Shelter | — | 27,125 | 15,650 | 17,770 | 20,140 | — | 5,770 | — |
| Portsmouth Council on Alcoholism | — | — | — | — | — | 13,000 | 11,202 | 11,917 |
| Portsmouth DHA[1] | — | — | — | 9,628 | 16,289 | 19,109 | — | — |
| Salford DHA[1] | — | — | — | 3,362 | 23,728 | 13,840 | 14,605 | 15,195 |
| Salvation Army | 24,095 | 30,397 | 2,573 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Society of St. Dismas | — | 8,500 | 6,980 | 4,480 | 7,715 | 553 | — | — |
| Stonham Housing Association | — | 13,000 | 10,000 | 17,100 | 19,000 | — | — | — |
| Turning Point[2] | 40,732 | 48,118 | 36,000 | 50,000 | 85,750 | 65,000 | 65,000 | 108,500 |
| Alcohol Prevention Projects | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 10,000 |
| Total | 1,043,463 | 1,477,941 | 1,122,504 | 1,177,929 | 1,219,579 | 1,012,932 | 1,226,576 | 1,282,789 |

[1] local alcohol service projects

[2] combined drugs and alcohol services

## Perivale Hospital, Greenford

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the estimated current value of Perivale hospital, Greenford; what is the estimated cost of building a hospital facility of similar proportions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** With the agreement of the district valuer, a contract has been signed to sell the bulk of the site of Perivale hospital to Ealing council for £6·19 million. The remainder of the site would probably have a market value of about £1·25 million, but is being retained for health service use. On medical advice, our policy is to provide maternity units as part of district general hospitals, thus no current estimates of the cost of building a free standing maternity hospital are available.

## Asbestos

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what estimates are available to him of the likely number of asbestos-induced deaths over the next 30 years.

**Mrs. Currie:** Information is not available on which to base such a forecast.

### Social and Community Planning Research (Survey)

**Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when his Department commissioned Social and Community Planning Research to carry out a survey into how people manage when they are unemployed; when the survey started; how many people have been interviewed to date; when the survey is to be completed; what is to be the total sample; in what regions of the United Kingdom people are being interviewed; how long an average interview takes; how many people have been invited to participate; how many have refused, either prior to being interviewed, or when the interviewer called; how many interviewers are employed on the survey and how are they recruited; what is the total cost of the survey; and if he will place a copy of the survey questionnaire in the Library.

**Mr. Major:** Social and Community Planning research (SCPR) was commissioned on 4 July 1986 to carry out interviews on behalf of the Department in connection with a study designed to find out about the incomes and experiences of people while employed and unemployed. The sample for the survey will be taken from people who become unemployed over a four-week period in March 1987, drawn from a representative sample of about one in 10 unemployment benefit offices in all regions in Great Britain, and interviews will take place in May. It is hoped to achieve completed interviews for about 1,800 men and 1,250 women. The study will be very similar to an earlier DHSS study which looked at a sample of men becoming unemployed in 1978. The report of that study ("For Richer for Poorer", HMSO 1984) is available in the Library, as are several working papers.

Participation by those selected for interview will be voluntary and they will be given written assurances that whatever they say will be anonymous and that whether they take part or not will have no effect on any claim to benefit they may make. SCPR has carried out a pilot exercise to test the questionnaire and the sampling mechanisms and the questionnaire will be amended as a result. As the study is still in its formative stages, I am unable to be more specific in response to the hon. Member's other points.

### Midwives

**Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what method his department uses to obtain figures relating to midwives employed by the National Health Service.

**Mr. Newton:** Computer tapes are received quarterly from regional payroll systems. Those data for midwives are then extracted by using the particular pay scale and occupation code.

**Mr. Fisher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many midwives were employed by the National Health Service in each year since 1976, expressing the figures both in terms of whole-time equivalents and of the total number of employees, and adjusted to take account of the change in the working week.

**Mr. Newton:** I am sorry I am unable to provide all the information the hon. Member requires. Numbers (head count) of midwives for the years 1976 to 1979 were not provided for staff working in primary health care, and therefore total numbers cannot be produced on a comparable basis with those from 1980 onwards. Such information as is available centrally is shown in the table.

*Midwifery Staff[1] as at 30 September—England*
*Numbers and Whole-Time Equivalent[2]*

| | *Number* | *Whole-time equivalent* | *Adjusted[3] whole-time equivalent* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1986 | n/a | 19,560 | 20,900 |
| 1977 | n/a | 20,060 | 21,400 |
| 1978 | n/a | 20,020 | 21,360 |
| 1979 | n/a | 20,150 | 21,490 |
| 1980 | 22,450 | 20,060 | * |
| 1981 | 23,110 | 20,910 | * |
| 1982 | 22,680 | 20,410 | * |
| 1983 | 24,590 | 22,070 | * |
| 1984 | 25,210 | 22,570 | * |
| 1985 | 25,460 | 22,810 | * |

*Source:* DHSS Annual Census of NHS non-medical Manpower.

*Notes:*

[1] Includes midwives in the hospital and community services, in administration, and student midwives. Excluding agency staff.

[2] All figures are independently rounded to nearest ten (10).

[3] Adjusted to take account of the reduction in nurses working hours (from 40 to 37·5 week) during 1980.

n/a Not available.

* Not applicable.

### Mobility Allowance

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received proposing the payment of mobility allowance to deaf-blind people; what his response has been; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Major:** Some deaf-blind people already receive mobility allowance. We have, however, had recent representations in support of proposals by the Disability Alliance to widen the eligibility criteria for mobility allowance, specifically to assist deaf-blind people among others. These proposals are still under consideration whilst the detailed implications are being clarified in discussion with representatives of the Disability Alliance.

### National Insurance

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will estimate the revenue effect of the national insurance contribution ceiling for employees being abolished for 1987-88.

**Mr. Major:** It is estimated that if the upper earnings limit for employees' class 1 national insurance contributions were abolished in 1987-88, but retained for the contracted out rebate, the additional contribution for the full year would be £930 million.

This figure is based on the assumptions used in the "Report by the Government Actuary on the drafts of the Social Security Benefits Up-rating (No. 2) Order 1986 and the Social Security (Contributions, Re-rating) (No. 2) Order 1986".

### Post-operative Infection

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the rate of post-operative infection in each health region in 1978 and each year since.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 15 December 1986, c. *417-18*]: The information requested is given in the table.

*National Health Service non-psychiatric, non-maternity hospitals*

| *Regional health authorities*<br>% | *Estimated number of in-patient cases with a diagnosis of post operative infection*[1] *as a percentage of all in-patient cases who undergo operations* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1978* | *1979* | *1980* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* |
| Northern | 0·4 | 0·5 | 0·4 | 0·4 | 0·6 | 0·7 | 0·6 |
| Yorkshire | 0·7 | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·7 | 0·6 | 0·6 |
| Trent | 0·6 | 0·8 | 0·8 | 0·8 | 0·8 | 0·8 | 0·8 |
| East Anglia | 0·5 | 0·6 | 1·0 | 0·7 | 0·6 | 0·8 | 0·8 |
| North West Thames | 0·5 | 0·4 | 0·5 | 0·7 | 0·8 | 0·8 | 0·6 |
| North East Thames | 0·4 | 0·6 | 0·5 | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·8 | 0·6 |
| South East Thames | 0·6 | 0·5 | 0·7 | 0·7 | 0·7 | 0·6 | 0·8 |
| South West Thames | 0·7 | 0·7 | 0·8 | 0·9 | 0·9 | 0·7 | 0·7 |
| Wessex | 0·5 | 0·5 | 0·5 | 0·5 | 0·5 | 0·5 | 0·5 |
| Oxford | 0·5 | 0·5 | 0·4 | 0·4 | 0·5 | 0·4 | 0·5 |
| South Western | 1·3 | 1·2 | 1·5 | 1·2 | 1·4 | 1·5 | 1·4 |
| West Midlands | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·5 | 0·5 | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·6 |
| Mersey | 0·6 | 0·5 | 0·6 | 1·0 | 0·7 | 0·8 | 0·7 |
| North Western | 0·6 | 0·8 | 0·9 | 0·8 | 0·9 | 0·8 | 0·9 |
| All RHAs | 0·6 | 0·6 | 0·7 | 0·7 | 0·7 | 0·7 | 0·7 |

[1] ICD No. N998.5 for 1978, International Classification of Diseases, eighth revision, 1965.
ICD No. 998.5 for 1979-1984, International Classification of Diseases, ninth revision, 1975.

The figures given are taken from the hospital in-patient inquiry, a 10 per cent. sample of discharges records held centrally by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. In any information of this kind which relies on local involvement and interpretation there is room for variation in recording practice and this may explain some of the variation between regions in recorded infection rates.

The Department is aware of the apparent higher incidence of post-operative infection in the South-Western regional health authority which has recently examined its data on 100 per cent. of discharges and deaths for 1982 to 1985 and found similar (though slightly lower) numbers of post-operative infection cases. However, over the four-year period the number of cases has been declining.

The South-Western regional health authority can find no ready explanation for the comparatively high level of post-operative infection recorded. It is mounting a detailed study of case notes to try to determine the reasons. The study is not yet complete, but we shall be following up the results with the RHA when they are known.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Monetary Policy

6. **Mr. Cunliffe** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on progress with the Government's monetary policy.

**Mr. Lawson:** The Government continue to maintain monetary conditions designed to exert steady downward pressure on inflation.

### Unemployment Costs

14. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in East Anglia and the north-west.

15. **Mr. Boyes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in the northern region.

**Mr. Randall** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in Humberside.

42. **Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in Wales.

44. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in Yorkshire.

45. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in the east midlands.

47. **Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in south Wales.

49. **Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimates of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment *(a)* in the south-east and *(b)* Greater London.

50. **Mr. O'Neill** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in Scotland.

59. **Mr. Fisher** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in the west midlands.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any estimate of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment in *(a)* the Greenock and Port Glasgow constituency, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland as a whole.

**Mr. Brooke:** Regional figures for benefit expenditure are not available.

### Public Expenditure

16. **Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the macro-economic effects of the levels of public spending set out in the White Paper on public expenditure.

**Mr. Lawson:** The White Paper provides for a rise in public expenditure less than the prospective rise in gross domestic product, and thus contribute to continued steady growth with low inflation.

19. **Mr. Sumberg** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increased public expenditure.

20. **Mr. Couchman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increased public expenditure.

21. **Mr. Wood** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increased public expenditure.

26. **Mr. Watts** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increased public expenditure.

30. **Mr. Allan Stewart** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increased public expenditure.

33. **Mr. Soames** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increased public expenditure.

36. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increased public expenditure.

54. **Mr. Michael Forsyth** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties in favour of increased public expenditure.

57. **Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increasing public expenditure.

73. **Mr. Proctor** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increased public expenditure.

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties for increased public expenditure.

**Mr. MacGregor:** I refer my hon. Friends to the answer that I gave earlier today to my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Lawler).

31. **Mr. Wareing** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the increased public expenditure announced in his autumn statement is likely to be invested in the north-west of England.

**Mr. MacGregor:** It is not practicable to estimate the percentage of increased public expenditure likely to be spent in particular regions.

### Balance of Payments

17. **Mr. Straw** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are his latest projections for the balance of payments in 1986-87.

**Mr. MacGregor:** First estimates are consistent with the autumn statement view that the current account in 1986 will be in broad balance.

### Take-home Pay

18. **Mr. Squire** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the net take-home pay of a married man with two children on average earnings in 1978-79; and what was the comparable figure after adjusting for inflation in the current tax year.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Net take-home pay for a married man on average earnings with two children is £166·83 per week in the current tax year, nearly 18 per cent. higher in real terms than in 1978-79.

### Tax Revenue

22. **Mr. Freud** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer to what extent the contribution from higher than expected value added tax receipts has contributed to the recent growth of tax revenues.

**Mr. Brooke:** About one third of the upward revision to the forecast of non-oil receipts shown in the autumn statement was due to value added tax.

23. **Mr. Sackville** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of total income tax revenue was contributed by the top 10 per cent. of taxpayers in *(a)* 1978-79 and *(b)* 1985-86.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The figures are 34·5 per cent. and 37 per cent. respectively.

### Corporation Tax

24. **Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the yield of corporation tax in 1978-79; and what is his estimate of the yield in the current year.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The figure is £3·9 billion in 1978-79. For the autumn statement, receipts in 1986-87 were forecast to be about £12·5 billion.

### European Monetary System

25. **Mr. Knox** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he next proposes to have discussions with the European Community Council of Ministers about the monetary system.

**Mr. Brooke:** My right hon. Friend the Chancellor discusses aspects of the European monetary system with European colleagues from time to time.

38. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received concerning Britain joining the exchange rate mechanism of the European monetary system.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** I have received a number of representations on this subject.

70. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he plans to hold further discussions with his European Economic Community counterparts on developments in the European monetary system, following the currency realignments of 12 January.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** My right hon. Friend discusses aspects of the European monetary system with European colleagues from time to time.

### Money Supply

27. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the most recent statistics concerning money supply; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** In the 12 months to end-December MO grew by 5·2 per cent. and £M3 by 18·1 per cent.

### Personal Equity Plans

28. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has received about the personal equity plan scheme since its introduction.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Chancellor gave earlier to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Burton (Mr. Lawrence).

39. **Mr. Stevens** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has on the operation of the personal equity plan scheme since its introduction.

62. **Dr. Twinn** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has on the operation of the personal equity plan scheme since its introduction.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I refer my hon. Friends to the answer I gave on 22 January 1987 at column 706 to my hon. Friend the Member for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Mr. Hirst).

52. **Mr. James Hamilton** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received concerning the introduction of personal equity plans.

64. **Mr. Cash** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received about the effectiveness of the personal equity plan scheme in attracting new shareholders.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** My right hon. Friend has received numerous representations, most of which welcome the incentives the personal equity plan scheme provides for those buying shares for the first time.

**Mr. James Hamilton** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received concerning the introduction of person a equity plans.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The personal equity plan scheme has been widely welcomed.

68. **Mr. McLoughlin** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what information he has on the growth of individual share ownership since the introduction of the personal equity plans.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Early indications reinforce my confidence that the personal equity plan scheme will make a significant contribution to the growth of individual share ownership.

### Economic Measures

29. **Mr. Hoyle** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what economic measures he proposes to take in order to lessen the gulf between the north and south of the country.

**Mr. MacGregor:** The Government's economic policies, which have brought inflation down to the lowest levels for 20 years and a sixth successive year of economic growth, provide the best foundation for sustaining this growth in all regions of the country. Unemployment has fallen fastest over the last 12 months in Wales, the north, north-west and west midlands.

### Listed Buildings

32. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the treatment of repairs and alterations to listed buildings for value added tax purposes.

**Mr. Brooke:** The repair and maintenance of buildings, listed or otherwise, has always been liable to VAT at the standard rate. On 1 June 1984 alteration work, previously liable at the zero rate, became standard-rated, but zero-rating was retained for approved alterations to listed buildings and scheduled monuments. This concession was widely welcomed by those concerned with the preservation of our national heritage.

### Interest Rates

34. **Mr. Wrigglesworth** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer by how much the current level of United Kingdom short-term interest rates exceeds the average for the other European Economic Community countries.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Three month interbank rates in London are about 11 per cent. The average of the three-month money market rates in other member states is around 10½ per cent., on latest data.

35. **Mr. Alton** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent representations he has received on the levels of interest rates; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** I have received a number of representations on this subject.

40. **Mr. Marland** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on the present level of interest rates.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** I refer to the answer I gave earlier to the hon. Member for Liverpool, Mossley Hill (Mr. Alton).

46. **Mr. Rogers** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will make a statement on the current level of interest rates.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Base rates are 11 per cent.

66. **Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any proposals for seeking to reduce interest rates.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Short-term interest rates will be held at whatever levels are necessary to keep steady downward pressure on inflation.

76. **Mr. Livsey** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give information available to him on the average level of real interest rates for the United States of America, Germany, Japan, France and the United Kingdom for the period from January 1984 to the present.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** I refer the hon. Member to the article in last September's Bank of England *Quarterly Bulletin* which discussed the difficulties involved in measuring real rates of interest, and considered recent trends.

### Mortgage Interest Rates

37. **Mr. Ashton** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the extra cost to the Exchequer of each 1 per cent. rise in mortgage interest rates.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** A one percentage point increase in gross mortgage interest rates would increase the cost of mortgage interest tax relief by about £400 million in a full year at 1986-87 levels. If other interest rates were also to change by a similar amount (in gross terms), the increased cost would be broadly offset by an increase in composite rate tax receipts in a full year. There would also be other effects on Government revenues.

### Strip Searches

41. **Mr. Madden** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received concerning the strip searching of passengers by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise officials at United Kingdom ports of entry.

**Mr. Brooke:** There have been very few representations: a small number of letters from other hon. Members during 1986 referring to particular individual cases and more recently representations from the hon. Member. I refer him to my reply to his previous questions on 16 December at columns *499* and *510*.

### Value Added Tax

43. **Mr. Heddle** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects that the European Court's decision in respect of European Economic Community sixth directive on value added tax will be known; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Brooke:** The position has not changed since my answer to my hon. Friend on 4 November at column 335.

51. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the outcome of his negotiations with the European Commission on the value added tax threshold.

**Mr. Brooke:** The Commission has proposed a new directive on VAT and small and medium enterprises which makes reference to the VAT threshold. Discussion on this directive started in the financial questions group of the Council in November and will continue under the Belgian presidency. It is not yet possible to forecast when and in what form the directive will be agreed.

**Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what would be the cost of extending value added tax bad debts relief *(a)* to all debts eligible for relief under section 130(i) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1970 and *(b)* to all unsatisfied judgment debts, indicating in each case the extent to which the cost would be affected by the proposals in his consultative document, "Value-added Tax: Small Business review", to permit smaller traders to account for value-added tax on a cash basis;

(2) what information he has concerning the increase in value added tax revenue which would occur if the standard method of reckoning gross takings were abolished as proposed in his consultative document, "Value-added Tax: Small Business Review"; and what is the number and size of traders who would be affected.

**Mr. Brooke** [*pursuant to his replies*, 26 January 1987, c. *185*]: There is no reliable basis for accurately forecasting the cost of comprehensive relief for bad and doubtful VAT debts. The best projection that can be made suggests an additional revenue cost well in excess of £100 million a year. In addition it is estimated that up to 200 extra Customs and Excise staff would be necessary to provide a reasonable security against abuse and fraud.

Representations received from respondents to the recent consultation document suggest that, if the proposal to abolish the standard method of reckoning gross takings for users of the VAT special retail schemes were to be implemented, the benefit to the revenue could be in excess of £25 million a year. The proposal would affect only those, mainly large, traders who provide self-financed credit facilities. It would not affect the wholly cash-dealing business.

The consultative document proposal to allow certain small traders to account for VAT on a cash basis would have only a minimal effect on the revenue cost of bad debt relief.

### Personal Income

48. **Mr. Fallon** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers earn less than £7,000 per year.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Information is readily available only in respect of total income for income tax purposes. In 1986-87 it is estimated that about 7·4 million single people and married couples will pay tax on incomes under £7,000.

### Consumer Spending

53. **Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement about the current levels of consumer spending.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** Figures published on 22 January 1987, which include a preliminary estimate for the fourth quarter of 1986, show a real increase of about 4½ cent. in consumer expenditure in 1986 compared with the previous year.

### Taxation

55. **Mr. Howarth** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from political parties in favour of higher taxes.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** My right hon. Friend has received no formal representations from such parties in favour of higher taxes.

58. **Mr. Greg Knight** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received urging an increase in the level of taxation in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** My right hon. Friend has received some representations proposing increases in particular taxes, but, very few, if any, proposing an increase in overall tax burdens.

### Tobacco Duty

56. **Mr. Roger King** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue he expects to receive from tobacco duty during the current financial year; and what was the total duty received in 1985-86.

**Mr. Brooke:** I refer my hon. Friend to table 9 on page 34 of the report of the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Customs and Excise for the year ended 31 March 1986. There is a copy in the Library of the House.

69. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the revenue yield from tobacco products in each of the years 1955-56, 1965-66, 1975-76 and 1985-86, both as a figure and as a percentage of total revenue.

**Mr. Brooke:** The information is as follows:

| | *Tobacco revenue* | *Tobacco revenue as percentage of central Government taxation* |
|---|---|---|
| | *£ million* | *percentage* |
| 1955-56 | 669 | 14·4 |
| 1965-66 | 1,014 | 12·2 |
| 1975-76 | [1]1,884 | 6·7 |
| 1985-86 | [1]5,374 | 5·6 |

*Note:*

[1] Including an estimate of VAT on sales of tobacco products.

### Scotch Whisky

60. **Mr. Bill Walker** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the value of the revenue received from the sale of Scotch whisky in the years 1984, 1985 and 1986, respectively.

**Mr. Brooke:** I regret that the available figures for Scotch whisky do not provide the information requested. However, it is estimated that the revenue from excise duty and VAT on all spirits in 1984, 1985 and 1986 was about £1,850 million, £1,965 million and £2,025 million respectively, and that about half of this came from the sale of Scotch whisky.

### Customs and Excise

61. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is satisfied that Her Majesty's Customs and Excise are able to operate and maintain its customs posts in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Brooke:** Yes.

### Taxation Revenue

63. **Mr. Howarth** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what studies his Department has conducted into the effect of top rate of income tax on revenue yields.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** Compared with 1978-79, top taxpayers in the United Kingdom are now paying a higher proportion of the total income tax yield. The links between top tax rates and yields can now be analysed in various ways, but I am not aware of any studies in the United Kingdom that have established a quantitative relationship between them.

### Small Businesses

65. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what responses have been received so far to the consultation paper on value-added tax and small businesses.

**Mr. Brooke:** Customs and Excise has received about 170 representations from trade and professional bodies and individual traders. In addition, over 1,200 responses have been received to the simplified question and answer leaflet sent to a random selection of 5,000 traders with annual turnovers not exceeding £100,000.

### Charities

67. **Mr. Ottaway** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his most recent information on the growth of giving to charities.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I regret that no comprehensive informaton on giving to charities is available. However the available information shows that in real terms covenanted giving increased by nearly 60 per cent. from 1978 to 1985 and bequests to charities increased by 140 per cent.

### Inflation

71. **Mr. Amess** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the present level of inflation and the outlook on inflation for the rest of the year.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** The increase in retail prices for the 12 months ending December 1986 was 3·7 per cent., an increase of 0·3 per cent. over November. The outlook for inflation to the fourth quarter of 1987 was described in the autumn statement forecast, which showed retail price inflation rising somewhat in the middle of 1987 before resuming a downward path.

### Privatisation

72. **Mr. Nellist** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what have been the total revenues to the Exchequer to date from the Government's privatisation programme.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I refer to the reply I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron).

### Banking System

74. **Mr. Loyden** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has any plans to change the present regulations governing the banking system.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** The present regulations for the banking system are governed by the Banking Act 1979. Because of developments in banking supervision, markets and technology the Government are taking steps to ensure that the law relating to banking and banking supervision is kept up to date and strengthened where necessary. A Banking Bill covering supervisory matters is before the House at present and on 14 November 1986 I announced that there would be a review of banking services law. Regulations made under the Banking Act 1979 are also reviewed from time to time and revised where appropriate.

### Income Tax

75. **Mrs. Roe** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current yield of 1p on the standard rate of income tax.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The direct revenue effect of a 1p change in the basic rate of income tax would be about £1·1 billion in 1987-88 and £1·45 billion in 1988-89 .

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what would be the cost in the 1987-88 financial year of introducing a reduced rate band of 25p of income tax on (i) the first £750 of taxable income, (ii) the first £1,000 of taxable income and (iii) the first £1,500 of taxable income; and in each case, what would be the impact on the net income of a married man on half average earnings, three quarters average earnings, average earnings, twice average earnings, five times average earnings and 10 times average earnings;

(2) if he will report the number of taxpayers and total income tax due from each range of £1,000 between £2,000 and £12,000 and for the following ranges: £12,000 to £16,000, £16,000 to £20,000, £20,000 to £30,000 and £30,000 plus for the latest year available.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Benefits (Revenue Gain)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the latest estimates of the average revenue gain which accrues to the Exchequer when *(a)* a person claiming benefit gains paid work and *(b)* a person not claiming benefit gains paid work, giving a gross figure and indicating the amount due to the tax gained, national insurance contributions gained, reductions in benefit expenditure and any other relevant factors.

**Mr. MacGregor:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Revenue

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if, in the manner of his reply of 20 January 1986, *Official Report*, column 84, he will publish and update the table showing the real changes in revenue sources between 1978-79 and 1986-87;

(2) if, in the manner of his reply of 20 January 1986, *Official Report*, columns 83-84, he will publish and update the table on total estimated tax revenue, broken down into the headings shown for 1986-87;

(3) what was the percentage and amount of national income derived from taxation for each year since 1979, in total and broken down between taxes on income and expenditure, national insurance and rates.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Tax Relief

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in the manner of his reply of 17 February 1986, *Official Report*, column 54, he will publish and update the tax relief figures for 1986-87.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Mortgage Interest Relief

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing the estimated cost of providing mortgage interest tax relief in 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88, at 1985-86 prices, showing separately the estimated cost of mortgages previously under the option mortgage scheme.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Currency Controls (Nigeria)

**Mr. Sheerman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what help he has made available to British companies adversely affected by policies of the Nigerian Government relating to currency exchange controls.

**Mr. John MacGregor:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

## ENVIRONMENT

### EC (Environmental)

**Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list in the *Official Report* all the EC directives and sub-directives relating to environmental improvement applicable in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Following is a list of the main environmental measures which have been adopted by the European Community. Information on those that are applicable in the United Kingdom can be found in "EEC Environmental Policy and Britain" by Nigel Haigh (ENDS 1984). As one of its contributions to European Year of the Environment, my Department has commissioned Mr. Haigh to bring his handbook up to date.

*Environment Action Programmes*

| *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|
| First Programme of Action on the Environment (1973-1976) and covering Council Declaration. | 22 November 1973 | C112/1<br>20 December 1973 |
| Second Programme of Action on the Environment (1977-1981) and covering Council Resolution. | 17 May 1977 | C139/1<br>13 June 1977 |
| Third Programme of Action on the Environment (1982-1986) and covering Council Resolution. | 7 February 1983 | C46/1<br>17 February 1983 |

*Environmental Measures adopted by the Council of Ministers*
*(Directives are the most commonly employed legal instruments*
*for environmental purposes. Those listed below are*
*Directives unless otherwise stated.)*
*General*

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 75/65/EEC | Commission Recommendation concerning the protection of the architectural and natural heritage. | 20 December 1974 | L21/22<br>28 January 1975 |
| 76/161/EEC | Decision establishing a common procedure for the setting up and constant updating of an inventory of sources of information on the environment in the Community. | 8 December 1975 | L31/8<br>5 February 1976 |
| 77/312/EEC | Biological screening of the population for lead. | 29 March 1977 | L105/10<br>28 April 1977 |
| 1872/84 | Action by the Community relating to the Environment. | 28 June 1984 | L176/1<br>3 July 1984 |
| 85/337/EEC | Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. | 27 June 1985 | L175/40<br>5 July 1985 |
| 85/338/EEC | Information on the state of the environment and natural resources in the Community. | 27 June 1985 | L176/14<br>6 July 1985 |

*Water*

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 73/404/EEC | Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to Detergents | 22 November 1973 | L347/51<br>17 December 1973 |
| 82/242/EEC | Amendment | 31 March 1982 | L109/1<br>22 April 1982 |
| 73/405/EEC | Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to methods of testing the biodegradebility of anionic surfactants | 22 November 1973 | L347/53<br>12 December 1973 |
| 82/243/EEC | Amendment | 31 March 1982 | L109/18<br>22 April 1982 |
| 75/440/EEC | Quality required of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water in the Member States | 16 June 1975 | L109/18<br>25 July 1975 |
| 76/160/EEC | Quality of bathing water | 8 December 1975 | L31/1<br>5 February 1976 |
| 76/464/EEC | Pollution caused by certain dangerous substances discharged into the aquatic environment of the Community | 4 May 1976 | L129/23<br>18 May 1976 |
| 77/795/EEC | Decision establishing a common procedure for the exchange of information on the quality of surface freshwater | 12 December 1977 | L334/29<br>24 December 1977 |
| 81/856/EEC | Adaptation | 19 October 1981 | L319<br>7 November 1981 |
| 84/422/EEC | Commission amendment | 24 July 1984 | L237<br>5 September 1984 |
| 78/659/EEC | Quality of freshwaters needing protection or improvement in order to support fish life | 18 July 1978 | L222/1<br>14 August 1973 |
| 79/869/EEC | Methods of measurements and frequencies of sampling and analysis of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water in the Member States | 9 October 1979 | L271/44<br>29 October 1979 |
| 81/855/EEC | Adaptation | 19 October 1981 | L319<br>7 November 1981 |
| 79/923/EEC | Quality required of shellfish waters | 30 September 1979 | L281/47<br>10 November 1979 |
| 80/68/EEC | Protection of groundwater against pollution caused by dangerous substances | 17 December 1979 | L20/43<br>26 January 1980 |

| EC No. | Subject | Date | EC Official Journal |
|---|---|---|---|
| 80/778/EEC | Quality of water intended for human consumption | 15 July 1980 | L229/11<br>30 August 1980 |
| 81/858/EEC | Adaptation | 19 October 1981 | L319<br>7 November 1982 |
| 82/176/EEC | Limit values and quality objectives for mercury discharges by the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry | 22 March 1982 | L81/29<br>27 March 1982 |
| — | Resolution concerning the combating of water pollution | 7 February 1983 | C46/17<br>17 February 1983 |
| 83/513/EEC | Limit values and quality objectives for cadmium discharges | 26 September 1983 | L291/1<br>24 October 1983 |
| 84/156/EEC | Limit values and quality objectives for mercury discharges by sectors other than the chlor-alkali electrolysis industry | 1 March 1984 | L74/49<br>17 March 1984 |
| 84/491/EEC | Limit values and quality objectives for discharges of HCH, and in particular lindane | 28 June 1984 | L274<br>17 October 1984 |
| 86/280/EEC | Limit values and quality objectives for discharges of certain dangerous substances included in list 1 of 76/464/EEC | 12 June 1986 | L181/16<br>4 July 1986 |
| 75/437/EEC | Decision concluding the Convention for the prevention of marine pollution from land-based sources. | 3 March 1975 | L194/5<br>25 July 1975 |
| 75/438/EEC | Community participation in the Interim Commission established on the basis of resolution No. III of the convention for the prevention of marine polution from land-based sources. | 3 March 1975 | L194/22<br>25 July 1975 |
| — | Resolution on the Convention for the prevention of marine pollution from land based sources. | 3 March 1975 | C168/1<br>25 July 1975 |
| 77/585/EEC | Decision concluding the Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution by dumping from ships and aircraft. | 25 July 1977 | L240/35<br>19 September 1977 |
| 77/586/EEC | Decision concluding the Convention for the protection of the Rhine against pollution. | 25 July 77 | L240/33<br>19 September 1977 |
| 82/460/EEC | Decision on a supplement to Annex IV to the Convention on the protection of the Rhine against chemical pollution. | 24 June 1982 | L210/8<br>19 July 1982 |
| 81/973/EEC | Decision establishing a Community information system for the control and reduction of pollution caused by hydrocarbons discharged at sea. | 3 December 1981 | L335/52<br>10 December 1981 |
| 81/420/EEC | Decision on the conclusion of the (second) Protocol concerning co-operation in combating pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by oil and other harmful substances in cases of emergency. | 19 May 1981 | L167/4<br>19 June 1981 |
| 83/101/EEC | Decision concluding the (third) Protocol for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea against pollution from land-based sources. | 28 February 1983 | L67/1<br>12 March 1981 |
| 84/358/EEC | Decision concerning the conclusion of the Agreement for co-operation in dealing with pollution of the North Sea by oil and other harmful substances [Bonn Agreement]. | 28 June 1984 | L188/7<br>16 July 1984 |
| 86/85/EEC | Council Decision establishing a Community information system for the control and reduction of pollution caused by the spillage of hydrocarbons and other harmful substances at sea. | 6 March 1986 | L77/33<br>22 March 1986 |
| 85/336/EEC | Council Decision concerning a supplement in respect of cadmium to annex IV to the Convention for the protection of the Rhine against chemical pollution. | 27 June 1985 | L175/36<br>5 July 1985 |

### *Air*

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 70/220/EEC | Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to measures to be taken against air pollution by gases from positive ignition engines of motor vehicles. | 20 March 1970 | L76/1<br>6 April 1970 |
| 74/290/EEC | Amendment. | 28 May 1974 | L159/61<br>15 June 1974 |
| 77/102/EEC | Amendment. | 30 November 1976 | L32/32<br>3 February 1977 |
| 78/665/EEC | Amendment. | 14 July 1978 | L223/48<br>14 August 1978 |
| 83/351/EEC | Amendment. | 16 June 1983 | L197/207 |
| 72/306/EEC | Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to measures to be taken against pollutant emissions from diesel engines for use in vehicles. | 2 August 1972 | L190/1<br>20 August 1972 |
| 75/441/EEC | Decision establishing a common procedure for the exchange of information between the surveillance and monitoring networks based on data relating to atmospheric pollution caused by certain compounds and suspended particulates. | 24 June 1975 | L194/32<br>25 July 1975 |
| 82/459/EEC | Decision establishing a reciprocal exchange of information and data from networks and individual stations measuring air pollution within Member States. | 24 June 1982 | L210/1<br>19 July 1982 |
| 75/716/EEC | Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the sulphur content of certain liquid fuels. | 24 November 1975 | L307/22<br>27 November 1975 |
| 77/537/EEC | Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the measures to be taken against the emission of pollutants from diesel engines for use in wheeled agricultural or forestry tractors. | 28 June 1977 | L220/38<br>29 August 1977 |
| 78/607/EEC | Resolution on fluorocarbons in the environment. | 30 May 1978 | C133/1<br>7 June 1978 |
| 80/372/EEC | Decision concerning chlorofluorocarbons in the environment. | 26 March 1980 | L90/45<br>3 April 1980 |
| 82/795/EEC | Decision on the Consolidation of Precautionary measures concerning CFCs in the environment. | 15 November 1982 | L329/29<br>25 November 1982 |
| 78/611/EEC | Lead content of Petrol | 29 June 1978 | L197/19<br>22 July 1978 |
| 80/779/EEC | Air quality limit values and guide values for sulphur dioxide and suspended particulates. | 15 July 1980 | L229/30<br>30 August 1980 |
| 81/857/EEC | Adaptation. | 19 October 1981 | L319/81<br>7 November 1981 |
| — | Resolution on transboundary air pollution by sulphur dioxide and suspended particulates. | 15 July 1980 | C222/1<br>30 August 1980 |
| 81/462/EEC | Decision on the conclusion of the convention on long range transboundary air pollution. | 11 June 1981 | L171/11<br>27 June 1981 |
| 82/834/EEC | Limit values for lead in air. | 3 December 1982 | L378/15<br>31 December 1982 |
| 82/605/EEC | The protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to metallic lead and its ionic compounds at work (first individual directive within the meaning of Article 8 of Directive 80/1107/EEC). | 28 July 1982 | L247/12<br>23 August 1982 |
| 84/360/EEC | Directive on the combating of air pollution from industrial plants. | 26 June 1984 | L188/20<br>16 July 1984 |
| 85/203/EEC | Directive on air quality standards for No.$_2$ | 7 March 1985 | L87/1 |

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 85/210/EEC | Directive on the lead content of Petrol | 20 March 1985 | L96/25<br>3 April 1985 |
| 85/277/EEC | Conclusion of the Protocol on the 1979 Convention on LRTBAP financing of EMEP. | 12 June 1986 | L181/1<br>4 July 1986 |

*Waste*

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 75/439/EEC | Disposal of Waste Oils | 16 June 1975 | L194/23<br>25 July 1975 |
| 75/442/EEC | Waste | 15 July 1975 | L194/39<br>25 July 1975 |
| 76/403/EEC | Disposal of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and polychlorinated terphenyls (PCTs) | 6 April 1976 | L108/41<br>26 April 1976 |
| 78/176/EEC | Waste from the titanium dioxide industry. | 20 February 1978 | L54/19<br>25 February 1978 |
| 83/29/EEC | Amendment | 24 January 1983 | L32/28<br>3 February 1983 |
| 78/319/EEC | Toxic and dangerous waste. | 20 March 1978 | L8443<br>31 March 1978 |
| 81/972/EEC | Recommendation concerning the re-use of recycled paper. | 3 December 1981 | L355/56<br>10 December 1981 |
| 82/883/EEC | Procedures for the surveillance and monitoring of environments concerned by waste from titanium dioxide industry. | 3 December 1982 | L378/1<br>31 December 1982 |
| 84/631/EEC | Supervision and control within the European Community of the transfrontier shipment of hazardous waste. | 6 December 1984 | L326/31 |
| 85/339/EEC | Directive on containers of liquid for human consumption | 27 June 1985 | L176/1<br>6 July 1985 |
| 86/278/EEC | Protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture. | 12 June 1986 | L181/6<br>4 July 1986 |
| 86/279/EEC | Amendment to directive 84/631/EEC on the supervision and control within the EC of the transfrontier shipment of hazardous waste. | 12 June 1986 | L181/13 |

*Noise*

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 70/157/EEC | Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the permissible sound level and the exhaust system of motor vehicles | 6 February 1970 | L42/16<br>23 February 1970 |
|  | Amendments |  |  |
| 73/350/EEC | (Commission Directive adapting to technical progress) | 7 November 1973 | L321/33<br>22 November 1973 |
| 77/212/EEC |  | 8 March 1977 | L66/33<br>12 March 1977 |
| 81/334/EEC |  | 13 April 1981 | L131/6<br>18 August 1981 |
| 79/113/EEC | Approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the determination of the noise emission of construction plant and equipment | 19 December 1976 | L33/15<br>8 February 1979 |
| 81/1051/EEC | Amendment | 7 December 1981 | L376<br>30 December 1981 |
| 79/1061/EEC | Limitation of noise emissions from subsonic aircraft | 20 December 1979 | L18/26<br>24 January 1980 |

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 78/1015/EEC | Approximation of the laws of Member States on the permissible sound level and exhaust system of motorcycles | 23 November 1978 | L349/21<br>13 December 1978 |

### *Conservation and Wildlife*

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 79/405/EEC | Conservation of wild birds | 2 April 1979 | L103/1<br>25 April 1979 |
| 81/854/EEC | Adaptation | 19 October 1981 | L319<br>7 November 1981 |
| | Council Resolution on 79/409/EEC | 2 April 1979 | L103/6<br>25 April 1979 |
| 348/81 | Regulation on Common Rules for imports of whales or other cetacean products | 20 January 1981 | L39/1<br>12 February 1981 |
| 81/691/EEC | Decision on the conclusion of the Convention on the conservation of Antarctic marine living resources | 4 September 1981 | L252/26<br>5 September 1981 |
| 82/72/EEC | Decision concerning the conclusion of the Convention on the conservation of European wildlife and natural habitats | 3 December 1981 | L38/1<br>10 February 1982 |
| 3786/81 | Regulation on provisions for the implementation of the common rules for imports of whale or other cetacean products | 22 December 1981 | L377/42<br>31 December 1981 |
| 82/461/EEC | Decision on the conclusion of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animal | 24 June 1982 | L210/10<br>19 July 1982 |
| 3626/82 | Regulation on the implementation in the Community of the Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora | 3 December 1982 | L384/1<br>31 December 1983 |
| 3645/83 | Amendment Regulation | 28 November 1983 | L367/1<br>28 December 1983 |
| 3646/83 | Amendment Commission Regulation | 12 December 1983 | L367/2<br>28 December 1983 |
| 2285/86 | Amendment Regulation | 21 July 1986 | L201/1<br>24 July 1984 |
| 3418/83 | Regulation laying down provisions for the uniform issue and use of the documents required for the implementation in the Community of the Convention on international trade in endangered species of wild fauna and flora | 28 November 1983 | L344/1<br>7 December 1983 |
| 83/129/EEC | Importation into Member States of skins of certain seal pups and products therefrom | 23 March 1983 | L91/30<br>9 April 1983 |

### *Dangerous Substances*

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 78/631/EEC | Approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances. Pesticides. | 26 June 1978 | L206/13<br>29 July 1978 |
| 81/187/EEC | First amendment. | 26 March 1981 | L77/29<br>2 April 1981 |
| 82/501/EEC | Major accident hazards of certain industrial activities. | 24 June 1982 | L230/1<br>5 August 1982 |
| 67/548/EEC | Approximation of laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances. | 27 June 1967 | 196/1<br>16 August 1967 |
| | **Amendments** | | |
| 69/81/EEC | First amendment. | 13 March 1969 | L68<br>19 March 1969 |

| EC No. | Subject | Date | EC Official Journal |
|---|---|---|---|
| 70/189/EEC | Second amendment. | 6 March 1970 | L59<br>14 March 1970 |
| 71/144/EEC | Third amendment. | 22 March 1971 | L74<br>29 March 1971 |
| 73/146/EEC | Fourth amendment. | 21 May 1973 | L167<br>25 June 1973 |
| 75/409/EEC | Fifth amendment. | 24 June 1975 | L183/22<br>14 July 1975 |
| 79/831/EEC | Sixth amendment. | 18 September 1979 | L259/10<br>15 October 1979 |
|  | Adaptations |  |  |
| 76/907/EEC | First adaptation. | 14 July 1976 | L360<br>30 December 1976 |
| 79/370/EEC | Second adaptation. | 30 January 1979 | L88<br>7 April 1979 |
| 81/957/EEC | Third adaptation. (Commission Directive) | 23 October 1981 | L351/5<br>7 December 1981 |
| 82/232/EEC | Fourth adaptation. (Commission Directive) | 25 March 1982 | L106/18<br>21 April 1982 |
| 83/467/EEC | Fifth adaptation. (Commission Directive) | 29 July 1983 | L257/1<br>16 September 1983 |
| 76/769/EEC | Approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations. | 27 July 1976 | L262/201<br>27 September 1976 |
|  | Amendments |  |  |
| 79/663/EEC | First amendment. | 24 July 1979 | L197/37<br>3 August 1979 |
| 82/806/EEC | Second amendment. | 22 November 1982 | L339/55<br>1 December 1982 |
| 82/828/EEC | Third amendment. | 3 December 1982 | L350/34<br>10 December 1982 |
| 83/264/EEC | Fourth amendment. | 16 May 1983 | L147/9<br>6 June 1983 |
| 83/478/EEC | Fifth amendment. | 19 September 1983 | L263/33<br>24 September 1983 |
| 85/467/EEC | Sixth amendment. | 1 October 1985 | L261/86<br>11 October 1985 |
| 73/173/EEC | Approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions relating to the classification, packaging and labelling of dangerous substances. Solvents. |  |  |
| 80/781/EEC | First amendment. | 22 July 1980 | L229/57<br>30 August 1980 |
| 82/473/EEC | First adaptation. | 10 June 1982 | L213/17<br>21 July 1982 |

### *Research and Development*

| EC No. | Subject | Date | EC Official Journal |
|---|---|---|---|
| 76/311/EEC | Decision adopting a Research Programme for the EEC (1976-1980) on the protection of the environment (Indirect Action). | 15 March 1976 | L74/36<br>20 March 1976 |
| 79/841/EEC | Amendment. | 9 October 1979 | L258/29<br>13 October 1979 |

| *EC No.* | *Subject* | *Date* | *EC Official Journal* |
|---|---|---|---|
| — | Communication of the Commission Research Programme for the EEC on the protection of the environment (Indirect Action) (second Environmental Research Programme 1976-80). | 3 April 1976 | C78/2<br>3 April 1976 |
| 81/213/EEC | Decision adopting a sectoral research and development programme in the field of environment (environmental protection and climatology) — indirect and concerted actions (1981-1985). | 3 March 1981 | L101/1<br>11 April 1981 |
| 84/139/EEC | Revised. | 1 March 1984 | L71/13<br>14 March 1984 |
| 79/968/EEC | Decision adopting a multi-annual research and development programme (1979-1982) for the EEC in the field of recycling of urban and industrial waste (secondary raw materials). | 12 November 1979 | 293/19<br>20 November 1979 |
| 78/384/EEC | Decision adopting a multi-annual research and development programme (1978-1980) for the EEC in the field of paper and board recycling (indirect action). | 17 April 1978 | L107/12<br>21 April 1978 |
| 80/1042/EEC | Amendment. | 11 November 1980 | L307/24<br>18 November 1980 |
| 80/27/EEC | Decision adopting a multi-annual research programme of the EEC in the field of climatology (indirect action 1980-1984). | 18 December 1979 | L12/24<br>17 January 1980 |

*Note:*
Directives adopted during the United Kingdom Presidency on Waste Oils, Asbestos and Motor Cycle Noise have not yet appeared in the EC Official Journal.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Friday 30 January 1987*

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Student Grants

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement on student grants.

**Mr. Walden:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given today by my right hon. Friend to the hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Rhodes James).

**Mr. Rhodes James** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will make a statement about levels of students' grants and parental contributions for 1987-88.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** Subject to Parliament's approval of the necessary regulations the main rates of student grant will be increased by 3·75 per cent., in line with the forecast rise in the retail price index. The new rates for England and Wales will be as follows (rates for 1986-87 are shown in brackets):

| | *Undergraduate* £ | *Postgraduate* £ |
|---|---|---|
| Hall or lodgings | | |
| (i) London | 2,330 (2,246) | 3,492 (3,366) |
| (ii) Elsewhere | 1,972 (1,901) | 2,859 (2,756) |
| Parental home | 1,567 (1,510) | 2,075 (2,000) |

The threshold for parental contribution, and the transitional scale points, will be raised on average by about 6·75 per cent. Parents earning a residual income of less than £9,300 will no longer be assessed for a contribution. The minimum parental contribution will be raised from £20 to £40, and the maximum for parents with more than one child in receipt of grant, from £4,300 to £4,600. The full scale is as follows:

*Parental contribution scale 1987-88*

| *Residual income* £ | *Contribution* £ |
|---|---|
| 9,300 | 40 |
| 9,400 | 54 |
| 9,500 | 68 |
| 10,000 | 140 |
| 11,000 | 282 |
| 11,800 | 397 |
| 11,900 | 417 |
| 12,000 | 437 |
| 13,000 | 637 |
| 14,000 | 837 |
| 15,000 | 1,037 |
| 16,000 | 1,237 |
| 17,000 | 1,437 |
| 17,300 | 1,497 |
| 17,400 | 1,522 |
| 17,500 | 1,547 |
| 18,000 | 1,672 |
| 19,000 | 1,922 |
| 20,000 | 2,172 |
| 21,000 | 2,422 |
| 22,000 | 2,672 |
| 23,000 | 2,922 |
| 24,000 | 3,172 |
| 25,000 | 3,422 |
| 26,000 | 3,672 |
| 27,000 | 3,922 |
| 28,000 | 4,172 |
| 29,000 | 4,422 |
| 29,712 | [1]4,600 |

[1] Maximun.

*Notes:*

1. For 1987-88 the rate of contribution is assessed at £1 in £7 for residual incomes from £9,300 to £11,800; then £1 in £5 to £17,300; then £1 in £4 in £4 thereafter. (In 1986-87 the rate of contribution was assessed at £1 in £7 from £8,700 to £11,100; then £1 in £5 to £16,200; then £1 in £4 thereafter.
2. The contribution payable may be less then the amounts shown on the scale, particularly at its top end. This will depend on the amount of grant against which the contribution has to be set and whether any of the assessed contribution is offset by allowance for other dependent children.

### Calderstones Comprehensive School, Liverpool

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will direct the Liverpool education authority under section 68 of the Education Act 1944 to consult the governors, parents and staff, in accordance with the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 before completion of the sale of the Morrison wing of Calderstones comprehensive school to a private developer.

**Mr. Dunn:** There is no provision in the Education (No. 2) Act 1986 requiring a local education authority to consult the governors, parents or staff of a school before parts of the school premises are taken out of use.

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received about the sale of the Morrison wing of Calderstones comprehensive school, Liverpool; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Dunn:** My right hon. Friend has received two letters from the hon. Member enclosing letters from his constituents. Calderstones comprehensive school is at present operating on a split site and I understand that the Liverpool education authority is considering the disposal of the Morrison wing in order to rationalise on to one site.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Primary Health Care

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Prime Minister if Her Majesty's Government will reduce inequalities in the allocation of primary health care financing by moving resources from areas such as Scotland and Northern Ireland to England.

**The Prime Minister:** The amount of resources provided for primary health care depends on demand for the family practitioner services and the need to develop community health services. Therefore, resources cannot be switched in the way the hon. Member suggests.

### North Sea

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement about the division of responsibility between Departments concerning the environment of the North sea.

**The Prime Minister:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment is responsible for co-ordinating policy on issues affecting the marine environment, including the North sea. His Department, as well as the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Department of Transport, the Department of Energy, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Scottish Office and the Welsh Office, also have responsibility, where appropriate, for various specific aspects of the marine environment.

### National Security

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Prime Minister if she will publish in the *Official Report*, Her Majesty's Government's definition of national security in the context of its use by Ministers.

**The Prime Minister:** I refer the hon, Gentleman to the reply by my right hon. Friend the then Home Secretary to the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 2 April 1985 at column *569*.

## ENERGY

### Nuclear Power Stations

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if contingency plans exist for the closure or running down of nuclear power stations in wartime; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** Contingency plans exist governing the operation of nuclear power stations in wartime. It would not be appropriate for me to reveal the details.

### Babcock Power Limited

**Mr. Allen Adams** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a visit to Paisley, North to inspect power station manufacturing equipment at Babcock Power Limited.

**Mr. Goodlad:** My right hon. Friend and I would be pleased to consider such a visit, should we receive an invitation.

### Wylfa Power Station

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) what is the current spare storage capacity of the irradiated fuel storage vaults at Wylfa, and the date by which these vaults will be filled presuming normal operation of the station;

(2) why repairs to the damaged flask-handling crane at Wylfa nuclear power station have not been completed; when it was decided to obtain a replacement crane; and when this replacement crane must be operational in order to prevent closure of the station.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I have asked the chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board to write to the hon. Member.

### Irradiated Fuel Stores

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what is the volume of the spare storage capacity of the irradiated fuel stores at a nuclear facility at which the nuclear installations inspectorate considers that it will be necessary to close down the station.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I am advised by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate of the Health and Safety Executive that it expects sufficient storage capacity to be kept available at a nuclear power station so that an irradiated defective channel of fuel could be discharged immediately from a reactor.

### Sizewell

**Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if, in the light of recommendation 4(f) of the report on the Sizewell public inquiry by Sir Frank Layfield, concerning the production of a consultative document as a matter of high priority, he will state his policy on waiting for the outcome of any such consultative initiatives before making a decision on the Sizewell consent application; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** My right hon. Friend has a quasi-judicial role in respect of the Central Electricity Generating Board's application to construct Sizewell B. It would not be proper for him to comment on the inspector's report, including the recommendations, before he has taken his decision.

### Sellafield

**Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether the new regime at Sellafield foreshadowed in June 1986 has now been instituted.

**Mr. Goodlad:** The new regime was instituted last month though, as I stated in June, Euratom inspectors have had access to all civil material at Sellafield since March last year. Under the new regime, it will be necessary for a time for certain quantities of residues containing plutonium to be removed temporarily from safeguards for treatment by specialised equipment in non-civil plant. These are purely technical movements which are necessary for safety reasons. All of the material will be returned to safeguards after treatment.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

**Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if his Department has considered an application for an exhibition relating to the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless to be displayed in the Upper Waiting Hall.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Yes. My hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) will be opening the exhibition on 9 February.

### Overseas Development Administration

**Mr. Whitney** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any change has been agreed in provision for the Overseas Development Administration in 1986-87.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** Subject to parliamentary approval of the spring supplementary estimate, the cash limit for the overseas aid vote (class II, vote 5) will be increased to £1,064,998,000. The change allows for agreed carry-over of aid programme underspending in 1985-86 and other adjustments. Subject to parliamentary approval, the cash limit on the overseas aid administration vote (class II, vote 6) will also be increased, to £27,312,000, to meet necessary capital expenditure on a computerised management information system. The increases do not add to the planned total of public expenditure in 1986-87.

## WALES

### Service Sector

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the net gain or loss of jobs in the service sector in *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales since 1983 to the latest date for which such figures are available.

**Mr. Edwards:** The latest estimates by the Department of Employment of the number of employees in employment indicate a net gain of 2,000 jobs in the service sector in Wales between June 1983 and June 1986. These estimates are not available below the Wales level.

### Manufacturing Job Losses

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector in *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales since (i) 1979 and (ii) 1983.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** Comprehensive information regarding the latest number of jobs lost in the manufacturing sector is not available. The latest Department of Employment estimates for employees in employment in Wales indicate that there were 112,000 fewer jobs in June 1986 than in June 1979. The comparable loss between June 1983 and June 1986 is 11,000.

Although equivalent information is not available for Clwyd, results of my Department's regional data system (which largely relate to the previous, 1968, definition of manufacturing and to companies of more than 10 employees) indicate that there was a fall of about 11,000 in the numbers employed in the establishments covered between 1979 and 1983, and a rise of over 1,500 in the period 1983 to the latest available date, which may vary a little because of the timing of reports from the establishments concerned.

### Manufacturing Output

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the most recent figure for output in the Welsh manufacturing industry; and what was the comparable figure for the same month seven years ago.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** Changes in the levels of output of Welsh manufacturing industry are measured by the "Index of Production and Construction for Wales", (1980 = 100), which is published in a quarterly press notice and is available in the Library. The most recent results available indicate that in the third quarter of 1986 the manufacturing index stood at 107·0, compared with 110·0 on a comparable basis in the third quarter of 1979.

### In-Service Teacher Training

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he has yet determined the allocations of specific grant to the local authorities in Wales for in-service teacher training in 1987-88; and what improvements he expects as a result of the new arrangements which he is introducing.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** In September 1986 the local education authorities in Wales were invited to submit details of their programmes of in-service teacher training for 1986-87. At the same time the authorities were given indicative allocations of grant ceilings against which to bid. All the authorities have submitted proposals for in-service training involving expenditure equalling or exceeding the indicative allocations. After considering these proposals, and in the light of advice from Her Majesty's inspectorate, I have decided that grant should be provided on the basis of the indicative allocation of £11·86 million aided expenditure for the scheme. I intend to confirm the allocations to each authority after regulations have been laid before Parliament and come into force.

This is a major new scheme for the professional development of teachers, leading to a more effective and properly planned system of training for the education service. The aided expenditure for 1987-88 represents and increse of 19 per cent. over the estimated expenditure on in-service training in the current year. I am pleased that local authorities have responded positively: they intend to spend £13·5 million on in-service training next year compared with £9·96 million this year. This is a major step towards ensuring that teachers' access to training will no longer depend on the part of the country in which they work.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Police National Computer

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Attorney-General whether the Director of Public Prosecutions will initiate a prosecution under the terms of the Data Protection Act for the unauthorised disclosure of personal data from the Police National Computer to private detectives by a police officer in Essex constabulary, discovered during the police investigation of the bugging of the director of Comet Electricals in November 1986; and if he will make a statement.

**The Attorney-General:** Inquiries are continuing into allegations of unauthorised disclosure of personal data from the police national computer. A decision as to the institution of criminal proceedings will be made when the inquiries are complete.

### Prosecution Policy

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Attorney-General what is his policy towards prosecutions under the Official Secrets Acts as opposed to the Data Protection Act in cases where a prosecution under either Act appears justified; and if he will make a statement.

**The Attorney-General:** The Director of Public Prosecutions will consider each case on its own facts and merits, and he will institute criminal proceedings whenever they are justified under the provision which is most appropriate in the circumstances.

### Immigration (Electronic Data System Limited)

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Attorney-General what action the Director of Public Prosecutions proposes to take in the case of alleged infringement of immigration rules by Electronic Data System Limited.

**The Attorney-General:** I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Wales (Crime Statistics)

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish a table showing for each year from 1979 to 1986 inclusive, the number of incidents of crime reported within the north Wales police area, the average number of police constables working in this area for those years and the number of incidents per police constable arising from these figures for each year.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The number of offences recorded by the police in the north Wales police force area is published in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales" (table 2.4 of the 1985 edition, Cmnd. 10.) The number of police officers working in the north Wales police force area is published in the annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, appendix 7 of the edition for 1985.

### Burial

**Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received any recent representations from local authorities in support of amending the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926 to permit under certain circumstances the burial of bodies without the delivery of a registration certificate; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** We have received a letter from my hon. Friend the Member for Bournemouth, West (Mr. Butterfill), together with a letter from Bournemouth borough council and a local maternity service manager. The possibility of amending the legislation which controls the disposal of human remains which are not at present registrable will be considered further depending on the parliamentary progress of the Infant Life Preservation Bill.

### Police Discipline (Access to Witnesses)

**Sir Eldon Griffiths** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps he is taking to draw to the attention of chief police officers the judgment of the High Court in the case of R. *v.* the Chief Constable of North Wales ex parte Connah, that it was contrary to natural justice that this accused police sergeant and his representatives were denied access to police witnesses who might assist in the preparation of his defence against discipline charges unless a senior officer was also present;

(2) if he will place in the Library a transcript of the 17 November 1986 judgment of Lord Justice Johnson and Mr. Justice Peter Pain in the case of R. *v.* Chief Constable of North Wales ex parte Connah; and when and how he proposes to amend his guidance regarding police discipline regulations so as to incorporate the findings of the judicial review.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I have today placed a copy of the judgment in the Library. The court limited the effect of their judgment to the facts of the case of Sergeant Connah. We shall, however consider whether the judgment needs to be brought to the attention of all chief constables through an amendment to the guidance to chief officers on complaints and discipline procedures.

### Crime

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further proposals he has for seeking to combat crime.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** We shall continue to combat crime by a range of measures to promote the involvement of the community in crime prevention, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system and to increase the resources available to the police. The Home Office standing conference on crime prevention has recently established working groups to consider juvenile crime, publicity on child abuse, and young people and alcohol. Demonstration projects to tackle the problem of alcohol-related crime in city centres are being set up. The Criminal Justice Bill includes measures to strengthen investigatory powers in major fraud cases and to increase the powers of the courts to confiscate the proceeds of crime. Further details of the Government's strategy may be found in the revised edition of "Criminal Justice: A Working Paper", a copy of which is in the Library.

### Non-custodial Sentences

**Mr. Watts** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the initiatives being taken to strengthen the range of non-custodial options available for dealing with offenders.

**Mr. Mellor:** The maintenance and development of a wide range of non-custodial options is a fundamental part of the Government's criminal justice strategy. Since 1979 we have taken a number of steps to increase the range of alternatives to imprisonment and their value to the courts: for example, by extending community service orders to 16-year-olds and by strengthening the probation order. Our main aim is to increase the courts' confidence in and use of existing measures, including the fine.

### Crimes of Violence

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of crimes of violence against the person in Wales in the 12 months ended March 1979 and the most recent 12 months for which such figures are available.

**Mr. Mellor:** Numbers of notifiable offences recorded in police force areas are published each year in the Command Paper "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales" (table 2.5 of the issue for 1985). Police in Wales recorded 4,810 offences of violence against the person in the 12 months ending March 1979, compared with 6,910 in the 12 months ending September 1986.

### Wheel Clamping

**Mr. Pavitt** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of the penalties exacted by wheel-clamping is retained by the Metropolitan police; how many clamps were imposed in London during the month of December 1986; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** All receipts from charges for wheel-clamping are retained by the Metropolitan police and used to offset the costs of clamping, including the payment of contractors and staff costs. A total of 8,187 vehicles were wheel-clamped during December 1986.

### Dundee (Immigration)

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigration officials are employed in connection with duties at the port of Dundee; and what steps he is taking to ensure they are equipped to deal with increased activity at the port.

**Mr. Waddington:** Customs officers stationed at Dundee act as immigration officers and are able to call upon the assistance of five immigration officers at Edinburgh airport as required. Operational requirements are regularly reviewed.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether officials from his Department have been in touch with Dundee district council's environmental health convener, or environmental health department officials at Dundee regarding the stowaways on board the jute vessel "Banglar Robi"; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waddington:** No. Immigration officers did not go on board the "Banglar Robi" until some time after the suspected stowaways were detained ashore.

### Electronic Data Systems

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on current work being undertaken for his Department by Electronic Data Systems.

**Mr. Hurd:** No work is at present being undertaken for the Home Office by Electronic Data Systems.

### Nuclear Safety

**Mr. Ashdown** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Avon and Somerset as to what items of equipment relevant to an incident involving radioactivity are available from stores located in Avon and Somerset for use by police and the Avon and Somerset constabulary: what number of *(a)* personal dosimeters, *(b)* other radiation meters, *(c)* sets of protective clothing and *(d)* breathing units, are available from such stores; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of Avon and Somerset as to what training facilities are used by the Avon and Somerset constabulary for courses in dealing with incidents involving radioactivity; what number of officers have attended such courses in each of the last five years; what training is given in the use of relevant equipment; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 January 1987, c. *358*]: Officers of Avon and Somerset constabulary are trained in the effects of radiation during initial training. Further training is given to senior officers. The force plan for major incidents covers a wide range of civil emergencies, including those involving radioactivity. It is exercised at least once a year. Avon and Somerset constabulary holds some 12 dosimeters and 694 radiac survey meters (PDRM 82s); protective equipment and breathing apparatus is held by Avon and Somerset fire brigade. Further equipment and professional advice is available as set out in the emergency planning guidance to local authorities (a copy is in the Library).

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of north Wales on the items of equipment available for police use in an accident involving radioactive contamination at *(a)* A division (Caernarfon), *(b)* B division (Llandudno), *(c)* C division (Prestatyn) and *(d)* D division (Wrexham) of the north Wales police, listing in each case the number of (i) dosimeters, (ii) radiac survey meters, (iii) sets of protective clothing, (iv) breathing units and (v) decontamination units;

(2) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of north Wales on what training the police in *(a)* A division (Caernarfon), *(b)* B division (Llandudno), *(c)* C division (Prestatyn) and *(d)* D division (Wrexham) of the north Wales police have received to deal with accidents involving radioactivity; what regular exercises the division carries out to deal with such accidents; and at what intervals such exercises take place;

(3) if he will call for a report from the chief constable of North Wales on what exercises have taken place over the past five years to prepare the police of the north Wales constabulary for *(a)* an accident involving radioactive contamination and *(b)* evacuation of the population in the event of the worst case of nuclear reactor disaster under adverse meteorological conditions; and if he will list in each case which units participated.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg** [*pursuant to his reply*, 13 January 1987, c. *148-49*]: Officers of the north Wales police are trained in the effects of radioactivity during initial training. Officers of A and B divisions take part in exercises with the CEGB at Trawsfynydd and Wylfa. In the last five years there have been five annual exercises at each site and two broader exercises. All exercise scenarios include radioactive contamination. The force reviews annually plans for evacuation of areas around the sites. North Wales police hold centrally 12 dosimeters and 780 radiac survey meters (PDRM 82s). A division holds 30 breathing units and B division 40. Further equipment and professional advice is available as set out in the emergency planning guidance to local authorities (a copy is in the Library).

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Income Tax

**Sir Brandon Rhys Williams** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the cost in terms of revenue forgone if the maximum annual amount of income tax payable by any individual taxpayer, counting husbands and wives separately, were £100,000 or 40 per cent. of gross taxable income.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The direct revenue cost would be about £450 million at 1986-87 income levels. This estimate makes no allowance for possible behavioural changes.

**Mr. Pike** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost to the Treasury of a cut in income tax basic rate of one penny.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The direct revenue cost would be about £1·1 billion in 1987-88 and £1·45 billion in 1988-89.

**Mr. Chapman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the loss of revenue in 1987-88 if *(a)* the basic rate of income tax was to be reduced by 2 per cent. and *(b)* the threshold for income tax liability was increased by 10 per cent. in real terms.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The direct revenue costs in 1987-88 would be about £2·2 billion and £1·8 billion, respectively.

## Mortgage Interest Relief

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, pursuant to the answer of 19 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *740*, to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury, in relation to the table of tax units receiving mortgage interest relief in 1986-87, he will account for *(a)* the increase from 1985-86 in those with total income of under £4,000 p.a. receiving mortgage relief from 500,000 to 690,000, and the increase in the average value of this relief from £110 to £350, *(b)* the increase from 1985[illegible]those with total income over £20,000 p.a. receiving mortgage relief from 900,000 to 1,100,000, whilst the total cost of such relief has fallen from £1 billion to £970 million and *(c)* the factors involved in the fall in the total cost of relief from £4·75 billion to £4·5 billion; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I assume that the hon. Member is comparing the information supplied in my answer to him of 19 December 1986, at column *740*, with that given to the hon. Members for Thurrock (Dr. McDonald), for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) and Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 9 April 1986, at columns *125-26*.

The information provided for 1985-86 in April 1986 was based on projections of the 1983 family expenditure survey and the 1983-84 survey of personal incomes. The estimates were therefore subject to a considerable amount of error. Also, I regret that the analysis incorrectly allocated the small proportion of mortgage interest relief received by non-taxpayers; this mainly affected the estimates for the lowest ranges of income.

Revised estimates for 1985-86, based on the 1985 family expenditure survey and projections from the 1984-85 survey of personal incomes are given in the table. These estimates are consistent with those for 1986-87, supplied on 19 December 1986. But they, like those [illegible] 1986-87, remain provisional.

Compared with the information supplied in the answer of 19 December 1986:

a. the average relief per mortgagor for those tax units with total incomes under £4,000 per year remained almost unchanged between 1985-86 and 1986-87, being estimated at £360 in 1985-86 and £350 in 1986-87.

b. the numbers with total incomes over £20,000 per year, receiving mortgage interest relief, increased from 940,000 in 1985-86 to 1,100,000 in 1986-87, while the total cost of relief to these tax units increased from £910 million to £970 million. In this range, therefore, the average relief per mortgagor fell from £970 in 1985-86 to £880 in 1986-87. This fall reflects the reduction in average interest rates (from 13·25 per cent. in 1985-86 to 11·5 per cent. assumed for 1986-87), which was partly offset by growth in the amount of interest eligible for relief below the ceiling of £30,000.

c. the estimate of the total cost of relief is now £4·5 billion in both 1985-86 and 1986-87. The esimate for 1985-86 has been revised from £4·75 billion, following improvements to methods of projecting amounts of mortgages outstanding.

*Tax units[1] receiving mortgage interest relief by range of total income—1985-86*

| *Range of total income* | *Numbers receiving mortgage relief[2] ('000)* | *Average value of relief per mortgagor (£)* | *Total cost of relief (£ million)* | *Percentage of total cost (per cent.)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Under 4 | 690 | 360 | 250 | 6 |
| 4 to 5 | 110 | 370 | 40 | 1 |
| 5 to 6 | 210 | 400 | 90 | 2 |
| 6 to 7 | 320 | 410 | 140 | 3 |
| 7 to 8 | 440 | 440 | 200 | 4 |
| 8 to 9 | 580 | 460 | 270 | 6 |
| 9 to 10 | 630 | 470 | 300 | 7 |
| 10 to 12 | 1,250 | 540 | 680 | 15 |
| 12 to 15 | 1,490 | 560 | 840 | 19 |
| 15 to 20 | 1,340 | 580 | 780 | 17 |
| 20 to 25 | 430 | 720 | 310 | 7 |
| 25 to 30 | 230 | 970 | 230 | 5 |
| over 30 | 280 | 1,300 | 370 | 8 |
| | 8,000 | 560 | 4,500 | 100 |

[1] single persons and married couples.

[2] including about 500,000 non-taxpayers.

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table showing the estimated cost of providing mortgage interest tax relief in 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88, at 1985-86 prices, showing separately the estimated cost of mortgages previously under the option mortgage scheme.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his reply*, 29 January 1987]: Information for 1985-86 and 1986-87 is in the table. It would be premature to provide an estimate for 1987-88, since the cost will depend on the amounts of mortgate lending and interest rates as well as on the 1987-88 income tax rates and bands. It is not possible to distinguish the cost of relief for those mortgages which were previously under the option mortgage scheme:

*Estimated cost of mortgage interest relief (£ million)*

| *Year* | *At current prices* | *At 1985-86 prices* |
|---|---|---|
| 1985-86 | 4,500 | 4,500 |
| 1986-87 | 4,500 | 4,370 |

## Pensions

**Mr. Clay** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will update the figures relating to the direct revenue costs of tax relief on pension contributions on the same basis as his reply of 3 May 1985 to the hon. Member for Oldham, West, (Mr. Meacher) *Official Report*, columns 255-7.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The information, including later estimates for 1984-85, is as follows:

*Direct revenue cost in full year*

| | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *£ million* |
| Employees' contributions to occupational pension schemes allowed as a deduction for income tax purposes | 1,100 | 1,200 | 1,300 |
| Employers' contributions to occupational pension schemes allowed as a charge against profits for corporation tax purposes[1] | 1,900 | 1,900 | 1,900 |
| Investment income of occupational pension funds (assuming relief at the basic rate) | 3,400 | 3,800 | 4,600 |
| Lump sum payments to pensioners (assuming relief at the basic rate) | 1,000 | 1,100 | 1,100 |

[1] These estimates are particularly tentative.

### Government Data Network (System Requirements)

**Mr. Warren** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer why the "Statement of System Requirement" for Her Majesty's Government's data network, issued to five United Kingdom foreign bidders by the CCTA, cannot be made generally available to interested parties.

**Mr. Brooke:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for Leyton (Mr. Cohen) on 28 January 1987.

### Customs Staff (Dundee)

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many customs staff are employed at Dundee; and if he is satisfied that their numbers are adequate to deal with increased activity at the port of Dundee.

**Mr. Brooke:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Territorial Expenditure

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table for each of the years 1979-80 to 1989-90 showing territorial spending by function in terms identical to those used for 1985-86 in table 2.12 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper.

**Mr. MacGregor:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) on 16 December, at columns *488-98*. This contains information for the period 1981-82 to 1985-86; figures for later years are not available.

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish a table comparable to table 2.12 of the 1987 public expenditure White Paper distinguishing for each function *(a)* expenditure falling within each territorial Secretary of State's block and *(b)* expenditure falling outside the block for (i) Scotland and (ii) Wales giving in each case the amount of expenditure in England which is judged to be "comparable expenditure" for the purpose of determining the size of each block.

**Mr. MacGregor:** I refer the hon. Member to table 6 in the answer that I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Fallon) on 16 December, at columns *488-98*. This showed expenditure in Scotland and Wales under the responsibility of the respective Secretaries of State. Figures for block expenditure are not readily available in the form requested.

### Exchange Controls (Nigeria)

**Mr. Sheerman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what help he has made available to British companies adversely affected by policies of the Nigerian Government relating to currency exchange controls.

**Mr. MacGregor** [*pursuant to his reply*, 29 January 1987]: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on Thursday 29 January.

### Incomes

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing tax and national insurance contributions less child benefit, where appropriate, for 1986-87, and comparable figures for 1985-86 and 1978-79, with the multiples of average earnings as half, two-thirds, one, five and 10 times for *(a)* a married couple, with part-time working spouse, *(b)* a married couple plus two children, with part-time working spouse, and *(c)* a single person.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his reply*, 20 January 1987, c. *496-70*]: The following table shows *(a)* income tax plus national insurance contributions less child benefit at current prices and *(b)* income tax plus national insurance contributions less child benefit as a percentage of gross income. The calculations assume that the taxpayer has no reliefs other than the appropriate personal allowances and that national insurance contributions are at the contracted-in rate. Average earnings are those for full-time males and part-time females paid at adult rates whose pay was not affected by absence. Figures for 1986-87 are provisional.

*Multiples of Average Earnings*

| | *1/2* | | *2/3* | | *1* | | *5* | | *10* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(a)* *£ per week* | *(b)* *per cent.* | *(a)* *£ per week* | *(b)* *per cent.* | *(a)* *£ per week* | *(b)* *per cent.* | *(a)* *£ per week* | *(b)* *per cent.* | *(a)* *£ per week* | *(b)* *per cent.* |
| *Single person* | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1978-79 | 10.92 | 23·5 | 17.03 | 27·5 | 29.25 | 31·5 | 242.17 | 52·2 | 625.97 | 67·5 |
| 1985-86 | 25.99 | 26·2 | 38.89 | 29·4 | 64.69 | 32·6 | 451.12 | 45·5 | 1,046.62 | 52·7 |
| 1986-87 | 27.52 | 25·8 | 41.04 | 28·8 | 68.07 | 31·9 | 487.04 | 45·6 | 1,127.24 | 52·8 |
| *Married couple with part-time working spouse* | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1978-79 | 7.43 | 12·5 | 13.54 | 17·1 | 29.28 | 24·6 | 285.80 | 48·0 | 726.82 | 61·1 |

| | 1/2 | | 2/3 | | 1 | | 5 | | 10 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | (a) £ per week | (b) per cent. | (a) £ per week | (b) per cent. | (a) £ per week | (b) per cent. | (a) £ per week | (b) per cent. | (a) £ per week | (b) per cent. |
| 1985-86 | 18.77 | 15·0 | 31.68 | 19·0 | 62.89 | 25·1 | 539.41 | 43·1 | 1,235.19 | 49·3 |
| 1986-87 | 20.16 | 15·0 | 33.68 | 18·8 | 66.62 | 24·8 | 579.85 | 43·1 | 1,328.71 | 49·4 |
| *Married couple plus two children*[1] *with part-time working spouse* | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1978-79 | 1.13 | 1·9 | 7.13 | 9·0 | 22.87 | 19·2 | 277.77 | 46·7 | 718.49 | 60·4 |
| 1985-86 | 4.97 | 4·0 | 17.88 | 10·7 | 49.09 | 19·6 | 525.61 | 42·0 | 1,221.39 | 48·8 |
| 1986-87 | 6.02 | 4·5 | 19.54 | 10·9 | 52.48 | 19·5 | 565.71 | 42·0 | 1,314.57 | 48·9 |

[1] Both under 11.

## Tax Revenue

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the percentage and amount of national income derived from taxation for each year since 1979, in total and broken down between taxes on income and expenditure, national insurance and rates.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his reply, 29 January 1987*]: Following is the information:

*Tax revenues and national insurance contributions*

*£ billion*

| | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Taxes on income and expenditure[2] | 54 | 63 | 75 | 80 | 85 | 93 | 101 | 102 |
| of which: North sea revenues[3] | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 5 |
| Local authority rates | 7 | 9 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| National insurance contributions | 12 | 14 | 16 | 19 | 21 | 23 | 24 | 26 |
| Total | 73 | 86 | 102 | 111 | 118 | 129 | 139 | 144 |

[1] Autumn statement forecasts.

[2] Excluding local authority rates.

[3] Figures may not sum to totals because of rounding.

*Tax revenues and national insurance contributions as a percentage of gross domestic product at market prices*

| | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Taxes on income and expenditure[2] | 26 | 27 | 29 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 27 |
| of which: North sea revenues[3] | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Local authority rates | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| National insurance contributions | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Total | 35 | 37 | 39 | 39 | 39 | 39 | 39 | 38 |

[1] Autumn statement forecasts.

[2] Excluding local authority rates.

[3] Figures may not sum to totals because of rounding.

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in the manner of his reply of 20 January 1986, *Official Report*, c. *83-84*, he will publish and update the table on total estimates tax revenue, broken down into the headings shown for 1986-87.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his reply*, 29 January 1987]: Estimates based on the autumn statement forecast for 1986-87 are given in the table below. The definitions used for non-North sea corporation tax and taxes on expenditure differ slightly from those used in the table in the *Official Report* of 20 January 1986, c. *83-84*, but are consistent with the forecasts published in the 1986-87 Financial Statement and Budget Report, table 1.2

| | *£ billion* | *Percentage of gross domestic product at market prices* |
|---|---|---|
| Income tax | 38 | 10·1 |
| Non-North sea corporation tax | 10 | 2·7 |
| Capital taxes | 3 | 0·7 |
| Expenditure taxes (including stamp duties but excluding rates) | 48 | 12·5 |
| Local authority rates | 15 | 4·1 |
| North sea revenues | 5 | 1·2 |
| Other[1] | −1 | −0·3 |
| National insurance contributions—employees | 13 | 3·4 |
| National insurance contributions—employers | 14 | 3·6 |
| Total[2] | 144 | 37·9 |

[1] Adjustments for advance corporation tax set off against North sea corporation tax plus accruals adjustments.

[2] Components do not sum to total because of rounding.

**Dr. McDonald** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, in the manner of his reply of 20 January 1986, *Official Report*, c. *84*, he will publish and update the table showing the real changes in revenue sources between 1978-79 and 1986-87.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his reply*, 29 January 1987]: Estimates based on the autumn statement forecast for 1986-87 are given in the table. The definitions used for non-North sea corporation tax and taxes on expenditure differ slightly from those used in the table in the *Official Report* of 20 January 1986, c. *83-84*, but are consistent with the forecasts published in the 1986-87 Financial Statement and Budget Report, table 1.2

| | *£ billion*[3] |
|---|---|
| Income tax | 1·2 |
| Non-North sea corporation tax | 2·9 |
| Capital taxes | 1·1 |
| Expenditure taxes (including stamp duties but excluding rates) | 16·5 |
| Local authority rates | 4·3 |
| North sea revenues | 3·7 |
| Other[1] | −1·2 |
| National insurance surcharge | −4·1 |
| National insurance contributions—employees | 4·9 |
| National insurance contributions—employers | 1·6 |
| Total[2] | 30·9 |

[1] Adjustments for advance corporation tax set off against North sea corporation tax plus accruals adjustments.

[2] Figures may not sum to total because of rounding.

[3] 1986-87 prices.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### AIDS

**Mr. Merchant** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which countries now normally require British citizens to possess a recent AIDS-free certificate or similar documentation before issuing a work permit or allowing entry.

**Mr. Eggar:** According to the most recent information available to me, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Qatar now normally require such documentation from British and other foreign nationals applying for residence, and India and Finland require it from overseas students.

### Dr. Frank Bertrand

**Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations have been made on behalf of Dr. Frank Bertrand in Zimbabwe; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** When Dr. Bertrand was first imprisoned in 1981 he was a dual British-Zimbabwean national and we had no standing under the terms of the Vienna convention on consular relations to intervene formally on his behalf in the country of his second nationality. However, since Dr. Bertrand renounced Zimbabwean nationality in 1985 a consular official has visited him regularly and has raised any problems, particularly on health, with the authorities. The most recent visit was on 14 January.

The High Commission has also assisted Mrs. Bertrand in her active representations to secure her husband's release. We understand that a plea for clemency on behalf of her husband was recently delivered to the Zimbabwean authorities. The High Commission has expressed to the authorities its support for this plea and the hope that it will be treated sympathetically.

### Diplomats (Prosecutions)

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many prosecutions were conducted during the past five years against foreign diplomats for committing rape or indecent assault on young children; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many foreign diplomats over the past five years claimed diplomatic immunity when faced with prosecution for committing indecent assault against young children; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Eggar:** In the past five years no prosecutions took place against foreign diplomats for committing rape or indecent assault on young children. In no such case did diplomatic immunity prevent a prosecution.

### Council of Ministers

**Mr. Hanley** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* a statement of forthcoming business in the European Community Council of Ministers.

**Mrs. Chalker:** The usual forecast was deposited in the House earlier today. At present, five meetings of the Council of Ministers are planned for February.

The Economic and Finance Council will discuss on 9 February the economic situation in the Community, and the Community position on tied aid financing in preparation for forthcoming discussions in the OECD.

The Agricultural Council is expected to meet on 9-10 February. Among the subjects likely to be discussed are the Commission's 1987 price-fixing proposals and its proposals for sociostructural measures.

The Foreign Affairs Council will meet on 16-17 February. The Council will discuss EC-Japan trade relations and consider progress on Japanese discrimination against imported alcoholic drinks; and Commission proposals for generation of financial protocols for some of the Community's preferential partners. The council may discuss the Commission's proposals for a system of compensation for loss of exports earnings (Compex) for least developed countries not signatory to the Lomé convention. It may also need to discuss any remaining problems in the enlargement dispute between the Community and the United States.

The Fisheries Council is expected to meet on 23 February and may discuss research and development and autonomous tariff quotas for certain species.

The Internal Market Council will meet on 24 February to discuss a number [illegible] measures in the rolling action programme for completing the internal market.

### Overseas Visitors

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list all overseas official delegations or Government-sponsored individuals or parties who visited the United Kingdom during the months of May, June and July 1986, stating in each case the purpose of the visit.

**Mr. Eggar:** Visitors for whom the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has responsibility fall into two categories: first, guests of Her Majesty's Government, including Heads of State and Government and Foreign Ministers, who are invited in furtherance of Her Majesty's Government's foreign policy objectives; and secondly, visitors invited under the Foreign and Commonwealth Office sponsored visitors scheme. The purpose of this scheme is to enable influential personalities from overseas to obtain first-hand impressions of British policies and achievements.

I will write to the hon. Member with the list of names; more than 600 visitors came, under both categories, in the period concerned.

### Diplomatic Immunity

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Leicester, East on 22 January, *Official Report*, column *670*, which relations of diplomatic staff other than spouses and children under 18 years may be regarded as enjoying immunity from criminal jurisdiction; and if he will specify the exceptional circumstances involved.

**Mr. Eggar:** We look carefully at suggestions that anyone outside the normal categories should be regarded as having diplomatic immunity. Our practice is as set out in paragraph 25 of the White Paper "Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges" (Cmnd. 9497).

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish in the *Official Report* such information as is readily available to him on refusals by foreign Governments to waive diplomatic immunity in respect of legal proceedings against their officials for alleged serious criminal offences.

**Mr. Eggar:** We have no direct information on the policy of overseas Governments concerning waivers. Our experience suggests that it is infrequent for overseas Governments to waive immunity for the purpose described in the question. Waivers are, however, often granted to enable diplomats to appear in court as witnesses.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Leicester, East on 27 January, if he will provide a breakdown of the 77 offences relating to cars with diplomatic registration in 1986, by type of offence and by country.

**Mr. Eggar:** Twenty-three of the alleged offences were for drinking and driving. The remainder were reported as minor offences (the largest single category was driving without due care and attention) under the various Road Traffic Acts and regulations.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Tobacco Industry

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much financial assistance was given to tobacco companies under the various industry Acts in England, Scotland and Wales, respectively, in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The following assistance has been provided under the Industrial Development Act 1982 (as amended) to tobacco companies in England, Scotland and Wales in the calendar year to 31 December 1986:

*Regional Selective Assistance*
  *Section 7*
    A single grant of £200,000 made to a company in Scotland (no payments were made to tobacco companies in England and Wales).
  *Section 8*
    No payments made.

*New Regional Development Grant*
    No payments made.

*Old Regional Development Grant*
    No separate details available.

### Prior Harwin

**Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) when his Department first commenced its current investigations into the affairs of Prior Harwin;

(2) if his Department was aware as at 15 December 1986 that Prior Harwin had set out to attract trading in British Gas shares;

(3) if his Department's investigations were sufficiently advanced by 15 December 1986 to have justified suspending the trading activities of Prior Harwin on that date.

**Mr. Howard:** Inquiries under section 447 of the Companies Act 1985 into Prior Harwin plc and Prior Harwin Securities Limited began on 1 August 1986. At 15 December 1986, my Department was aware that Prior Harwin Securities Limited had set out to attract trading in British Gas shares. Action was taken to present a petition for the winding up of both companies and for the appointment of the Official Receiver as provisional liquidator as soon as sufficient information and legal advice was available to support such a serious step.

**Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many traders in British Gas shares now rank as unsecured creditors of Prior Harwin; and how much in total is their unsecured claim.

**Mr. Howard:** The Official Receiver was appointed as provisional liquidator on 22 December 1986; he has so far been notified of 796 possible claims amounting to £731,000 relating to potential purchases of British Gas shares.

### Reed Corrugated Papers

**Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he intends to reply to the letter dated 20 January from the hon. Member for Monklands, West concerning the problem raised by Reed Corrugated Papers, Coatbridge.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Time Sharing

**Mr. Michael Cocks** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how his Department will be distributing the consumer advice leaflets on time sharing published on 27 January;

(2) how many consumer advice leaflets on time sharing have been printed by his Department for distribution;

(3) if he will name the three trade associations covering most United Kingdom developers mentioned in his reply to the right hon. Member for Bristol, South on 27 January.

**Mr. Howard:** Initially, 100,000 consumer advice leaflets on time sharing were printed, and heavy demand may make a reprint necessary shortly. They have been distributed to Citizens Advice Bureaux, Trading Standards Departments, public libraries, airport information centres and British consular offices in several holiday countries. Copies have also been sent to other interested organisations and trade associations, including those representing the travel and the time share industries.

The three major United Kingdom trade associations in the time share industry, to which I referred in my answer to the hon. Member on 27 January, are the British property Timeshare Association, the European Holiday Timeshare Association and the Timeshare Developers Group.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Housing Executive

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, on what grounds two members of staff of the Housing Executive were threatened with disciplinary action for being associated with the Fair Employment Trust.

**Mr. Needham:** This is a matter for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, but I understand from the chairman that no threats of disciplinary action were made to the two members of staff for being associated with the Fair Employment Trust.

## SCOTLAND

### M80 (Stepps and Haggs)

**Mr. Norman Hogg** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has determined the line of route for the proposed M80 motorway between Stepps and Haggs; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** The first part of a consultation report on alternative routes for the proposed motorway has been received by the Scottish Development Department and is being considered. The final part of the report is expected shortly. The preferred route will then be selected and draft orders will be published as soon as possible.

### Schools (Assessment of Achievement)

**Mrs. McCurley** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what reports he has received on the continuing programme of research sponsored by his Department on the assessment of achievement in schools.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Two research reports have been presented to my right hon. and learned Friend and myself, one concerning performance in mathematics and the other performance in English language, both at primary 4, primary 7 and secondary 2. I have placed synopses of both reports in the Libraries of both Houses, along with a newsletter setting out the main purposes of the programme and its progress to date.

The aims of the programme are:

i. to provide information on what pupils know and can do at selected stages in their education in certain curricular areas judged to be of fundamental importance;

ii. to provide comparisons of standards of performance over time, by repeating tests at intervals where possible;

iii. to investigate ways in which the findings can be used nationally, by education authorities, by curriculum developers and by teachers, to evaluate and develop educational policy and to improve learning and teaching.

The first two reports have successfully fulfilled these aims and will, I believe, promote better standards of teaching and learning in our schools.

The main findings on both mathematics and English were that in general pupils, at each stage of education tested, demonstrated appropriate competence in most of the tasks set for them. At each consecutive stage pupils were capable of undertaking the wider range of tasks and more complex problems expected of them.

Earlier studies were conducted in mathematics in 1978 and reading comprehension in 1971. Comparison with these studies has shown that generally the performance of pupils at all three stages has been maintained since 1978 for mathematics and since 1971 for reading comprehension.

The findings of the first stage of the mathematics project have been drawn to the attention of education authorities in the form of folders of notes for use in teacher training. Copies of the folders have also been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Similar steps will be taken in the near future to disseminate the findings of the English language project.

### Woodlands (Conservation)

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what advice is given or conditions attached prior to the approval of plans of operation for private woodlands, in respect of nesting periods of birds and conservation in general, by the Forestry Commission;

(2) what advice is now given or conditions attached by the Forestry Commission, prior to the approval of felling licences, in respect of nesting periods of birds and conservation in general.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The Forestry Commission seeks to ensure that forestry operations approved in plans of operations and felling licences are compatible with the environment. Woodland owners generally adopt a responsible attitude towards the need to minimise disturbance to nesting birds during felling operations. It is not usually felt necessary, therefore, to introduce specific conditions for this purpose in plans of operations or felling licences, although this would be done in respect of woodlands in SSSIs if the Nature Conservancy Council asked for it.

Comprehensive advice on good environmental practice, including the protection of nesting birds, is available to private woodland owners in the "Forestry and Woodland Code" published by Timber Growers UK.

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what advice the Forestry Commission now gives to landowners with private woodlands arising from the Wildlife and Countryside (Amendment) Act 1985; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John MacKay:** It is the Forestry Commission's policy, before commencing consultations on forestry grant and felling applications, to try to ensure that they are sensibly drawn on silvicultural, land use, nature conservation or landscape grounds. Where necessary, the commission will return an application with suggestions as to how it might be modified in order to achieve an acceptable standard. The commission therefore encourages applicants to take care to see that adequate information about their planting or felling proposals is given and that in framing their proposals sufficient account is taken of amenity and conservation considerations, especially in areas designated for their landscape or conservation value.

### Higher Education

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many students were undertaking full-time courses of higher education in Scotland in each year since 1979.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information is as follows:

*Total Students in Full-Time Higher Education in Scotland*

| *Academic year beginning* | |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 68,800 |
| 1980 | 72,700 |
| 1981 | 74,400 |
| 1982 | 75,300 |
| 1983 | 76,700 |
| 1984 | 77,900 |
| 1985 | [1]79,000 |

[1] Estimated

### Public Expenditure

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he intends to publish the 1987 volume of his Department's document, "Public Expenditure to 1989-90: a Commentary on the Scotland Programme."

**Mr. Rifkind:** I expect to publish "Public Expenditure to 1989-90: A Commentary on the Scotland Programme" on Wednesday 18 February. As in previous years, I shall arrange for a copy to be sent to all Scottish Members. Copies will also be placed in the Library.

### Urban Aid

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money his Department has made available to each Scottish regional authority in the form of urban aid in each of the last five years for which records are available.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The information is set out in the table.

| | *Capital £ million* | *Current £ million* |
|---|---|---|
| *Central region* | | |
| 1982-83 | 0·092 | 0·201 |
| 1983-84 | 0·120 | 0·480 |
| 1984-85 | 0·043 | 0·510 |
| 1985-86 | 0·213 | 0·746 |
| 1986-87 | 0·040 | 0·752 |
| *Fife region* | | |
| 1982-83 | — | 0·005 |
| 1983-84 | 0·052 | 0·038 |
| 1984-85 | 0·040 | 0·043 |
| 1985-86 | 0·070 | 0·113 |
| 1986-87 | 0·076 | 0·187 |
| *Grampian region* | | |
| 1982-83 | 0·146 | 0·287 |
| 1983-84 | 0·357 | 0·590 |
| 1984-85 | 0·082 | 0·715 |
| 1985-86 | 0·103 | 0·849 |
| 1986-87 | 0·063 | 0·978 |
| *Highland region* | | |
| 1982-83 | — | 0·045 |
| 1983-84 | 0·005 | 0·018 |
| 1984-85 | 0·188 | 0·005 |
| 1985-86 | — | 0·065 |
| 1986-87 | — | 0·055 |
| *Lothian region* | | |
| 1982-83 | 0·184 | 0·999 |
| 1983-84 | 0·283 | 1·143 |
| 1984-85 | 0·093 | 0·754 |
| 1985-86 | 0·089 | 0·893 |
| 1986-87 | 0·060 | 1·088 |
| *Strathclyde region* | | |
| 1982-83 | 5·515 | 13·814 |
| 1983-84 | 5·931 | 15·405 |
| 1984-85 | 2·544 | 15·757 |
| 1985-86 | 3·380 | 16·200 |
| 1986-87 | 3·365 | 16·232 |
| *Tayside region* | | |
| 1982-83 | 0·091 | 0·055 |
| 1983-84 | 0·056 | 0·170 |
| 1984-85 | 0·535 | 0·304 |
| 1985-86 | 0·199 | 0·329 |
| 1986-87 | 0·286 | 0·347 |

*Notes:*

1. The figures comprise approved expenditure for each regional council only and do not include approved expenditure for district councils within the area of the region.
2. No expenditure has been incurred in this period by Borders regional council, nor by Dumfries and Galloway regional council.
3. Figures for 1986-87 are estimated.

### Education Budget

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the total education budget for each year since 1979 expressed as actual outturn expenditure for each year on a constant 1986-87 prices base and *(b)* the proportion of that total allocated in each year to (i) school teachers' salaries, (ii) adult education, (iii) adult education staff salaries and (iv) the Workers Educational Association.

**Mr. Rifkind:** No separate information is held on resources allocated to adult education which will constitute an element of many parts of my education programme. The information requested which is available is as follows:

| | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *(a)* Total outturn[1] on education expenditure | 1,554 | 1,610 | 1,648 | 1,654 | 1,668 | 1,641 | 1,569 |
| *(b)*(i) proportion for school teachers' salaries (expressed as a percentage) | 41·5 | 43·4 | 42·8 | 41·8 | 41·3 | 40·9 | 39·2 |
| *(b)*(iv) proportion for Workers' Educational Association (expressed as a percentage) | 0·009 | 0·009 | 0·010 | 0·010 | 0·010 | 0·010 | 0·013 |

[1] £ million at constant prices, calculated by applying GDP deflator-base year 1986-87.

[2] Estimated outturn.

### Food Aid

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much European Economic Community intervention fund food is to be distributed in Scotland; what individual foods are included in the total; and in what quantities.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Arrangements are being made for distribution of butter, beef, milk and certain milk products. The amounts of food to be distributed will depend on the needs established by the charitable organisations.

**Mr. Dewar:** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland who will be responsible for the distribution in Scotland of European Economic Community intervention fund food; and how much of each individual type of food will be distributed to each region.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The following charitable organisations have agreed to co-operate in arranging the distribution of free food in Scotland:

**Salvation Army**
**Women's Royal Voluntary Service**

Age Concern Scotland
Royal British Legion Scotland
Help the Aged
British Red Cross
Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility
Catholic Social Care Commission

The amounts of each individual food distributed in each region will depend on the needs established by the charitable organisations, and cannot yet be estimated.

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what proportion of the United Kingdom allocation of European Economic Community intervention fund foods will be distributed in Scotland.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Funds are not being allocated to individual member states or regions. The relationship of expenditure in Scotland to that in other regions of the United Kingdom will depend on the eventual uptake by the charitable organisations concerned in each region.

## Student Support

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the total cost to the Scottish Education Department of *(a)* student grants and *(b)* student tuition fees in each year since 1979 expressed in (i) cash terms and (ii) real terms on a constant 1986-87 base.

**Mr. Rifkind:** This information is not yet available in the form requested. The cost to the Scottish Education Department of students' maintenance allowances and tuition fees in cash terms, and in real terms on a constant 1985-86 base was as follows:

| *Academic year* | *Maintenance allowances (including reimbursement of travelling expenses)* | | *Tuition, etc fees* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Actual* *£ million* | *At 1985-86 prices* *£ million* | *Actual* *£ million* | *At 1985-86 prices* *£ million* |
| 1979-80 | 52·9 | 80·8 | 33·1 | 50·6 |
| 1980-81 | 63·7 | 84·5 | 43·1 | 57·2 |
| 1981-82 | 68·4 | 83·8 | 52·2 | 63·9 |
| 1982-83 | 64·6 | 74·4 | 34·5 | 39·7 |
| 1983-84 | 70·9 | 78·4 | 30·1 | 33·3 |
| 1984-85 | 68·2 | 72·0 | 31·2 | 32·9 |
| 1985-86 | [1]66·8 | 66·8 | [1]32·5 | 32·5 |

[1] Provisional.

Notes:

(1) In session 1982-83 the rate of tuition fees was reduced.

(2) 1985-86 price equivalents are based on the average GDP deflator for the first quarter of each year (mid-academic session).

**Sir Brandon Rhys Williams** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish in the *Official Report* figures showing the maintenance element of student grants in 1985-86.

**Mr. John MacKay** [*pursuant to his reply*, 19 January 1987, c. *397*]: I propose to increase main rates of allowances by about 3·75 per cent. in session 1987-88. The new rates for Scottish students will be as follows (rates for 1986-87 are shown in brackets):

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Student in parental home | 1,442 (1,390) |
| Student living away from home | |
| outside London | 1,915 (1,846) |
| in London | 2,273 (2,191) |

Students in receipt of maintenance allowances will be eligible for reimbursement of travelling expenses in excess of £52 included in the main rates.

The threshold for parental contributions, and the transitional scale points, will be raised on average by about 6·75 per cent. Parents earning a residual income of less than £9,300 will no longer be assessed for a contribution. The minimum parental contribution will be raised from £20 to £40, and the maximum, for parents with more than one child in receipt of grants, from £4,300 to £4,600. The scale is as follows:

*Parental contribution scale 1987-88*

| *Residual income* £ | *Contribution* £ |
|---|---|
| 8,700 | — |
| 9,000 | — |
| 9,300 | 40 |
| 9,400 | 54 |
| 9,500 | 68 |
| 10,000 | 140 |
| 11,000 | 282 |
| 11,800 | 397 |
| 11,900 | 417 |
| 12,000 | 437 |
| 13,000 | 637 |
| 14,000 | 837 |
| 15,000 | 1,037 |
| 16,000 | 1,237 |
| 17,000 | 1,437 |
| 17,300 | 1,497 |
| 17,400 | 1,522 |
| 17,500 | 1,547 |
| 18,000 | 1,672 |
| 19,000 | 1,922 |
| 20,000 | 2,172 |
| 21,000 | 2,422 |
| 22,000 | 2,672 |
| 23,000 | 2,922 |
| 24,000 | 3,172 |
| 25,000 | 3,422 |
| 26,000 | 3,672 |
| 27,000 | 3,922 |
| 28,000 | 4,172 |
| 29,000 | 4,422 |
| 29,712 | [1]4,600 |

[1] Maximum.

*Notes:*

1. For 1987-88 the rate of contribution is assessed at £1 in £7 for residual incomes from £9,300 to £11,800; then £1 in £5 to £17,300; then £1 in £4 thereafter. (In 1986-87 the rate of contribution was assessed at £1 in £7 from £8,700 to £11,100; then £1 in £5 to £16,200; then £1 in £4 thereafter.)

2. The contribution payable may be less than the amounts shown on the scale, particularly at its top end. This will depend on the amount of grant against which the contribution has to be set and whether any of the assessed contribution is offset by allowances for other dependent children.

## Workers' Educational Association

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what has been the total support allocated to the Workers' Educational Association by his Department in each year since 1979 expressed in *(a)* cash terms and *(b)* constant terms on a 1986-87 prices base.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Grants and other money paid to the Workers' Educational Association in Scotland during each year since 1979 were as follows:

| *Year* | *Amount*<br>£ | *Revalued to constant 1986-87 prices*<br>£ |
|---|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 82,012 | 136,354 |
| 1980-81 | 103,234 | 144,682 |
| 1981-82 | 124,800 | 159,203 |
| 1982-83 | 133,674 | 159,025 |
| 1983-84 | 140,227 | 159,654 |
| 1984-85 | 154,800 | 169,015 |
| 1985-86 | 198,310 | 204,259 |
| 1986-87 | 187,500 | 187,500 |

### Teachers (Pay)

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the cost of the teachers' pay settlement to his Department in each relevant financial year.

**Mr. Rifkind:** My Department will be contributing grant of £8 million and £30 million respectively towards the cost of the settlement in 1986-87 and 1987-88.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Manufacturing Industry

**Mr. Pike** asked the Paymaster General what percentage of those available for work in 1979 in the north-west had been previously employed in manufacturing industries; and what is his latest comparable figure.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The available information from the labour force survey indicates that 42 per cent. of those without a job who were available for work in the north-west region in the spring of 1979 and whose previous industry could be identified had previously left a job in manufacturing industry. The latest labour force survey estimate, for spring 1985, was 30 per cent., although this is not fully comparable.

### Trade Union Legislation

**Mr. Evans** asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received following the decision not to introduce further trade union legislation in this parliamentary Session; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I have received no representations specifically on the question of the timing of any such legislation.

### Tobacco Industry

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Paymaster General how many people were employed in the tobacco industry in the United Kingdom in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Lee:** The Department's employment statistics are produced on a quarterly basis and cannot be expressed in precisely the manner requested.

In September 1986 (the latest date for which figures are available) there were 17,000 employees in employment in the tobacco industry in Great Britain. These estimates are subject to considerable potential estimation error due to the relatively small number of employees in the industry.

Figures for the United Kingdom are not available.

### Basildon (Unemployment)

**Mr. Amess** asked the Paymaster General if he will give the numbers of unemployed people, as well as the percentage rate of unemployed people, for each of the last five years, in Basildon.

**Mr. Lee:** Following is the available information, which is also in the Library. The table shows the numbers of unemployed claimants in the Basildon local authority district in December of each year since 1983. The comparison is affected by the change in the compilation of the unemployment statistics in March 1986. Statistics of unemployment for local authority districts are derived from the ward-based system and are available only from June 1983. Unemployment rates are calculated only for self-contained labour markets, the smallest areas are travel-to-work areas.

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| December, 1983 | 8,587 |
| December, 1984 | 9,046 |
| December, 1985 | 8,524 |
| December, 1986 | 8,325 |

### Public Bodies

**Mr. Alfred Morris** asked the Paymaster General if he will list all the bodies established by statute which are responsible to him; if he will specify the statute in each case; to which of these bodies there is anyone appointed with special knowledge of disability; and if the persons so appointed are persons with a disability.

**Mr. Lee:** Listed below are the bodies established by statute which are responsible to my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State. For most of the bodies listed, members are not appointed for their special knowledge of disability and therefore it is not known how many have such knowledge. The National Advisory Council on Employment of Disabled People has 27 members, all of whom have a special knowledge of disability and eight of whom themselves have a disability. The 1,032 members of Committees for the Employment of Disabled People also all have a special knowledge of disability, and 132 are known to have a disability.

| *Name of body* | *Statute* |
|---|---|
| Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service | Employment Protection Act 1975 |
| British Tourist Authority | Development of Tourism Act 1969 |
| Co-operative Development Agency | Co-operative Development Agency Act 1978 |
| English Tourist Board | Development of Tourism Act 1969 |
| National Dock Labour Board | Dock Work Regulations 1976 |
| Health and Safety Commission | Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 |
| Health and Safety Executive | Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 |
| Manpower Services Commission | Employment and Training Act 1973 |

| *Name of body* | *Statute* |
|---|---|
| Industrial Training Boards | Industrial Training Act 1982 |
| —Clothing and Allied Products ITB | Industrial Training Act 1982 |
| —Construction ITB | Industrial Training Act 1982 |
| —Engineering ITB | Industrial Training Act 1982 |
| —Hotel and Catering ITB | Industrial Training Act 1982 |
| —Offshore Petroleum ITB | Industrial Training Act 1982 |
| —Plastics Processing ITB | Industrial Training Act 1982 |
| —Road Transport ITB | Industrial Training Act 1982 |
| Remploy Ltd. | Incorporated under the Companies Act for the purposes of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944, Section 15(2) |
| Employment Medical Advisory Service | Employment Medical Advisory Service Act 1972 and continued by Section 55 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 |
| Committees for the Employment of Disabled People (86 Local Committees) | Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 |
| National Advisory Council on Employment of Disabled People | Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 |
| Central Arbitration Committee | Employment Protection Act 1975 |
| Employment Appeal Tribunal | Employment Protection Act 1975 |
| Industrial Tribunals | Industrial Training Act 1964 |

### North Liverpool Music Resource Centre

**Mr. Alton** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement about the closure of the north Liverpool music resource centre community programme scheme, and the future of the trainees.

**Mr. Lee:** The north Liverpool music resource centre was funded jointly by the European social fund and the Manpower Services Commission community programme.

I understand that the sponsors decided not to apply for a renewal of social fund assistance from January 1987. Unfortunately, this meant that the community programme project was no longer viable.

The Manpower Services Commission will do all that it can to find alternative places for the 25 community programme participants on the project so they may complete the balance of time they have left on the programme.

### Sizewell

**Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Paymaster General, in the light of recommendation 4*(f)* of the report on Sizewell public inquiry by Sir Frank Layfield, concerning the production by the Health and Safety Executive of a consultative document as a matter of high priority, if he will review the resources available to that body; if he will discuss the priorities of work with the director general; if he will consider whether such a consultative exercise may be undertaken before the report is debated in this House; when he expects to know whether the Health and Safety Executive will undertake any such consultative exercise; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy has a quasi-judicial role in respect of the Central Electricity Generating Board's application to construct Sizewell B. It would not be proper to comment on the inspector's report, including the recommendations, before he has taken his decision.

### Construction Industry

**Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received from the construction industry concerning the level of the Construction Industry Training Board's cash reserves.

**Mr. Trippier:** I have received no such representations. I have, however, asked the construction industry training board to take account of the size of its reserves in drawing up next year's levy and grant proposals.

### Semiconductors (Manufacture)

**Mrs. Beckett** asked the Paymaster General whether he is issuing any advice to firms in the semiconductor manufacturing sector of the United Kingdom about health risks to pregnant women of working in such conditions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** The Health and Safety Executive has no plans to issue guidance at present. I am aware of recent reports that a study in an American company suggests that miscarriages are more likely among some women production workers making semiconductors. HSE is trying to get further information and will consider carefully any details that can be obtained.

### Departmental Cash Limits

**Mr. Couchman** asked the Paymaster General whether any changes will be made to his Department's cash limits or running cost limit for 1986-87.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimates, the following changes will be made.

The cash limit on class VII, vote 1 will be reduced by £7,000,000 from £1,300,123,000 to £1,293,123,000. This is due to reduced expenditure on the community programme, take-up of which has been marginally lower than forecast. This reduction offsets the increases in expenditure on class VII, vote 3 and class XV, vote 5 described below. It also enables £500,000 to be transferred to the Department of the Environment as a special contribution towards the costs in this financial year of the home insulation scheme.

The cash limit on class VII, vote 3 will be increased by £5,500,000 from £67,005,000 to £72,505,000 to make additional provision for publicising to employers, unemployed people and others Department of Employment Group services for the unemployed. Gross expenditure on vote 3 is also to increase by £1,000,000 to reactivate the unemployment benefit office (UBO) expansion programme, but this increase is matched by receipts from the Department of Health and Social Security (class XV, vote 5). The full additional cost arising from the UBO expansion programme in 1986-87 is £1,700,000, but a contribution of £700,000 will be made from existing running costs provision within the vote. As a result, the Department of Employment's gross running costs provision is reduced from £391,238,000 to £390,538,000 and the total running costs provision for the Department of Employment Group is reduced from £891,898,000 to £891,198,000.

No net increase in public expenditure results from these changes.

## TRANSPORT

### Marine Pollution

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many vessels identified by United Kingdom sources as discharging oil in the North sea illegally were reported to their flag state in 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86, respectively.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The number of vessels identified as having possibly discharged oil into the North sea and reported to their flag state is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1983-84 | 2 |
| 1984-85 | 3 |
| 1985-86 | 1 |

### External Financing Limits

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement about the external financing limits for British Rail and the Civil Aviation Authority for the current financial year.

**Mr. Moore:** The external financing limits of BR and CAA for 1986-87 have been revised. BR's EFL has been increased by £13 million to £784 million to £784 million to accommodate additional expenditure associated with restructuring British Rail Engineering Limited. CAA's EFL has been reduced by £5 million to £9 million, as currency fluctuations will lead to higher proceeds fom its en-route navigation charges in the current financial year.

### Merchant Shipping

**Sir Edward du Cann** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether he will list in the *Official Report* information available to him on the aids for merchant shipping in the Republic of Ireland recently announced by the Government of that country, together with a list of the equivalent aids available to merchant shipping in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Moore:** The available information is as follows:

| *Measures announced by the Irish Government on 6 January* | *United Kingdom equivalent* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* Corporations profit tax on shipping profits will be reduced from 50 per cent. to 10 per cent. | *(a)* Corporation tax has been progressively reduced from 50 per cent. in 1983 to its present level of 35 per cent. The small companies' rate has been reduced to 29 per cent. |
| *(b)* Investment grants will be introduced providing for up to 25 per cent. of the purchase price of new ships and second hand ships less than five years old for ship-owners who employ Irish labour and remain on the Irish Register. Shipping will also be treated as an export service industry and as such qualify for investment under a National Development Corporation scheme. | *(b)* No equivalent schemes. However, United Kingdom owners investing in United Kingdom new built ships are eligible for loans under the Home Shipbuilding Credit Scheme for 80 per cent. of the capital cost at a fixed rate of interest of 7·5 per cent. over eight and half years with discount available in the case of early repayment of loans. United Kingdom investors in ships (whether new or second hand) are also normally eligible for annual writing down allowances of 25 per cent. of the capital cost on a reducing balance basis, with special flexibility in choosing when to use these allowances. |
| *(c)* Shipping will now qualify to benefit from the business expansion scheme. | *(c)* The business expansion scheme applies to shipping. |

**Sir Edward du Cann** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will detail in the *Official Report* information available to him on the tax depreciation regimes applicable to investment in merchant shipping in each of the member countries of the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Moore:** The available information is set out below.

| *Method* | *Rate* |
|---|---|
| *Belgium* | |
| Reducing balance | Based on ship life of 8 years—20 per cent. maximum, reducing to 10 per cent. |
| *Denmark* | |
| *(a)* Reducing balance based on pooled assets system | (i) Indexed to cost of living rate up to 30 per cent. maximum. |
| *(b)* Anticipated depreciation also available | (ii) 25 per cent. per year up to 50 per cent. in all. |
| *France* | |
| Reducing balance preferred but annual depreciation in excess of straight line depreciation may be deferred | (i) Ship life of 8 years—31·25 per cent.<br>(ii) Ship life of 10 years—25 per cent.<br>(iii) Ship life of 15 years—16·66 per cent.<br>(iv) Ship life of 20 years—12·5 per cent. |
| *Germany, Federal Republic of* | |
| *(a)* Straight line | (i) Large passenger ships with ship life of 16 years—6·25 per cent.<br>(ii) Other ships with ship life of 12 years—8·33 per cent. |
| Or optional reducing balance | (i) Large passenger ships with ship life of 16 years—18·75 per cent.<br>(ii) Other ships with ship life of 12 years—25 per cent. |

| *Method* | *Rate* |
|---|---|
| Special advanced payment depreciation | Up to 40 per cent. over first five years. |
| *Greece* | |
| Special tax system | Related to age and tonnage. |
| *Ireland, Republic of* | |
| — | Free depreciation for new ships for first year. 100 per cent. for secondhand ships for first year. |
| *Italy* | |
| Straight line | (i) Passenger ships, tankers and refrigerated ships—10 per cent.<br>(ii) Other ships—9 per cent. |
| Additional accelerated depreciation for each of first three years | 15 per cent. |
| *Luxembourg* | |
| — | — |
| *Netherlands* | |
| *(a)* Straight line or | *(a)* Ship life of 12 years—20 per cent. |
| *(b)* Reducing balance | *(b)* 12 to 16 per cent. |
| *Portugal* | |
| *(a)* Straight line | (i) Coastal fishing—10 per cent.<br>(ii) Deep sea ships—6·25 per cent.<br>(iii) General cargo—8 per cent.<br>(iv) Passenger/ferries/tankers—10 per cent. |
| *(b)* Revaluation of assets may also result in further allowances | |
| *Spain* | |
| *(a)* Straight line or | (i) Tankers and liquified cargo ships with life of 25 years—6 per cent.<br>(ii) Passenger and passenger/cargo and cargo ships with life of 30 years—5 per cent. |
| *(b)* Reducing balance | (i) Ship life of 3 to 5 years—1·5 × straight line depreciation rate.<br>(ii) Ship life of 6 to 8 years—2 × straight line rate.<br>(iii) Ship life of over eight years—2·5 × straight line rate. |
| *United Kingdom* | |
| Reducing balance | Annual writing down allowances, which can be carried over to future years, of 25 per cent. of the capital cost for new and second ships. |

## Disabled People

**Mr. Gregory** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on access between central London and Heathrow for disabled people.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** "Care Line", a bus service operated by Alder Valley North, with facilities for wheelchair passengers, has been in operation between Heathrow airport and central London since July 1986. In December 1986 Alder Valley North announced that the service would cease as it had become unsustainable. They agreed to continue until the end of this month to allow a study of the service commissioned by the Department of Transport to be carried out. I have arranged for a copy of the report of this study, prepared by the Cranfield centre for transport studies, to be placed in the Library.

I am pleased to say that London regional transport has told me that it is planning to adapt its existing Airbus services between Heathrow and central London to carry wheelchair passengers. It is also examining the possibility of a service which will link the London terminals of the Airbus service at Victoria and Euston with other main line London rail stations. In the meantime, it will be announcing arrangements to provide disabled passengers who notify them in advance with suitable transport between central London and Heathrow.

I have authorised an increase in LRT's expenditure on transport for disabled pople to meet the cost of these new facilities.

I shall be inviting the Department's disabled persons transport advisory committee to assist in the introduction of these services.

## Traffic Flow Statistics

**Mr. Warren** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what traffic flow statistics have been taken on the A259 trunk road in the last 12 months; and what are the findings.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Traffic has been counted continuously at four sites on the A259 during 1986. The findings are as follows:

| | *Annual Average 24 hour Daily Flows* |
|---|---|
| Pevensey (Marsh Road) | 13,200 |
| Hastings (Glyne Gap) | 23,400 |
| West Icklesham | 6,700 |
| East of Rye | 6,600 |

**Mr. Warren** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what traffic flow statistics have been taken on the A21 trunk road in the last 12 months; and what are the findings.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Traffic has been counted continuously at two sites and intermittently at four sites on the A21 during 1986. The findings are as follows:

| | *Annual Average 24 hour Daily Flows* |
|---|---|
| North of Hurst Green (between A265 and B2099) | 10,400 |
| South of A229 (Kent Street) | 13,200 |
| South of Tonbridge Bypass (Castle Hill) | [1]26,300 |
| East of Kippings Cross | [1]15,100 |
| North of Lamberhurst (Windmill Farm) | [1]13,200 |
| Lamberhurst (Scotney Castle) | [1]12,600 |

[1] Estimated from intermittent counts.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### Operations (Statistics)

**Mr. Merchant** asked the Secretary of State for Social Security if he will give the number of heart operations, the number of hip replacements, and the number of knee replacements carried out in the Newcastle health authority area in the following years *(a)* 1979, *(b)* 1982 and *(c)* the latest available year.

**Mrs. Currie:** I understand from the Northern regional health authority that the numbers of these operations carried out by Newcastle district health authority in the years requested were as follows:

| *Procedure carried out in Newcastle DHA* | *Year*<br>*1979* | *1982* | [1]*1985* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Surgical procedures on the heart | 1,690 | 1,980 | 2,454 |
| Total hip replacements and other arthroplasty of hip | 338 | [2]276 | 407 |
| Arthroplasty of knee | 29 | 115 | 236 |

[1] The latest year for which figures are available.

[2] The number of operations was affected by industrial action in the National Health Service.

My hon. Friend may wish to write for more detailed information to the chairman of Newcastle district health authority.

## Mobility Allowance

**Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claimants there were for mobility allowance in each of the past five years; how many cases were approved by the adjudicating officers on first application; how many cases went to appeal and how many were approved or refused; and how many cases went to the Medical Appeal Tribunal and were approved or refused.

**Mr. Major:** The available information is as follows. It relates to decisions given in the relevant years, not to the results of claims made in those years.

*1. Claims*

| | *Number of claims decided* | *Decided in claimant's favour* |
|---|---|---|
| 1982 | 109,340<br>[1](21,240) | 76,130<br>[1](17,130) |
| 1983 | 126,300<br>[1](19,500) | 86,300<br>[1](16,450) |
| 1984 | 132,000<br>[1](23,950) | 93,500<br>[1](19,900) |
| 1985 | 157,250<br>[1](27,520) | 101,890<br>[1](22,500) |
| 1986 | 175,010<br>[1](29,530) | 109,220<br>[1](24,420) |

*Notes:*

1. Figures for renewal claims are shown separately in brackets marked [1] but included in the total.
2. It is not possible to identify separately the number of these decisions which were made by adjudication officers on the basis of an advisory medical report.

*2. Appeals and references decided by medical boards*

| | *Number of claims* | *Decisions in favour of claimant* | *Decisions adverse to claimant* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1982 | 11,410 | 3,600 | 7,810 |
| 1983 | 12,970 | 3,890 | 9,080 |
| 1984 | 14,750 | 4,800 | 9,950 |
| 1985 | 16,800 | 5,410 | 11,390 |
| 1986 | 20,370 | 6,930 | 13,440 |

*Note:* Figures include renewal claims.

*3. Appeals decided by medical appeal tribunals*

| | *Number of claims* | *Decisions in favour of claimant* | *Decisions adverse to claimant* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1982 | 2,663 | 703 | 1,960 |
| 1983 | 3,070 | 1,000 | 2,070 |
| 1984 | 3,933 | 1,107 | 2,826 |
| 1985 | 4,316 | 850 | 3,466 |
| 1986 | 5,382 | 1,235 | 4,147 |

*Note:* Figures include renewal claims.

## Housing Benefit

**Mr. Bowden** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services *(a)* what is his latest estimate of the number of retirement pensioners who receive housing benefit supplement; *(b)* what is his estimate of the numbers of retirement pensioners who will cease to qualify for housing benefit supplement in April 1987 as a result of the changes to supplementary benefit arrangements announced on 22nd October 1986; and *(c)* what is his estimate of the proportion of retirement pensioners who quality for housing benefit supplement but do not claim it and of the amount of housing benefit supplement that goes unclaimed.

**Mr. Lyell:** Information on all the details requested is not available.

*(a)* Information from local authority subsidy claims for the 1986-87 financial year, indicates that there are approximately 320,000 retirement pensioner households receiving housing benefit supplement.

*(b)* The number of retirement pensioners affected is too small for a reliable estimate to be made. In such cases the reduction as a result of these changes will not in general exceed 10p per week.

*(c)* Estimates of take-up of housing benefit supplement will be available in a few weeks' time.

## Invalid Care Allowance

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if married and cohabiting women who now qualify for invalid care allowance, and who qualify for back-dating of that allowance, will automatically be credited in arrears with class I national insurance credits to the date when their period of entitlement to invalid care allowance is commenced.

**Mr. Major:** Yes, subject to the usual provision that married women are not entitled to credits if they have chosen to pay reduced rate national insurance contributions.

## Job Start Allowances

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether people who take low-paid employment in anticipation of qualifying for job start allowances but who fail to so qualify will, if they leave their job, be treated as voluntarily unemployed and so risk having their unemployment benefit suspended for 13 weeks.

**Mr. Major:** I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Member on 18 November 1986 at column *150*.

## Board and Lodging

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many single persons under and over 25 years of age and how many married couples *(a)* with children and *(b)* without children, respectively, in Greenock and Port Glasgow are in receipt of board and lodging payments.

**Mr. Lyell:** I regret that the information requested is not collected by individual local offices and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Pension Entitlement

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state why the state pension entitlements of Mr. and Mrs. G. Douglas, Hafod, Trefor, Gwynedd, which have been queried with the Department of Health and Social Services in Newcastle upon Tyne since last August, have not yet been adequately answered; if he will look into this case as a matter of urgency; and reply to the letter of the hon. Member for Caernarfon dated 23 December 1986 without further delay.

**Mr. Lyell:** My noble Friend replied to the hon. Member on 28 January.

### Asbestos

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department has received a request from the regional health authority to finance the detection and removal of blue asbestos in the Liverpool royal infirmary.

**Mrs. Currie:** We have received no such request. The hon. Member may wish to contact the chairman of the Mersey regional health authority for information about how it proposes to tackle the problem.

### NHS (Staff)

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the salary grades of operating department assistants employed in the National Health Service; and if he will also list the comparable nursing grades salaries with which operating department assistants are interchangeable according to the Lewin report.

**Mr. Newton:** "The Organisation and Staffing of Operating Departments", a report of a joint sub-committee of the standing medical advisory committee and the standing nursing advisory committee (the Lewin report) proposed the introduction of a new class of operating department staff, known as operating department assistants (ODAs) whose duties, as far as practicable, would be interchangeable with those of trained theatre nurses.

Current basic salary scales of the groups employed in operating departments are as follows:

| *Trainee* | *ODA* | *Senior ODA* | *Enrolled Nurse* | *Staff Nurse RGN* | *Nursing Sister II* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| 3,668 | 4,632 | 5,778 | 5,700 | 6,475 | 8,070 |
| 3,877 | 4,831 | 5,987 | 5,920 | 6,730 | 8,525 |
| 4,086 | 5,031 | 6,196 | 6,140 | 6,985 | 8,980 |
| — | 5,230 | 6,405 | 6,360 | 7,240 | 9,435 |
| — | 5,430 | 6,612 | 6,580 | 7,495 | 9,890 |
| — | — | — | 6,800 | 7,750 | 10,345 |
| — | — | — | 7,020 | — | 10,800 |

### AIDS

**Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to extend provision of public information on AIDS through newspapers, television and radio; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** Further plans are currently under consideration.

**Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to publish and to distribute information on AIDS designed specifically for people under the ages of *(a)* 20, *(b)* 18 and *(c)* 16 years.

**Mr. Newton:** The Department has a press and radio advertising campaign on AIDS which is targeted specifically at young people aged between 15 and 20.

**Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to distribute the Government's literature on AIDS and HIV in languages other than English.

**Mr. Newton:** Leaflets and other media activities providing information on AIDS in a number of languages other than English are being considered. A Welsh language version of the national leaflet is already available.

**Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* for each of the last 10 years for which figures are available *(a)* the number of nurses leaving National Health Service employment and *(b)* the number of nurses who have begun employment in private sector health care after leaving National Health Service employment.

**Mr. Newton:** Information about the number of nurses leaving National Health Service employment is not collected centrally.

### Warwick and District General Hospital

**Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a decision to authorise the proposed phase II development at Warwick district general hospital before the end of February; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** Proposals for a phase II development of Warwick district general hospital have not been received by the Department. It is for the west midlands regional health authority to decide whether any such proposals should be included in its future plans and the hon. Member may wish to contact that authority for further information.

### Benefits

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people within Tayside region are receiving supplementary benefit; and how many of these are unemployed.

**Mr. Lyell:** Tayside region is covered by the department's local offices at Perth, Arbroath, Dundee East and Dundee West, but their boundaries are not conterminous with those of Tayside. The total number of people receiving supplementary benefit from these offices, and the number of those who were unemployed on 10 December 1986—the latest available figures—were:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| Total in receipt of supplementary benefit | 38,217 |
| Unemployed people in receipt of supplementary benefit | 15,501 |

*Source:* 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many cases of claims for supplementary benefit to his Department's Liverpool offices during 1986 were not met within 14 days; and what percentage of total claims this represents.

**Mr. Lyell** [*pursuant to his reply,* 12 January 1987, c. *105*]: The number of claims for supplementary benefit which take more than 14 days to clear is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Details of the average time taken to deal with a fresh claim to supplementary benefit by each of the social security offices covering the Liverpool city council area, for the year up to and including April 1986, are as follows:

| *Name of DHSS local office* | *Average clearance time (in days)* |
|---|---|
| Belle Vue | 6 |
| Breckfield | 10 |
| City | 4 |
| Edge Hill | 11 |
| Garston | 5 |
| Norris Green | 3 |
| Toxteth | 3 |
| West Derby | 5 |

**Mr. Iain Mills** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the number of claimants in *(a)* 1984, *(b)* 1985 and *(c)* 1986 processed by the Department of Health and Social Security office at 2,104 Coventry road, Sheldon, Birmingham in total; and if he will break this figure down to show the number resident in (i) Chelmsley Wood (ii) Ford Bridge (iii) Kingshurst (iv) Bicken Hill and (v) Castle Bromwich.

**Mr. Lyell:** Information is not available in the form requested. The number of claims dealt with by the Department's South Yardley local office is shown in the table. Figures are available only on the basis of statistical years which run from April to April. Figures for supplementary benefit show the number of decisions made in each period, figures for other benefits show the number of claims received. A breakdown of these figures into separate districts is not available.

| | *11 April 1984 to 9 April 1985* | *10 April 1985 to 8 April 1986* | *9 April 1986 to 13 January 1987* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Supplementary benefit claims decided | 21,156 | 22,892 | 17,526 |
| *Other benefits* | | | |
| Sickness—invalidity benefit claims received | 5,199 | 5,261 | 2,110 |
| Severe disablement allowance claims received | 64 | 139 | 95 |
| Maternity benefit claims received | 1,933 | 2,000 | 1,529 |
| Retirement pension claims received | 3,947 | 4,445 | 2,753 |
| Widows benefit claims received | 298 | 315 | 200 |
| Death grant claims received | 2,231 | 2,312 | 1,859 |
| Industrial disablement benefit claims received | 224 | 277 | 229 |

### Community Care

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list total expenditure on community care by (i) each district health authority, and (ii) each local authority social service department for each year since 1979, showing separately expenditure on private residential and nursing care.

**Mr. Newton:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Leukaemia

**Ms. Richardson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about the high incidence of leukaemia in children in the parishes of Aldermaston, Tadley, Mortimer and Burghfield; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** We have received representations as to the allegedly high incidence of childhood leukaemia in the vicinity of Aldermaston and Burghfield from a number of local authorities in or adjacent to this area and from individuals.

My noble Friend met a delegation from Berkshire county council on 26 January to discuss this matter.

**Ms. Richardson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the inquiry set up to advise the Government on the incidence of leukemia in the parishes adjacent to the atomic weapons research establishment at Aldermaston will make its report; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** Allegations of a raised incidence of leukaemia in the vicinity of AWRE Aldermaston and ROF Burghfield were referred to the Government's independent advisory committee, COMARE (Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment). COMARE is expected to report in the latter half of 1987.

### Elderly People

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has as to how many people there are of retirement age in each district authority in Cambridgeshire; what proportion live alone; and how many and what proportion of the people of retirement age are *(a)* married, *(b)* single men and *(c)* single women.

**Mrs. Currie:** Only the number of people of retirement age (taken as 65 for men and 60 for women) is available annually; the remaining information is taken from the 1981 census of population. Hence the latest available information is as follows:

| *District* | *Persons of retirement age, mid-1985* | | | *Persons of retirement age, 1981 Census* | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Males* | *Females* | *Persons* | *Living alone* | *Married persons* | | *Single males* | | *Single females* | |
| | *(000's)* | *(000's)* | *(000's)* | *(Per cent.)* | *(000's)* | *(Per cent.)* | *(000's)* | *(Per cent.)* | *(000's)* | *(Per cent.)* |
| Cambridge | 5·8 | 12·5 | 18·3 | 31·6 | 9·4 | 54·0 | 0·4 | 7·5 | 1·6 | 13·5 |
| East Cambridgeshire | 4·2 | 6·9 | 11·1 | 27·0 | 6·0 | 60·0 | 0·3 | 8·4 | 0·5 | 7·7 |
| Fenland | 4·9 | 8·9 | 13·8 | 27·7 | 7·6 | 57·9 | 0·3 | 7·0 | 0·6 | 7·6 |
| Huntingdon | 6·1 | 11·1 | 17·2 | 26·8 | 9·4 | 59·1 | 0·4 | 7·2 | 0·8 | 8·2 |
| Peterborough | 7·5 | 13·8 | 21·3 | 28·2 | 11·1 | 59·0 | 0·4 | 6·6 | 0·9 | 7·5 |
| South Cambridgeshire | 6·2 | 11·9 | 18·1 | 26·0 | 9·9 | 59·8 | 0·4 | 7·2 | 1·0 | 9·8 |

### Births and Deaths Registration Act

**Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what recent representations he has received in support of amending the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926 to allow for the burial or cremation of foetal remains of less than 28 weeks; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the written reply given to his question No. 68 to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department answered today.

### Hospitals (Coal)

**Mr. Lofthouse** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what experiments are being conducted within the National Health Service in the use of imported coal for heating hospitals; and what guidance his Department has issued to health authorities on this subject;

(2) if he will make it his policy that the National Health Service should purchase only British coal for use in hospitals.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply,* 15 January 1987, c. *300*]: The Department is currently finalising the new supply agreement with British Coal referred to in my reply to the hon. Member for Rother Valley (Mr. Barron) on 14 January, c. *205*.

### Mental Illness

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the number of beds for the treatment of mental illness in England in *(a)* 1972, *(b)* 1982 and *(c)* the latest available year, for (i) general hospitals, (ii) mental hospitals and (iii) other residential facilities.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply* 19 January 1987, c. *428*]: The information requested is given in the table.

*Available mental illness beds—England*

| *National Health Service hospitals* | [1]*1972* | *1982* | *1985* |
|---|---|---|---|
| General hospitals[2] | 4,639 | 8,897 | 9,268 |
| Mental illness hospitals | 104,208 | 70,746 | 61,925 |
| Other hospitals | 5,650 | 4,188 | 4,673 |
| Private hospitals[3] | n/a | 1,994 | 2,340 |

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[1] Available beds in the specialties of psychogeriatrics and forensic psychiatry included in the figures for 1982 and 1985 were not separately identifiable in 1972. Therefore the figures are not strictly comparable.

[2] Hospitals classified as acute, mainly acute or partly acute.

[3] Institutions registered under Section 23 of the Registered Homes Act 1984.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, further to his answer of 12 January, *Official Report,* column *39,* on estimated expenditure by local authorities on bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households in the financial year 1985-86, he will indicate when he expects to receive returns from the non-responding authorities; and if he intends to place all returns received in the Library.

**Mr. Tracey:** A further 26 returns have recently been received from local authorities and the required information has been placed today in the House of Commons Library. Returns from the remaining authorities are expected by the end of March 1987. When this information is available this will also be placed in the House of Commons Library.

### Local Authority Housing

**Sir Hugh Rossi** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the comparative figures for areas of *(a)* council house rents and *(b)* local authority mortgage repayments indicating the global sums, the number of cases in each and the relationship of these figures in percentage terms to the total numbers of lettings and mortgages as the case may be.

**Mr. Ridley:** The available figures on English local authorities' housing and mortgage loans are shown below. Information on all rented housing and mortgage loans in each area is not available.

*Rent and mortgage payments received by local authorities 1985-86*
*Housing stock and mortgages outstanding at end of 1985-86*
*England*

| | | | *Local authority mortgage lending to private persons* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Local authority housing* | | *Council dwelling sales* | | | *Other* | |
| *Local authority* | *Gross rent received £ thousand* | *Housing stock* | *Interest payments £ thousand* | *Repayments of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* | *Repayment of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* |
| **Hartlepool** | 8,888 | 11,168 | 506 | 436 | 649 | 125 | 192 |
| **Langbaurgh** | 14,384 | 16,904 | 650 | 640 | 765 | 280 | 533 |
| **Middlesbrough** | 18,338 | 18,033 | 340 | 340 | 553 | 411 | 670 |
| **Stockton-on-Tees** | 14,892 | 18,803 | 1,241 | n/a | 1,016 | n/a | 442 |
| **Chester-le-Street** | 6,180 | 7,431 | 69 | 93 | 73 | 97 | 282 |
| **Darlington** | 5,427 | 8,251 | 276 | 454 | 420 | 221 | 408 |
| **Derwentside** | 9,173 | 12,518 | 510 | 820 | 901 | 152 | 386 |
| **Durham** | 7,772 | 11,346 | 69 | 52 | 77 | 87 | 214 |
| **Easington** | 16,063 | 18,764 | 838 | 864 | 1,179 | 148 | 226 |
| **Sedgefield** | 12,750 | 15,009 | 580 | 1,160 | n/a | 275 | n/a |
| **Teesdale** | 887 | 1,318 | 72 | 39 | 92 | 124 | 264 |
| **Wear Valley** | 6,468 | 8,149 | 111 | 63 | 132 | 200 | 631 |
| **Alnwick** | 2,574 | 2,959 | 67 | 202 | 64 | 54 | 245 |
| **Berwick-upon-Tweed** | 3,046 | 3,740 | 78 | 84 | 111 | 7 | 37 |
| **Blyth Valley** | 7,932 | 9,972 | 410 | 950 | 377 | 182 | 220 |
| **Castle Morpeth** | 3,322 | 4,057 | 255 | n/a | 198 | n/a | 186 |
| **Tynedale** | 3,292 | 4,735 | 35 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| **Wansbeck** | 7,078 | 9,543 | 383 | 596 | 406 | 558 | 1,344 |
| **Gateshead** | 26,511 | 35,797 | 280 | 128 | 274 | 750 | 1,241 |
| **Newcastle-upon-Tyne** | 38,080 | 46,222 | 754 | 737 | 1,180 | 428 | 722 |
| **North Tyneside** | 20,895 | 28,745 | 1,172 | 1,000 | n/a | 381 | n/a |
| **South Tyneside** | 23,874 | 29,906 | 2,212 | 148 | n/a | 98 | 2,856 |
| **Sunderland** | 31,317 | 53,041 | 731 | n/a | 863 | n/a | 1,592 |
| **Beverley** | 3,255 | 5,485 | 147 | 183 | 184 | 68 | 146 |
| **Boothferry** | 3,454 | 4,740 | 142 | 129 | 254 | 213 | 134 |
| **Cleethorpes** | 2,840 | 3,529 | 149 | 144 | 309 | 344 | 563 |
| **East Yorkshire** | 4,091 | 4,884 | 145 | 237 | 167 | 37 | 16 |
| **Glanford** | 2,906 | 3,764 | 353 | 388 | 683 | 71 | 263 |
| **Great Grimsby** | 6,804 | 8,302 | 204 | 346 | 535 | 192 | 454 |
| **Holderness** | 1,810 | 2,535 | 121 | 304 | 120 | 19 | 36 |
| **Kingston-upon-Hull** | 32,309 | 46,727 | 288 | 606 | 311 | 297 | 496 |
| **Scunthorpe** | 8,123 | 9,385 | 764 | 597 | 1,142 | 295 | 627 |
| **Craven** | 1,575 | 2,298 | 52 | 161 | n/a | 30 | n/a |
| **Hambleton** | 3,540 | 4,899 | 86 | 292 | 76 | 20 | 53 |
| **Harrogate** | 4,370 | 6,063 | 207 | 176 | 267 | 53 | 76 |
| **Richmondshire** | 2,191 | 2,795 | 42 | 21 | 39 | 25 | 114 |
| **Ryedale** | 2,571 | 3,843 | 103 | 118 | 116 | 121 | 208 |
| **Scarborough** | 5,153 | 7,452 | 94 | 116 | n/a | 30 | n/a |
| **Selby** | 3,990 | 5,476 | 555 | 493 | 603 | 90 | 249 |
| **York** | 6,170 | 10,545 | 789 | 2,396 | 755 | 280 | 348 |
| **Barnsley** | 21,597 | 31,124 | 1,149 | n/a | 1,371 | n/a | 1,769 |
| **Doncaster** | 23,596 | 34,421 | 1,547 | 926 | 1,952 | 196 | 567 |
| **Rotherham** | 25,506 | 34,108 | 1,708 | 1,582 | 2,060 | 178 | 458 |
| **Sheffield** | 79,617 | 90,003 | 922 | 4,498 | 691 | 1,199 | 1,810 |
| **Bradford** | 27,517 | 36,250 | 2,692 | 2,000 | 4,805 | 2,200 | 3,694 |
| **Calderdale** | 11,170 | 15,600 | 652 | 1,066 | 1,137 | 669 | 831 |
| **Kirklees** | 22,880 | 35,211 | 1,322 | 1,381 | 2,200 | 1,082 | 1,603 |
| **Leeds** | 60,152 | 92,269 | 4,042 | 4.823 | 5,145 | 1,541 | 2,408 |
| **Wakefield** | 31,401 | 44,663 | 751 | 975 | 880 | 946 | 1,561 |
| **Amber Valley** | 5,995 | 7,619 | 473 | 1,684 | 387 | 137 | 431 |
| **Bolsover** | 7,101 | 8,350 | 622 | 497 | 808 | 178 | 426 |
| **Chesterfield** | 9,186 | 13,658 | 447 | 283 | 484 | 239 | 348 |
| **Derby** | 14,715 | 20,699 | 993 | 1,030 | 1,397 | 194 | 315 |
| **Erewash** | 6,280 | 8,388 | 470 | 608 | 617 | 186 | 359 |
| **High Peak** | 4,689 | 6,153 | 217 | 253 | 321 | 104 | 348 |
| **North East Derbyshire** | 8,539 | 11,192 | 320 | 389 | 340 | 130 | 232 |
| **South Derbyshire** | 3,578 | 4,716 | 304 | 200 | 333 | 80 | 166 |
| **West Derbyshire** | 3,422 | 4,077 | 314 | 174 | 309 | 80 | 254 |
| **Blaby** | 2,077 | 3,238 | 113 | 99 | n/a | 84 | n/a |
| **Charnwood** | 5,359 | 8,352 | 339 | n/a | 350 | 700 | 367 |
| **Harborough** | 2,503 | 3,285 | 186 | 118 | 189 | 48 | 111 |
| **Hinckley and Bosworth** | 3,763 | 5,062 | 168 | 121 | n/a | 30 | n/a |
| **Leicester** | 29,928 | 34,087 | 558 | 658 | 619 | 1,082 | 1,684 |
| **Melton** | 2,146 | 2,737 | 162 | 190 | 200 | 39 | 37 |
| **North West Leicestershire** | 4,984 | 5,995 | 226 | 186 | 229 | 145 | 360 |
| **Oadby and Wigston** | 1,195 | 1,834 | 165 | 182 | 164 | 38 | 59 |
| **Rutland** | 1,278 | 1,925 | 23 | 32 | 31 | 9 | 36 |
| **Boston** | 3,670 | 5,809 | 13 | 13 | n/a | 25 | 4 |

|  |  |  | Local authority mortgage lending to private persons |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Local authority housing |  | Council dwelling sales |  |  | Other |  |
| Local authority | Gross rent received £ thousand | Housing stock | Interest payments £ thousand | Repayments of principal £ thousand | Number outstanding | Repayment of principal £ thousand | Number outstanding |
| East Lindsey | 3,957 | 5,903 | 198 | 325 | 216 | 82 | 201 |
| Lincoln | 6,999 | 10,525 | 82 | 225 | 70 | 135 | 188 |
| North Kesteven | 4,055 | 5,263 | 111 | 135 | 112 | 29 | 104 |
| South Holland | 3,948 | 5,523 | 212 | 82 | n/a | 43 | n/a |
| South Kesteven | 6,770 | 9,172 | 277 | 646 | 321 | 217 | 170 |
| West Lindsey | 3,808 | 4,906 | 282 | 145 | 308 | 49 | 170 |
| Corby | 7,033 | 9,796 | 1,169 | 1,129 | 1,489 | 193 | 582 |
| Daventry | 3,749 | 4,965 | 126 | 135 | 123 | 40 | 83 |
| East Northamptonshire | 3,086 | 5,294 | 397 | 286 | 495 | 70 | 135 |
| Kettering | 4,952 | 5,920 | 88 | 106 | 196 | 67 | 124 |
| Northampton | 15,346 | 18,306 | 1,021 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| South Northamptonshire | 2,557 | 4,541 | 833 | 1,014 | 843 | 133 | 188 |
| Wellingborough | 6,007 | 6,913 | 342 | 410 | 482 | 62 | 71 |
| Ashfield | 7,927 | 10,884 | 497 | n/a | 560 | n/a | 892 |
| Bassetlaw | 7,321 | 9,982 | 791 | 1,685 | 1,018 | 384 | 331 |
| Broxtowe | 5,963 | 6,764 | 709 | 767 | 875 | 739 | 820 |
| Gedling | 4,526 | 5,744 | 634 | 593 | 900 | 489 | 833 |
| Mansfield | 9,197 | 10,424 | 485 | 300 | 619 | 500 | 484 |
| Newark and Sherwood | 6,077 | 8,101 | 775 | 1,670 | 909 | 75 | 122 |
| Nottingham | 36,962 | 45,928 | 6,288 | 5,763 | 7,156 | 1,260 | 1,194 |
| Rushcliffe | 3,653 | 4,487 | 781 | 680 | 886 | 427 | 721 |
| Luton | 10,601 | 11,956 | 1,614 | 2,016 | 1,259 | 784 | 1,172 |
| Mid Bedfordshire | 5,621 | 7,967 | 1,146 | 1,183 | 859 | 491 | 322 |
| North Bedfordshire | 6,968 | 8,198 | 1,104 | 1,503 | n/a | 409 | n/a |
| South Bedfordshire | 6,783 | 7,925 | 735 | 681 | 518 | 205 | 244 |
| Aylesbury | 8,848 | 11,127 | 930 | 1,287 | 723 | 120 | 208 |
| Chiltern | 3,961 | 5,099 | 624 | 971 | 384 | 210 | 155 |
| Milton Keynes | 5,989 | 7,163 | 716 | 1,114 | 685 | 670 | 440 |
| South Bucks | 2,981 | 3,662 | 656 | 3,288 | 303 | 138 | 23 |
| Wycombe | 7,866 | 10,094 | 2,826 | 3,392 | 1,829 | 276 | 488 |
| Cambridge | 8,412 | 10,727 | 730 | 703 | 557 | 122 | 119 |
| East Cambridgeshire | 3,668 | 4,789 | 387 | 335 | 416 | 40 | 85 |
| Fenland | 3,677 | 5,352 | 569 | 801 | n/a | 122 | 1 |
| Huntingdonshire | 6,412 | 8,736 | 1,259 | 1,477 | 1,401 | 228 | 494 |
| Peterborough | 7,700 | 9,664 | 520 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| South Cambridgeshire | 5,755 | 7,788 | 514 | 397 | 418 | 60 | 81 |
| Basildon | 5,405 | 6,071 | 19 | n.a. | 267 | 10 | 156 |
| Braintree | 9,209 | 11,600 | 884 | 810 | 589 | 51 | 173 |
| Brentwood | 3,161 | 3,713 | 583 | 410 | 429 | 110 | 341 |
| Castle Point | 2,146 | 2,376 | 205 | 326 | 131 | n.a. | 392 |
| Chelmsford | 7,352 | 9,783 | 779 | 943 | 623 | 22 | 99 |
| Colchester | 7,992 | 9,138 | 1,670 | 2,042 | 1,760 | 552 | 808 |
| Epping Forest | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 2,726 | 1,731 | 360 | 634 |
| Harlow | 12,774 | 17,482 | 590 | 856 | 339 | 31 | 30 |
| Maldon | 2,000 | 2,501 | 174 | 374 | 208 | 96 | 89 |
| Rochford | 2,486 | 2,521 | 184 | n.a. | 111 | n.a. | 280 |
| Southend-on-Sea | 8,908 | 8,105 | 447 | 312 | 439 | 353 | 616 |
| Tendring | 3,707 | 4,327 | 572 | 732 | 586 | 121 | 256 |
| Thurrock | 12,664 | 15,556 | 2,078 | n.a. | 84 | n.a. | 154 |
| Uttlesford | 3,624 | 4,078 | 302 | 399 | 222 | 98 | 7 |
| Broxbourne | 5,059 | 5,116 | 265 | 330 | 271 | 297 | 509 |
| Dacorum | 12,082 | 16,181 | 2,020 | 2,655 | n.a. | 134 | n.a. |
| East Hertfordshire | 7,168 | 8,515 | 576 | 713 | 351 | 108 | 250 |
| Hertsmere | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 495 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| North Hertfordshire | 9,759 | 11,888 | 854 | 1,803 | 682 | 342 | 464 |
| St. Albans | 5,872 | 7,930 | 738 | 2,915 | 562 | 658 | 473 |
| Stevenage | 11,189 | 13,791 | 1,216 | 1,777 | 713 | 464 | 773 |
| Three Rivers | 5,244 | 5,951 | 643 | 627 | n.a. | 113 | n.a. |
| Watford | 5,172 | 6,649 | 100 | 85 | 105 | 228 | 420 |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 11,477 | 14,673 | 569 | 381 | 367 | 893 | 316 |
| Breckland | 5,183 | 7,573 | 1,169 | 1,572 | 1,375 | 302 | 595 |
| Broadland | 3,108 | 3,963 | 144 | 676 | n.a. | 76 | n.a. |
| Great Yarmouth | 5,816 | 7,918 | 94 | 172 | 99 | 92 | 71 |
| King's Lynn and West Norfolk | 6,589 | 9,544 | 1,119 | 1,571 | n.a. | 383 | n.a. |
| North Norfolk | 4,596 | 6,338 | 254 | 406 | 230 | 98 | 211 |
| Norwich | 18,571 | 23,103 | 453 | 150 | 377 | 677 | 885 |
| South Norfolk | 4,990 | 5,868 | 175 | 93 | 162 | 116 | 296 |
| Babergh | 4,237 | 5,236 | 477 | 597 | 407 | 50 | 155 |
| Forest Heath | 3,687 | 4,538 | 411 | 467 | 422 | 148 | 238 |
| Ipswich | 8,778 | 11,704 | 33 | 38 | 26 | 61 | 69 |

| | | | *Local authority mortgage lending to private persons* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Local authority housing* | | *Council dwelling sales* | | | *Other* | |
| *Local authority* | *Gross rent received £ thousand* | *Housing stock* | *Interest payments £ thousand* | *Repayments of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* | *Repayment of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* |
| **Mid Suffolk** | 4,125 | 4,826 | 116 | 116 | 81 | 73 | 130 |
| **St. Edmundsbury** | 6,514 | 8,892 | 37 | 94 | 42 | 172 | 218 |
| **Suffolk Coastal** | 4,363 | 5,944 | 50 | 49 | 69 | 55 | 185 |
| **Waveney** | 5,368 | 6,485 | 675 | 594 | 818 | 261 | 537 |
| **City of London** | 2,336 | 2,305 | 0 | 473 | 128 | 0 | 0 |
| **Barking and Dagenham** | 23,257 | 32,098 | 4,239 | 3,344 | 2,975 | 345 | 318 |
| **Barnet** | 21,008 | 17,563 | 2,047 | 1,666 | 1,395 | 687 | 985 |
| **Bexley** | 9,649 | 11,132 | 1,912 | 1,798 | 1,423 | 763 | 1,078 |
| **Brent** | 16,242 | 21,474 | 257 | 124 | 135 | 454 | 159 |
| **Bromley** | 15,670 | 16,094 | 2,150 | 2,404 | 1,537 | 1,065 | 1,223 |
| **Camden** | 26,419 | 35,252 | 76 | 375 | 111 | 1,330 | 683 |
| **Croydon** | 20,548 | 19,592 | 2,406 | 2,333 | n.a. | 741 | n.a. |
| **Ealing** | 20,646 | 20,433 | 4,174 | 4,045 | 3,086 | 569 | 222 |
| **Enfield** | 20,630 | 20,740 | 2,921 | 3,141 | 1,783 | 511 | 538 |
| **Greenwich** | 28,070 | 36,929 | 686 | 490 | 368 | 1,600 | 1,307 |
| **Hackney** | 28,826 | 49,422 | 237 | 101 | 167 | 504 | 879 |
| **Hammersmith and Fulham** | 21,327 | 19,308 | 1,009 | 970 | 542 | 1,122 | 1,198 |
| **Haringey** | 18,147 | 25,081 | 757 | 363 | 405 | 1,314 | 1,431 |
| **Harrow** | 9,363 | 8,360 | 904 | n.a. | 560 | 280 | 220 |
| **Havering** | 16,400 | 16,674 | 4,165 | 5,469 | 2,914 | 792 | 867 |
| **Hillingdon** | 19,698 | 17,964 | 5,279 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| **Hounslow** | 17,985 | 20,176 | 1,884 | 1,102 | 1,045 | 364 | 653 |
| **Islington** | 31,428 | 41,420 | 440 | n.a. | 177 | n.a. | 297 |
| **Kensington and Chelsea** | 14,326 | 8,756 | 394 | n.a. | 162 | 1,291 | 480 |
| **Kingston upon Thames** | 7,460 | 6,563 | 1,356 | 2,040 | 808 | 869 | 599 |
| **Lambeth** | 38,222 | 49,300 | 438 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| **Lewisham** | 33,061 | 42,421 | 1,489 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| **Merton** | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 1,048 | n.a. | 609 |
| **Newham** | 23,738 | 32,183 | 130 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| **Redbridge** | 14,061 | 11,129 | 3,001 | 2,665 | 2,404 | 3,251 | 2,051 |
| **Richmond upon Thames** | 10,009 | 9,870 | 1,182 | 782 | n.a. | 186 | n.a. |
| **Southwark** | 50,655 | 62,024 | 177 | 142 | 351 | 239 | 312 |
| **Sutton** | 13,161 | 11,917 | 921 | 1,159 | 578 | 451 | 351 |
| **Tower Hamlets** | 31,341 | 47,295 | 312 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| **Waltham Forest** | 17,842 | 21,180 | 1,245 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| **Wandsworth** | 39,782 | 34,135 | 6,604 | 5,331 | 3,783 | 1,393 | 889 |
| **Westminster** | 28,117 | 23,300 | 933 | n.a. | 500 | n.a. | 550 |
| **Bracknell** | 8,688 | 10,335 | 2,531 | 3,451 | 1,334 | 374 | 554 |
| **Newbury** | 6,444 | 7,923 | 765 | 2,057 | 373 | 102 | 214 |
| **Reading** | 8,846 | 9,968 | 1,604 | 1,432 | 1,385 | 954 | 1,501 |
| **Slough** | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 1,866 | 1,401 | 328 | 283 |
| **Windsor and Maidenhead** | 6,980 | 7,543 | 1,785 | 1,548 | 1,217 | 1,104 | 1,552 |
| **Wokingham** | 3,453 | 3,693 | 863 | 1,222 | 458 | 146 | 435 |
| **Brighton** | 13,081 | 11,698 | 735 | 984 | n.a. | 1,193 | n.a. |
| **Eastbourne** | 5,055 | 5,161 | 294 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| **Hastings** | 3,972 | 4,981 | 117 | 135 | 95 | 332 | 367 |
| **Hove** | 3,625 | 4,453 | 344 | 252 | 256 | 276 | 244 |
| **Lewes** | 3,848 | 4,326 | 435 | 550 | 341 | 317 | 261 |
| **Rother** | 2,863 | 3,998 | 211 | 331 | 173 | 142 | 153 |
| **Wealden** | 4,776 | 4,337 | 75 | 23 | 60 | 37 | 63 |
| **Basingstoke and Deane** | 10,806 | 11,838 | 3,448 | 4,559 | n.a. | 543 | n.a. |
| **East Hampshire** | 4,639 | 4,893 | 621 | 1,896 | 329 | 146 | 286 |
| **Eastleigh** | 4,549 | 5,268 | 1,232 | 1,181 | 1,076 | 885 | 876 |
| **Fareham** | 3,038 | 3,364 | 95 | 218 | 117 | 42 | 44 |
| **Gosport** | 4,902 | 5,782 | 732 | 996 | 554 | 103 | 316 |
| **Hart** | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 491 | 338 | 145 | 219 |
| **Havant** | 3,898 | 3,965 | 282 | 452 | 180 | 66 | 80 |
| **New Forest** | 6,944 | 7,022 | 812 | 2,055 | 466 | 273 | 248 |
| **Portsmouth** | 21,171 | 22,896 | 1,955 | 3,297 | 1,844 | 710 | 1,033 |
| **Rushmoor** | 6,091 | 6,177 | 732 | 2,038 | 659 | 123 | 441 |
| **Southampton** | 17,067 | 21,544 | 2,359 | 3,432 | 2,982 | 478 | 640 |
| **Test Valley** | 7,278 | 7,468 | 496 | 1,326 | 325 | 36 | 88 |
| **Winchester** | 5,645 | 6,750 | 221 | 247 | 185 | 147 | 221 |
| **Medina** | 3,130 | 3,237 | 302 | n.a. | 120 | n.a. | 380 |
| **South Wight** | 2,136 | 2,390 | 230 | 140 | 206 | 230 | 455 |
| **Ashford** | 8,275 | 8,709 | 245 | 302 | 173 | 93 | 248 |
| **Canterbury** | 6,028 | 7,155 | 1,073 | 942 | 973 | 325 | 756 |
| **Dartford** | 5,887 | 6,553 | 1,495 | 1,052 | 1,034 | 179 | 336 |
| **Dover** | 6,712 | 7,939 | 469 | 1,154 | 395 | 106 | 372 |
| **Gillingham** | 3,918 | 4,409 | 245 | 373 | n.a. | 153 | n.a. |

| | | | *Local authority mortgage lending to private persons* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Local authority housing* | | *Council dwelling sales* | | | *Other* | |
| *Local authority* | *Gross rent received £ thousand* | *Housing stock* | *Interest payments £ thousand* | *Repayments of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* | *Repayment of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* |
| Gravesham | 6,825 | 8,244 | 567 | 486 | 542 | 210 | 400 |
| Maidstone | 6,381 | 8,896 | 1,032 | 1,156 | 787 | 108 | 217 |
| Rochester upon Medway | 10,269 | 10,300 | 2,678 | 2,619 | n.a. | 529 | n.a. |
| Sevenoaks | 6,908 | 7,373 | 582 | 479 | 389 | 149 | 370 |
| Shepway | 4,724 | 4,505 | 247 | 550 | 234 | 40 | 153 |
| Swale | 7,460 | 8,314 | 884 | 716 | 779 | 392 | 709 |
| Thanet | 6,501 | 7,494 | 862 | 1,009 | 804 | 384 | 456 |
| Tonbridge and Malling | 5,776 | 6,844 | 1,008 | 1,269 | 695 | 250 | 482 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 5,055 | 6,453 | 646 | 605 | n.a. | 204 | n.a. |
| Cherwell | 6,715 | 8,258 | 550 | 600 | n.a. | 400 | n.a. |
| Oxford | 6,485 | 10,070 | 902 | 852 | 932 | 325 | 617 |
| South Oxfordshire | 6,706 | 7,731 | 958 | 2,697 | n.a. | 269 | n.a. |
| Vale of White Horse | 4,873 | 6,266 | 943 | 1,173 | 1,009 | 326 | 601 |
| West Oxfordshire | 4,036 | 5,053 | 486 | 320 | 361 | 146 | 305 |
| Elmbridge | 5,456 | 5,882 | 519 | 713 | 270 | 216 | 283 |
| Epsom and Ewell | 2,688 | 2,278 | 484 | n.a. | 251 | n.a. | 135 |
| Guildford | 6,844 | 7,420 | 634 | 612 | 434 | 114 | 274 |
| Mole Valley | 3,720 | 4,677 | 644 | 412 | 346 | 75 | 107 |
| Reigate and Banstead | 5,881 | 7,309 | 553 | 806 | n.a. | 135 | n.a. |
| Runnymede | 4,017 | 4,317 | 423 | 731 | 231 | 209 | 219 |
| Spelthorne | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | 2,028 | 392 | 75 | 119 |
| Surrey Heath | 3,088 | 3,547 | 1,699 | 1,500 | n.a. | 126 | n.a. |
| Tandridge | 3,909 | 4,188 | 529 | 604 | 215 | 95 | 129 |
| Waverley | 5,720 | 6,819 | 419 | 443 | 287 | 309 | 533 |
| Woking | 4,746 | 4,845 | 846 | 951 | 511 | 251 | 421 |
| Adur | 3,551 | 3,895 | 292 | 428 | 260 | 64 | 171 |
| Arun | 5,426 | 5,252 | 824 | 1,343 | 700 | 226 | 162 |
| Chichester | 6,455 | 7,123 | 407 | 670 | 357 | 187 | 331 |
| Crawley | 10,901 | 12,392 | 845 | 994 | 476 | 88 | 165 |
| Horsham | 5,201 | 6,205 | 150 | 173 | 118 | 158 | 159 |
| Mid Sussex | 3,817 | 4,950 | 678 | 1,093 | 483 | 327 | 539 |
| Worthing | 2,511 | 3,001 | 540 | 647 | n.a. | 210 | n.a. |
| Bath | 6,804 | 7,499 | 569 | 807 | 601 | 463 | 872 |
| Bristol | 31,478 | 41,356 | 4,275 | 3,526 | 4,937 | 1,332 | 2,733 |
| Kingswood | 3,844 | 5,156 | 565 | 487 | 584 | 194 | 399 |
| Northavon | 4,710 | 5,888 | 965 | 674 | 824 | 135 | 293 |
| Wansdyke | 3,663 | 5,343 | 539 | 670 | 546 | 40 | 86 |
| Woodspring | 7,493 | 9,000 | 761 | 635 | n.a. | 378 | n.a. |
| Caradon | 3,778 | 4,543 | 181 | 166 | 138 | 283 | 295 |
| Carrick | 3,899 | 5,169 | 358 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| Kerrier | 3,487 | 4,188 | 207 | 183 | 187 | 322 | 571 |
| North Cornwall | 3,770 | 4,491 | 271 | 730 | n.a. | 62 | n.a. |
| Penwith | 3,413 | 4,019 | 167 | 159 | 154 | 197 | 421 |
| Restormel | 3,068 | 4,465 | 444 | 266 | 409 | 378 | 971 |
| Isles of Scilly | 115 | 121 | 0 | 0 | n.a. | 2 | n.a. |
| East Devon | 3,625 | 5,912 | 704 | 922 | 693 | 121 | 164 |
| Exeter | 5,050 | 8,088 | 589 | 678 | 619 | 151 | 261 |
| Mid Devon | 3,885 | 4,831 | 211 | 151 | n.a. | 40 | 112 |
| North Devon | 3,803 | 4,310 | 115 | 569 | n.a. | 36 | n.a. |
| Plymouth | 17,359 | 22,539 | 2,619 | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| South Hams | 3,602 | 4,070 | 239 | 389 | 223 | 63 | 123 |
| Teignbridge | 4,612 | 5,278 | 144 | 109 | 132 | 99 | 163 |
| Torbay | 3,560 | 4,418 | 26 | 38 | n.a. | 381 | n.a. |
| Torridge | 2,237 | 2,529 | 126 | 1,033 | 132 | 47 | 115 |
| West Devon | 1,794 | 1,859 | 198 | 261 | 178 | 81 | 109 |
| Bournemouth | 6.206 | 6,640 | 428 | 913 | 376 | 124 | 194 |
| Christchurch | 1,457 | 1,770 | 207 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| North Dorset | 2,498 | 3,456 | 14 | 18 | 29 | 11 | 37 |
| Poole | 5,623 | 6,471 | 196 | 128 | 132 | 37 | 211 |
| Purbeck | 1,859 | 2,236 | 105 | 100 | 63 | 34 | 73 |
| West Dorset | 4,907 | 6,026 | 111 | 51 | 84 | 108 | 154 |
| Weymouth and Portland | 3,622 | 4,057 | 70 | 116 | 109 | 88 | 213 |
| Wimborne | 2,405 | 2,536 | 145 | 184 | n/a | 33 | n/a |
| Cheltenham | 5,105 | 6,985 | 377 | 338 | 319 | 218 | 695 |
| Cotswold | 4,502 | 5,158 | 161 | 99 | 202 | 27 | 153 |
| Forest of Dean | 4,238 | 5,373 | 182 | 86 | 163 | 167 | 434 |
| Gloucester | 5,060 | 6,515 | 66 | 42 | n/a | 327 | n/a |
| Stroud | 5,259 | 7,402 | 290 | 263 | 272 | 114 | 213 |
| Tewkesbury | 3,334 | 4,224 | 149 | 98 | 136 | 125 | 345 |
| Mendip | 4,714 | 6,460 | 467 | 811 | 411 | 68 | 201 |
| Sedgemoor | 5,264 | 6,614 | 520 | 584 | 544 | 165 | 297 |

| | | | *Local authority mortgage lending to private persons* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Local authority housing* | | *Council dwelling sales* | | | *Other* | |
| *Local authority* | *Gross rent received £ thousand* | *Housing stock* | *Interest payments £ thousand* | *Repayments of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* | *Repayment of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* |
| South Somerset | 7,001 | 12,020 | 413 | 486 | 378 | 89 | 249 |
| Taunton Deane | 6,652 | 8,643 | 510 | 896 | 365 | 257 | 348 |
| West Somerset | 1,755 | 2,104 | 190 | 311 | 146 | 51 | 92 |
| Kennet | 4,612 | 5,819 | 97 | 69 | 85 | 40 | 79 |
| North Wiltshire | 5,891 | 7,606 | 722 | 998 | 723 | 242 | 503 |
| Salisbury | 6,103 | 8,314 | 559 | 388 | 394 | 145 | 238 |
| Thamesdown | 13,097 | 14,304 | 897 | 860 | 908 | 1,476 | 1,536 |
| West Wiltshire | 5,921 | 6,980 | 842 | 867 | 1,017 | 176 | 574 |
| Bromsgrove | 3,039 | 4,415 | 408 | n/a | 467 | n/a | 92 |
| Hereford | 3,288 | 5,121 | 576 | 618 | 910 | 107 | 167 |
| Leominster | 1,630 | 2,086 | 312 | n/a | 262 | n/a | 179 |
| Malvern Hills | 5,319 | 5,460 | 477 | 364 | 690 | 387 | 323 |
| Redditch | 8,507 | 10,058 | 128 | 452 | 147 | 76 | 88 |
| South Herefordshire | 1,866 | 2,287 | 113 | 39 | n/a | 63 | n/a |
| Worcester | 4,696 | 6,398 | 240 | 237 | n/a | 97 | n/a |
| Wychavon | 6,199 | 8,087 | 140 | 243 | n/a | 65 | n/a |
| Wyre Forest | 6,880 | 7,821 | 448 | 1,225 | 485 | 399 | 702 |
| Bridgnorth | 2,307 | 3,707 | 151 | n/a | 163 | n/a | 77 |
| North Shropshire | 2,668 | 3,604 | 191 | 185 | 295 | 91 | 137 |
| Oswestry | 1,707 | 2,811 | 161 | 60 | n/a | 40 | n/a |
| Shrewsbury and Atcham | 4,951 | 7,141 | 175 | 191 | 240 | 156 | 430 |
| South Shropshire | 1,609 | 1,900 | 199 | 103 | 192 | 53 | 150 |
| The Wrekin | 10,225 | 11,178 | 523 | 322 | n/a | 384 | n/a |
| Cannock Chase | 6,574 | 8,753 | 599 | 646 | n/a | 251 | n/a |
| East Staffordshire | 4,335 | 7,082 | 475 | 731 | 707 | 143 | 251 |
| Lichfield | 4,240 | 6,419 | 606 | 599 | 747 | 162 | 242 |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme | 8,814 | 12,278 | 311 | 648 | 317 | 291 | 527 |
| South Staffordshire | 4,940 | 6,507 | 700 | 644 | 843 | 114 | 204 |
| Stafford | 5,326 | 8,391 | 590 | 485 | 704 | 385 | 424 |
| Staffordshire Moorlands | 2,429 | 4,200 | 68 | 20 | n/a | 21 | n/a |
| Stoke-on-Trent | 18,753 | 29,077 | 2 ,087 | 2,447 | 2,442 | 465 | 997 |
| Tamworth | 7,068 | 7,722 | 208 | n/a | 276 | n/a | 504 |
| North Warwickshire | 3,052 | 4,863 | 255 | 110 | 288 | 155 | 250 |
| Nuneaton and Bedworth | 7,989 | 9,279 | 275 | 242 | 356 | 364 | 363 |
| Rugby | 4,703 | 5,544 | 340 | 402 | 355 | 110 | 234 |
| Stratford-on-Avon | 5,893 | 7,324 | 464 | 995 | 393 | 26 | 75 |
| Warwick | 6,437 | 7,856 | 606 | 2,748 | 323 | 421 | 394 |
| Birmingham | 100,989 | 123,330 | 7,102 | 6,199 | n/a | 2,912 | n/a |
| Coventry | 21,541 | 25,383 | 1,051 | n/a | 1,937 | 3,205 | 2,884 |
| Dudley | 27,108 | 36,350 | 1,425 | n/a | 2,004 | n/a | 1,563 |
| Sandwell | 40,602 | 55,556 | 1,949 | 1,475 | 2,932 | 370 | 800 |
| Solihull | 13,626 | 15,974 | 898 | 3,770 | 493 | 155 | 70 |
| Walsall | 28,469 | 38,523 | 2,130 | 1,700 | n/a | 500 | n/a |
| Wolverhampton | 34,651 | 39,261 | 1,390 | 1,901 | 1,512 | 43 | 232 |
| Chester | 6,262 | 8,565 | 761 | 560 | 1,053 | 120 | 242 |
| Congleton | 3,452 | 5,121 | 253 | 282 | 279 | 150 | 313 |
| Crewe and Nantwich | 6,418 | 8,534 | 315 | 500 | 409 | 332 | 532 |
| Ellesmere Port and Neston | 5,122 | 8,863 | 917 | 798 | 1,072 | 99 | 121 |
| Halton | 7,031 | 96,755 | 955 | 588 | 1,241 | 233 | 660 |
| Macclesfield | 5,556 | 8,450 | 334 | 395 | 396 | 460 | 437 |
| Vale Royal | 6,689 | 9,803 | 971 | 989 | 794 | 455 | 980 |
| Warrington | 7,871 | 13,155 | 837 | 939 | 1,396 | 366 | 664 |
| Allerdale | 5,336 | 6,409 | 8 | 12 | 12 | 108 | 218 |
| Barrow-in-Furness | 4,141 | 4,802 | 167 | 80 | n/a | 150 | n/a |
| Carlisle | 6,464 | 12,015 | 20 | 24 | 24 | 35 | 28 |
| Copeland | 4,589 | 6,353 | 26 | 56 | 38 | 79 | 113 |
| Eden | 1,879 | 2,557 | 55 | 940 | 32 | 17 | 10 |
| South Lakeland | 4,582 | 5,707 | 104 | 586 | 39 | 8 | 50 |
| Blackburn | 10,933 | 13,986 | 174 | 203 | 249 | 400 | 928 |
| Blackpool | 6,030 | 7,348 | 132 | 95 | 194 | 117 | 214 |
| Burnley | 5,367 | 7,284 | 214 | 188 | 252 | 306 | 600 |
| Chorley | 3,478 | 4,260 | 195 | 185 | 278 | 253 | 585 |
| Fylde | 1,895 | 2,583 | 67 | 61 | 65 | 24 | 38 |
| Hyndburn | 3,937 | 4,544 | 176 | 223 | 358 | 318 | 707 |
| Lancaster | 3,818 | 5,394 | 615 | 701 | 867 | 263 | 612 |
| Pendle | 4,536 | 5,142 | 177 | 133 | 236 | 202 | 470 |
| Preston | 8,762 | 11,110 | 254 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Ribble Valley | 1,578 | 1,854 | 242 | 227 | 185 | 138 | 184 |
| Rosendale | 4,613 | 5,952 | 441 | 529 | 651 | 332 | 956 |
| South Ribble | 3,578 | 4,221 | 280 | 354 | 313 | 262 | 373 |
| West Lancashire | 8,743 | 10,988 | 446 | 280 | 453 | 160 | 262 |

| | | | *Local authority mortgage lending to private persons* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Local authority housing* | | *Council dwelling sales* | | | *Other* | |
| *Local authority* | *Gross rent received £ thousand* | *Housing stock* | *Interest payments £ thousand* | *Repayments of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* | *Repayment of principal £ thousand* | *Number outstanding* |
| Wyre | 2,757 | 3,916 | 224 | 252 | 259 | 190 | 240 |
| Bolton | 18,487 | 26,114 | 349 | 332 | n/a | 899 | n/a |
| Bury | 8,493 | 11,635 | n/a | 1,799 | 786 | 801 | 1,432 |
| Manchester | 59,957 | 98,212 | 472 | n/a | 673 | n/a | 1,889 |
| Oldham | 20,672 | 25,691 | 521 | 471 | 732 | 625 | 1,163 |
| Rochdale | 17,486 | 21,519 | 320 | 362 | n/a | 1,065 | n/a |
| Salford | 34,084 | 41,842 | 534 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Stockport | 12,154 | 16,371 | 512 | 545 | 862 | 880 | 1,121 |
| Tameside | 17,739 | 21,112 | 576 | 737 | n/a | 793 | n/a |
| Trafford | 10,372 | 13,749 | 1,217 | 977 | 1,232 | 562 | 1,080 |
| Wigan | 26,049 | 33,908 | 1,247 | 3,073 | 1,098 | 972 | 1,923 |
| Knowsley | 23,426 | 26,146 | 1,507 | 1,407 | 3,056 | 480 | 833 |
| Liverpool | 53,030 | 67,330 | 4,035 | n/a | n/a | 1,110 | n/a |
| St Helens | 15,637 | 20,404 | 733 | 521 | 870 | 604 | 1,483 |
| Sefton | 14,835 | 17,661 | 843 | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Wirral | 24,572 | 24,511 | 1,248 | n/a | 1,629 | n/a | 985 |

*Sources* Local authorities' subsidy claim returns 1986: Housing Revenue Account rent, dwelling stock and interest proposals.
Local authorities P1 returns: repayments of principal.
Local authorities P3 returns: mortgages outstanding.
n/a information not available.

**Mr. Warren** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest data he has on the average total cost of building and financing the loans on council flats and houses with one, two and three bedrooms, respectively.

**Mr. Tracey:** I shall answer this question shortly.

## East Sussex

**Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what proportion of expenditure by Brighton borough council and East Sussex county council, respectively, has been provided by rate support grant, in each year since 1974.

**Mr. Chope:** The following table shows the block grant paid to Brighton borough council and East Sussex county council for 1981-82 onwards expressed as a proportion of their total expenditure.

| | *Brighton BC* | *East Sussex CC* |
|---|---|---|
| 1981-82 | ·482 | ·386 |
| 1982-83 | ·297 | ·344 |
| 1983-84 | ·451 | ·308 |
| 1984-85 | ·397 | ·305 |
| 1985-86 | ·496 | ·266 |
| 1986-87 | ·358 | ·231 |

Total expenditure is the measure of local authority expenditure used in the determination of block grant. It comprises net current expenditure on the rate fund revenue account plus items such as debt charges and revenue contributions to capital and less specific and supplementary grants and items such as interest receipts. Estimates of total expenditure prior to 1981-82 are not available.

## Metropolitan Police

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the procedures and criteria used in determining the block grant entitlement of the Metropolitan police.

**Mr. Chope:** Block grant is paid direct to the receiver for the Metropolitan police district (MPD) under the provisions of section 10 and schedule 2 of the Local Government Finance Act 1982. As police authority for the MPD the Home Secretary approves the Metropolitan police estimates. Local authorities are consulted each year by the receiver before he puts his financial proposals to the Home Secretary, and their views are taken into account. In calculating the amount of block grant payable to the receiver, the Secretary of State therefore determines his grant-related expenditure (GRE) each year at the value, net of specific grants and receipts, estimated for the receiver's expenditure that year.

The receiver's grant-related poundage (GRP) for expenditure at the level of GRE is determined by reference to his share of the total GRE for London.

In other respects the calculation of block grant is as for all authorities. A more detailed description of this is contained in the Rate Support Grant Report (England) 1986-87 but, briefly, an authority's entitlement to grant is determined by deducting from its total expenditure the product of its grant-related poundage and its gross rateable value (and, where specified in the rate support grant, a multiplier determined under section 59 of the Act).

## Sports Council

**Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will outline details of any contractual relationships which exist between the Sports Council and the Central Council for Physical Recreation, or any other public or private sector organisation, regarding the National Sports Centres funded by the Sports Council.

**Mr. Tracey:** The Sports Council has a management agreement with Nottinghamshire county council in connection with the Holme Pierrepont National Water Sports Centre. The agreement provides for equal representation by both bodies on a joint committee and for the sharing of net revenue expenditure.

**Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a detailed breakdown of capital and current expenditure over the last 10 years for each of the national sports centres funded by the Sports Council.

**Mr. Tracey:** The following is the information:

| | *Crystal Palace* £ | *Bisham Abbey* £ | *Lilleshall* £ | *Plas Y Brenin* £ | *National Sailing Centre* £ | *Holme Pierrepont* £ | *Harrisons Rocks* £ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *1976-77* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 559,000 | 106,500 | — | — | 17,000 | 53,000 | 59,000 |
| Current | 669,314 | 113,937 | 220,947 | 214,599 | 157,277 | 325,683 | — |
| *1977-78* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 95,000 | 357,000 | 427,000 | 11,000 | 66,000 | — | 1,000 |
| Current | 954,338 | 326,120 | 292,799 | 263,699 | 221,454 | 464,489 | — |
| *1978-79* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 335,000 | 120,000 | 1,159,000 | 25,000 | 41,000 | — | — |
| Current | 1,071,698 | 426,927 | 317,547 | 308,122 | 234,011 | 505,290 | — |
| *1979-80* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 114,000 | 123,000 | 1,138,000 | 49,000 | 2,000 | — | — |
| Current | 1,331,243 | 502,245 | 467,637 | 410,504 | 303,345 | 545,949 | 6,356 |
| *1980-81* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 185,865 | 563,374 | 279,041 | 91,162 | 71,298 | 78,000 | — |
| Current | 1,647,500 | 611,908 | 679,255 | 483,476 | 432,155 | 657,357 | 8,144 |
| *1981-82* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 72,919 | 275,218 | 232,702 | 70,061 | 192,250 | 10,812 | — |
| Current | 1,702,117 | 705,924 | 767,890 | 551,851 | 434,127 | 776,814 | 9,075 |
| *1982-83* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 535,552 | 13,908 | 272,245 | 11,826 | 183,393 | 44,207 | — |
| Current | 2,082,565 | 786,514 | 857,739 | 618,250 | 489,954 | 859,997 | 9,374 |
| *1983-84* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 1,022,379 | 80,185 | 316,574 | 32,384 | 53,346 | 35,706 | — |
| Current | 2,305,180 | 816,895 | 935,711 | 643,076 | 566,599 | 853,074 | 11,333 |
| *1984-85* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 375,433 | 294,464 | 1,332,306 | 15,697 | 77,687 | 222,231 | — |
| Current | 2,618,313 | 962,294 | 1,000,276 | 668,709 | 610,796 | 889,489 | 16,468 |
| *1985-86* | | | | | | | |
| Capital | 457,413 | 49,893 | 677,102 | 42,041 | 17,812 | 1,090,187 | — |
| Current | 2,462,674 | 903,375 | 868,207 | 725,453 | 628,093 | 782,112 | 13,210 |
| Local Capital | 3,752,561 | 1,983,542 | 5,833,970 | 3,481,710 | 7,217,860 | 1,534,143 | 60,000 |
| Total Current | 16,844,915 | 6,156,139 | 6,408,008 | 4,887,739 | 4,077,811 | 6,660,254 | 73,960 |

*Source:* Sports Council Annual Report.

## Urban Programme

**Mrs. Peacock** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what resources will be available for local authorities in the urban programme 1987-88; and whether he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** I am today announcing the allocation of £272·3 million in urban programme resources to 57 hard-pressed inner city areas. This money will support co-ordinated programmes to stimulate enterprise, improve the environment and encourage self-help and voluntary effort in local communities. This reflects a £7 million increase in the provisions for the urban programme contained in the Public Expenditure White Paper (the Government Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90, Cmnd. 56-II).

For the first time, part of this money will be distributed by my Department's regional offices so that they can enhance allocations for inner area programmes which reflect best practice within a renewal strategy which meets ministerial guidelines for the urban programme as a whole. It is our policy to recognise good and cost-effective performance by local authorities and to direct resources where they can be of most use.

In allocating these resources I have taken careful account of the representations made in response to consultation with the local authority associations about proposals on the geographical coverage of the urban programme which I announced last August. In the light of these representations, I have decided that three more authorities should be invited to submit Inner Area Programmes — Plymouth, Kirklees and The Wrekin — bringing the total to 57.

Urban areas can also receive resources through urban development grant, which helps to attract private investment, and a range of other Government initiatives, such as derelict land grant and estate action, which helps local authorities to tackle the problems of rundown housing estates. Authorities are encouraged to take advantage of these various types of support and adopt an area-based approach in tackling urban problems.

The allocation to individual authorities listed below are provisional. Formal allocations are made after IAPs are approved, and are conditional on the quality of the IAP, on its conforming with ministerial guidelines, and, in the case of authorities with partnership or programme status in 1986-87, on their providing a satisfactory annual report on achievements through the UP in 1985-86.

| | *Local authority allocations* | *Additional regional allocations* |
|---|---|---|
| *Northern* | | |
| Newcastle/Gateshead | 17·2 | 1·65 |
| Hartlepool | 1·75 | |
| Langbaurgh | 1·75 | |
| Middlesbrough | 5·5 | |
| North Tyneside | 3·5 | |
| South Tyneside | 4·5 | |
| Stockton | 1·25 | |
| Sunderland | 4·0 | |
| *North Western* | | |
| Manchester/Salford | 23·8 | 1·65 |
| Blackburn | 4·0 | |
| Bolton | 4·0 | |
| Burnley | 1·0 | |
| Oldham | 4·0 | |
| Preston | 1·25 | |
| Rochdale | 4·0 | |
| Wigan | 1·5 | |
| *Merseyside* | | |
| Liverpool | 20·0 | 4·45 |
| Halton | 1·32 | |
| Knowsley | 4·0 | |
| St. Helen's | 1·5 | |
| Sefton | 1·5 | |
| Wirral | 3·5 | |
| *West Midlands* | | |
| Birmingham | 25·0 | 2·05 |
| Coventry | 5·0 | |
| Dudley | 1·25 | |
| Sandwell | 5·0 | |
| Walsall | 1·5 | |
| Wolverhampton | 5·5 | |
| The Wrekin | ·38 | |
| *East Midlands* | | |
| Derby | 1·25 | |
| Leicester | 5·43 | |
| Nottingham | 5·5 | |
| *Yorkshire and Humberside* | | |
| Barnsley | 1·5 | 1·65 |
| Bradford | 4·5 | |
| Doncaster | 1·75 | |
| Hull | 5·0 | |
| Kirklees | ·82 | |
| Leeds | 4·5 | |
| Rotherham | 1·75 | |
| Sheffield | 5·5 | |
| *London* | | |
| Hackney | 10·8 | 1·65 |
| Islington | 10·0 | |
| Lambeth | 12·8 | |
| Brent | 4·0 | |
| Greenwich | 1·5 | |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 5·0 | |
| Haringey | 2·0 | |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 1·25 | |
| Lewisham | 1·5 | |
| Newham | 1·75 | |
| Southwark | 1·75 | |
| Tower Hamlets | 4·5 | |
| Wandsworth | 4·5 | |
| *South Western* | | |
| Bristol | 1·5 | |
| Plymouth | ·36 | |

### Urban Development Corporations

**Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if, further to his reply to the right hon. Member for Brent, East (Mr. Freeson) of 15 January, *Official Report*, column *269*, he will state in relation to the Black Country, Teesside and Tyne and Wear urban development corporations *(a)* who are the consultants advising him, *(b)* what is the brief they are working to, *(c)* when he expects to announce the corporation board memberships, *(d)* what are his criteria for selecting board members and *(e)* what the salaries of the chairman and the board members will be.

**Mr. John Patten:** The information is as follows:

*(a)* The consultants are Ecotec, Research and consulting Limited (for the Black Country), Price Waterhouse (for Tyne and Wear) and Coopers and Lybrand Associates Limited (for Teesside). These firms are heading consortia of other specialist consultants.

*(b)* The consultants are analysing the development potential of the areas advising on what was held back achievement of that potential, advising on the most appropriate use of sites, identifying the levels of private sector investment that would be achieved and the public sector cost, and making recommendations on the boundaries of the urban development areas.

*(c)* My right hon. Friend announced on 6 January his intention to appoint Mr. Paul Nicholson as chairman of the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation. Other proposed appointments will be announced as soon as possible.

*(d)* My right hon. Friend will select board members on the basis of their ability to do the job. He will include members who have a special knowledge of the locality and appropriate business or professional experience.

*(e)* All posts are part-time. The chairmen and deputy chairmen will be paid at notional full-time rates of £43,515 and £29,535 respectively. Actual remuneration will depend on the time commitment involved. Members will be paid at a flat rate of £3,465.

### Trafalgar Square (Public Meeting)

**Mr. Straw** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what decision he has made in respect of the application by the National Union of Students for the use of Trafalgar square for a public meeting on 21 February; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I will answer this question shortly.

### Television Sets

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many television sets there are at the official residence of the Lord Chancellor; and who is responsible for the payment of the licence fee.

**Mr. Chope** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987, c. *52*]: There are no television sets currently in use in the official residence of my right hon. and noble Friend the Lord Chancellor.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### EEC (Food Sales to Soviet Union)

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food which member states of the European Community are not in favour of selling agricultural products uneconomically to the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** Other member states of the European Economic Community generally support the Commission's proposals for sales to the USSR. There are, however, many who, like the United Kingdom, believe that we must reduce production to a level much nearer demand, which would then obviate the need for such sales.

### Agricultural Land

**Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total acreage *(a)* in cereals and rape and *(b)* in grass in 1986 and the forecast for 1987; and what was the increase or decrease in each case since 1979 in actual and percentage terms.

**Mr. Gummer:** The areas for 1986 and 1979 are set out below.

The 1987 area cannot be accurately forecast at this stage.

| *England* | *Thousand Hectares* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1979 '000 HA* | *1986 '000 HA* | *Actual change* | *Per Cent. Change 1986-1979* |
| Total area of cereals (excl. maize) plus rape grown for oilseed | 3,322 | 3,645 | +323 | +9·7 |
| Total area of grassland (Excl. rough grazing) | 4,295 | 3,955 | −341 | −7·9 |

### North Sea (Hydrocarbons)

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how specifically he has extended the scope of his Department's monitoring of hydrocarbons in the North sea in the last three years.

**Mr. Gummer:** By more intensive sampling of coastal waters and of waters adjacent to offshore platforms.

### Offshore Disposal Sites

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what specific improvements his Department has made in its monitoring of offshore sea disposal sites in the last three years.

**Mr. Gummer:** Improvements made include an increased sampling capability, greater emphasis on the study of changes at sea disposal sites, and closer integration of chemical and biological analyses.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will list the numerical limits placed by Her Majesty's Government on the levels of annex I and II substances which, when disposed of at sea in dredged materials, are considered acceptable.

**Mr. Gummer:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply that I gave him on 5 December 1986, at column *813*.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what the average concentrations of annex I and annex II substances was in dredged materials disposed of by the United Kingdom in 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 in the North sea.

**Mr. Gummer:** Data for the years up to and including 1984 may be found in the annual reports of the Oslo Commission, copies of which are in the Library of the House. Data for 1985 and 1986 will, as usual, be published by the commission in due course.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how the operation of part II of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 has improved his Department's control over the disposal of waste at sea.

**Mr. Gummer:** By comparison with the Dumping at Sea Act 1974, which it superseded, part II of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 extended controls to marine incineration and disposal of waste beneath the seabed, increased the powers of Ministers in considering applications for licences, notably to take account of human health and the availability of alternative methods of disposal, enabled Ministers to charge fully for the costs of considering licence applications, monitoring sea disposal and to recover the costs of clean-up operations, and strengthened their powers of inspection.

### North Sea (Research)

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food how much his Department spent in 1978-79, 1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83, 1983-84, 1984-85 and 1985-86 on research and monitoring designed to extend Her Majesty's Government's scientific understanding of the North sea.

**Mr. Gummer:** It is not possible precisely to allocate a proportion of my Department's research and monitoring effort to the North sea because many relevant projects would also apply to wider areas. It is estimated, however, that the cost to the Ministry for such work in the years in question was:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1978-79 | 2·5 |
| 1979-80 | 2·8 |
| 1980-81 | 3·7 |
| 1981-82 | 3·9 |
| 1982-83 | 4·2 |
| 1983-84 | 4·7 |
| 1984-85 | 4·6 |
| 1985-86 | 5·0 |

### Mercury, Cadmium and Zinc

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what concentration of mercury, cadmium and zinc he regards as trace, with regard to sewage sludge disposed of at sea by the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Gummer:** In the absence of specific limits for trace contaminants in the relevant international conventions, my Ministry aims to keep permissible concentrations in sewage sludge below 10 parts per million in the case of mercury and 20 parts per million in the case of cadmium. Disposal of zinc other than as a trace contaminant is not prohibited by the conventions.

### Food (Noxious Substances)

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food pursuant to the answer of 15 December, *Official Report*, column *365*, what are the details of the programme of research into the detection of noxious substances in the food chain.

**Mr. Gummer:** Research is being carried out into the detection of polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins (PCDDs) and dibenzofurans (PCDFs) in the food chain by the Steering Group on Food Surveillance through its working party on organic environmental contaminants in food. The laboratory work is being carried out at MAFF food science laboratory where methods of analysis for these compounds in foodstuffs are being developed with the following aims. For the methods of analysis to be of value, they must be capable of detecting 0·001 microgram of each substance in one kilogram of foodstuff. In order to provide meaningful information the methods of analysis must be capable of detecting these substances in a range of foodstuffs including milk, eggs, fish and animal fat. The methods of analysis should also be more rapid than those presently available.

### Food Aid

**Mr. John** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what is the Government's estimate of the numbers of individual deliveries of food by charities necessary to carry out the European Economic Community food aid scheme.

**Mr. Jopling:** Individual charitable organisations are arranging for the food concerned to reach recipients. I am not able to estimate the number of individual deliveries that this will involve.

**Mr. John** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in what areas of the United Kingdom the distribution of food under the European Economic Community food aid scheme has been commenced; and in how many additional areas it will be commenced in each of the next two weeks.

**Mr. Jopling:** My most recent information is that there have so far been releases from intervention stores of butter or beef in the following areas:

**Avon**
**Somerset**
**Manchester**
**Kent**
**Northamptonshire**
**Northern Ireland**

I expect releases to occur in other areas in the next two weeks, depending on the requirements of the charitable organisations concerned. Actual distribution after the products leave intervention stores is for charitable organisations themselves.

**Mr. John** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of the allocated cost of the European Economic Community food aid programme is taken up by the cost of preparation or butchering of the food for distribution.

**Mr. Jopling:** It is not possible to estimate such a proportion at this stage because most other member states have not yet decided how to implement the relevant EC legislation.

**Mr. John** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what proportion of people in receipt of supplementary benefit in the United Kingdom he estimates will be entitled to benefit under the European Economic Community food aid scheme.

**Mr. Jopling:** All.

**Mr. John** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what kinds and quantities of food released under the European Economic Community food aid scheme will be *(a)* distributed to individuals and/or institutions in their natural state or *(b)* incorporated in prepared meals.

**Mr. Jopling:** The relevant products are being distributed through charitable organisations to the most needy individuals and not to institutions. I understand that most charitable organisations will be distributing butter in small packages, though incorporation into prepared meals is not ruled out. The Community legislation provides for releases of beef only for incorporation into prepared meals. The arrangements for milk and milk products are still being worked out, but I expect that the charitable organisations will wish to distribute these in the normal quantities obtained in retail shops.

**Mr. John** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what help he proposes to give to charities to maintain the quality of foodstuffs for distribution under the European Economic Community food aid scheme after the release of those foodstuffs from their stores.

**Mr. Jopling:** My Department stands ready to advise the charitable organisations concerned on these questions, which already arise in any case for bodies engaged in providing foodstuffs to the disadvantaged.

**Mr. John** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will set out, pursuant to the answer of 21 January to the hon. Member for Torridge and Devon, West (Sir P. Mills), *Official Report*, column *638*, the precise rules governing the working of the EEC food aid scheme.

**Mr. Jopling:** The arrangements are being administered by the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce. I am arranging for the board leaflet setting out the conditions for release of beef and butter to charitable organisations to be placed in the Library. Arrangements for milk and milk products have not yet been finalised.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Monday 2 February 1987*

## ENERGY

### Power Stations

**Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he expects the Heysham B and Torness B advanced gas-cooled reactor power stations to come on load.

**Mr. Goodlad:** The CEGB has advised me that the first reactor at Heysham II is expected to raise power early in 1988 and the second in the course of next year. Electricity matters in Scotland are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland.

### British Coal

**Sir Ian Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will publish statistics for the number of collieries and average manpower in each British Coal area for the fiscal month of November 1986.

**Mr. David Hunt:** I am advised by British Coal that the number of collieries at the end of its fiscal month of November 1986, and average manpower during that month, by area, was:

| *Four weeks ended 22 November 1986* | *Number of pits* | *Average manpower* |
|---|---|---|
| Scotland | 6 | 5,384 |
| North East | 9 | 15,390 |
| North Yorkshire | 19 | 18,727 |
| South Yorkshire | 18 | 16,657 |
| North Derbyshire | 7 | 7,784 |
| Nottinghamshire | 21 | 24,127 |
| South Midlands | 8 | 7,649 |
| Kent | 2 | 1,264 |
| Western | 12 | 13,137 |
| South Wales | 15 | 11,859 |

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Schools (Basildon)

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) how many pupils are enrolled in comprehensive schools in Basildon; and what are the projected enrolments for 1990 and 1995;

(2) how many teachers are employed in comprehensive schools in Basildon; and what is the projected employment for 1990 and 1995;

(3) what information he has as to how many teachers are employed in primary schools in Basildon, and as to the projection of employment for 1990 and 1995;

(4) what information he has as to how many pupils are enrolled in primary schools in Basildon, and as to the projections for enrolment for 1990 and 1995.

**Mr. Dunn:** Information for areas within local education authorities is not available centrally. In January 1986, the number of pupils on roll in maintained primary and comprehensive schools in Essex and the number of teachers in these schools were as follows:

| | *Pupils*[1] | *Teachers*[2] |
|---|---|---|
| Primary schools | 118,796 | 4,920 |
| Comprehensive schools | 104,815 | 6,137 |

[1] Full-time and part-time pupils

[2] Full-time and the full-time equivalent of part-time teachers employed in schools.

Projections of pupil numbers and assumptions concerning future teacher numbers are made only for England as a whole.

### Science Teachers

**Mr. Spearing** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will state the number of unfilled posts in science subjects notified to him by local authorities in January 1986.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** In January 1986 local authorities in England reported 407 unfilled posts in science.

**Mr. Spearing** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, in view of the shortage of science, technical and mathematics teachers, he will state the means he intends to adopt to ensure that the planned city technical colleges are able to recruit teachers in these subjects.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** I am confident that city technology colleges will be able to attract staff, who will welcome the opportunity to teach pupils of varying abilities and backgrounds in a disciplined school community working to clear objectives. I recognise that the establishment of city technology colleges will increase the demand for teachers in shortage subjects, though I expect also that they may draw back into the profession some who have left it and stimulate new recruitment. A range of measures to reduce current teacher shortages is in hand and the situation will be kept under review.

### Pupil Numbers

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will now publish in the *Official Report* for each of the following London boroughs—Waltham Forest, Enfield, Haringey, Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Hillingdon, Harrow and Newham—*(a)* the number of secondary pupils, *(b)* the number of pupils studying in another local education authority area, *(c)* the number of pupils educated from other local education authority areas, and *(d)* the net inflow/outflow of pupils for the last date for which figures are available and in each of the past three years.

**Mr. Dunn:** The information available relates to pupils of secondary age attending maintained primary, middle or secondary schools in January of each year. The figures for the years 1984, 1985 and 1986 are as follows:

| | *All pupils in schools maintained by this authority* | *Pupils from this authority attending schools maintained by another authority* | *Pupils from other authorities attending schools maintained by this authority* | *Net inflow (+) or outflow (−)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *January 1984* | | | | |
| Waltham Forest | 15,613 | 816 | 222 | −594 |
| Enfield | 19,975 | 904 | 1,043 | +499 |
| Haringey | 12,148 | 2,317 | 642 | −1,675 |
| Barnet | 19,493 | 1,077 | 2,546 | +1,469 |
| Brent | 15,642 | 2,954 | 815 | −2,139 |
| Ealing | 14,547 | 2,362 | 674 | −1,688 |
| Hillingdon | 16,335 | 481 | 589 | +108 |
| Harrow | 10,552 | 1,543 | 602 | −941 |
| Newham | 16,167 | 464 | 374 | −90 |
| *January 1985* | | | | |
| Waltham Forest | 14,778 | 874 | 230 | +644 |
| Enfield | 18,999 | 1,013 | 1,367 | +354 |
| Haringey | 11,096 | 2,525 | 661 | −1,864 |
| Barnet | 19,234 | 1,150 | 2,768 | +1,618 |
| Brent | 14,591 | 3,113 | 863 | −2,250 |
| Ealing | 13,731 | 2,361 | 652 | −1,709 |
| Hillingdon | 15,395 | 592 | 560 | −32 |
| Harrow | 10,343 | 1,609 | 720 | −889 |
| Newham | 15,516 | 556 | 392 | −164 |
| *January 1986* | | | | |
| Waltham Forest | 14,067 | 943 | 244 | −699 |
| Enfield | 18,140 | 1,034 | 1,277 | +243 |
| Haringey | 10,331 | 2,480 | 761 | −1,719 |
| Barnet | 18,705 | 1,161 | 2,924 | +1,763 |
| Brent | 13,567 | 3,293 | 839 | −2,454 |
| Ealing | 13,119 | 2,216 | 753 | −1,463 |
| Hillingdon | 14,927 | 662 | 797 | +135 |
| Harrow | 10,138 | 1,618 | 750 | −868 |
| Newham | 14,809 | 594 | 404 | −190 |

## Broadacres School, Hixon

**Mr. Heddle** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science when his decision on the future of Broadacres school, Hixon, Staffordshire, will be published.

**Mr. Dunn:** Proposals to reorganise educational provision in the Stafford area, of which this forms a part, are currently before the Secretary of State, and a decision will be announced shortly.

## A-Levels and GCSE

**Mr. Conway** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he intends to issue a circular to local education authorities on the timing of A-levels and GCSE examinations with regard to school leaving dates and term conclusions; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** My right hon. Friend has no plans to issue guidance to local authorities on these matters. It is for the relevant examination boards to consider the timing of these examinations in consultation with local authorities and other interested parties. The replacement of O-levels and CSE by the GCSE will shorten and simplify the 16-plus examinations timetable. I am not aware of intended further changes which have implications for school leaving or term dates.

## Welsh Language

**Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what priority he attaches to teaching through the medium of Welsh at university level; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Walden:** My right hon. Friend acknowledges the need for some Welsh medium teaching to be available at university level. The priority accorded to it is a matter for the University Grants Committee and the University of Wales.

## Capital Expenditure

**Mr. Ashdown** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a list showing for each local education authority in England *(a)* the estimated cost of primary school capital projects other than provision of basic need contained in the plans submitted to his Department for 1987-88 and *(b)* the estimated cost of primary school capital projects for basic need contained in the plans submitted to his Department for 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Dunn:** The expenditure plans submitted by local education authorities are not presented in a form that allows this information to be extracted.

**Mr. Ashdown** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information was received by his Department in response to the circular letter to local education authorities in mid-1986 seeking information in connection with the authorities' plans for education capital expenditure in 1987-88 on *(a)* numbers of sub-standard places in unremodelled primary schools constructed before 1903 and *(b)* numbers of such places considered to serve areas of educational and social disadvantage; if he will publish such information as he has available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Dunn:** The information requested is set out in the following table. It does not present a reliable national picture of the incidence of substandard places or of areas of educational and social disadvantage for several reasons. For example, a number of authorities failed to supply any information, or supplied only a part of what was requested. In addition, authorities themselves are asked to judge what constitutes an area of educational and social disadvantage: the information at *(b)* cannot therefore be taken as consistent or comparable.

| *Local Education Authority* | *(a)* *Sub-standard places in unremodelled primary schools constructed before 1903* | *(b)* *Number of such places in areas of educational and social disadvantage* |
|---|---|---|
| Barking | nil | nil |
| Barnet | 1,180 | nil |
| Bexley | 1,100 | nil |
| Brent | nil | nil |
| Bromley | nil | nil |
| Croydon | nil | nil |
| Ealing[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| Enfield | 1,924 | 1,924 |
| Haringey[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| Harrow[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| Havering | 1,377 | nil |
| Hillingdon[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| Hounslow | 1,196 | nil |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 187 | nil |
| Merton[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| Newham | 3,500 | 3,500 |
| Redbridge | 348 | n.a. |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | 490 | nil |
| Sutton | 156 | n.a. |
| Waltham Forest | 3,230 | 2,630 |
| Inner London | 57,376 | 27,024 |
| Birmingham | 8,600 | 7,000 |
| Coventry | 1,725 | 1,295 |
| Dudley | 3,500 | 1,000 |
| Sandwell | 2,253 | 1,866 |
| Solihull | nil | nil |
| Walsall | 3,200 | 3,200 |
| Wolverhampton | 1,170 | 850 |
| Knowsley | nil | nil |
| Liverpool[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| St. Helens | 755 | 351 |
| Sefton | 1,696 | 372 |
| Wirral | 990 | 990 |
| Bolton[2] | 3,500 | 2,050 |
| Bury | 2,002 | 692 |
| Manchester | 1,830 | 1,220 |
| Oldham | 1,883 | 1,661 |
| Rochdale | 725 | nil |
| Salford | nil | nil |
| Stockport | 2,620 | 450 |
| Tameside | 1,600 | 1,600 |
| Trafford | 380 | nil |
| Wigan | 1,100 | 600 |
| Barnsley | 535 | nil |
| Doncaster[1] | nil | nil |
| Rotherham | 3,150 | 765 |
| Sheffield | 5,620 | 2,705 |
| Bradford | 18,810 | 9,240 |
| Calderdale | 4,960 | 1,230 |
| Kirklees | 2,000 | 400 |
| Leeds | 14,943 | 1,892 |
| Wakefield | 2,597 | 1,473 |
| Gateshead[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 1,100 | 240 |
| North Tyneside | 680 | nil |
| South Tyneside | 1,417 | 541 |
| Sunderland | 2,394 | 786 |
| Isles of Scilly | nil | nil |
| Avon | 27,343 | 4,240 |
| Bedfordshire | 2,181 | 556 |
| Berkshire | 3,712 | 1,197 |
| Buckinghamshire | 635 | nil |
| Cambridgeshire | 6,600 | 950 |
| Cheshire | 5,291 | 743 |
| Cleveland | 1,714 | 1,714 |
| Cornwall | 12,780 | 3,210 |
| Cumbria | 1,740 | 583 |
| Derbyshire | 23,443 | 5,463 |
| Devon | 13,300 | 680 |
| Dorset[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| Durham | 3,700 | 230 |
| East Sussex | 4,600 | 330 |
| Essex[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| Gloucestershire | 12,892 | 198 |
| Hampshire | 23,991 | 4,305 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 8,775 | nil |
| Hertfordshire | nil | nil |
| Humberside | 6,103 | 1,275 |
| Isle of Wight | 1,183 | 83 |
| Kent | 28,042 | 88 |
| Lancashire | 23,900 | 5,170 |
| Leicestershire | 13,700 | 4,885 |
| Lincolnshire | 5,053 | nil |
| Norfolk | 8,868 | nil |
| North Yorkshire | 7,000 | 1,800 |
| Northamptonshire | 2,221 | n.a. |
| Northumberland | 3,049 | 1,563 |
| Nottinghamshire | 6,813 | 1,710 |
| Oxfordshire | 692 | nil |
| Shropshire | 3,000 | 190 |
| Somerset[2] | 7,500 | 1,750 |
| Staffordshire | 5,153 | 685 |
| Suffolk | 7,710 | 600 |
| Surrey | 4,855 | 230 |
| Warwickshire[1] | n.a. | n.a. |
| West Sussex | 1,850 | nil |
| Wiltshire | 7,984 | 1,200 |

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[1] These authorities did not complete the relevant section of the form in their responses either to the letter of 30 June 1986 or to that of 18 December 1985.

[2] These authorities did not supply the information requested in their response to the Department's letter of 30 June 1986; the figures given were supplied in response to the letter of 18 December 1985.

## Examination Results

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of entrants for A level examinations of each of the examining boards in England and Wales in each year since 1983 have received *(a)* A grades, *(b)* B grades, *(c)* C grades, *(d)* D grades and *(e)* E grades.

**Mrs. Rumbold** [*pursuant to the reply*, 23 January 1987, c. *743*]: The information for English boards is given in the following table:

*GCE A level summer examinations, England*

| | Percentage of entrants awarded | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Grade A* | *Grade B* | *Grade C* | *Grade D* | *Grade E* |
| *1983* | | | | | |
| Associated Examining Board for the GCE | 4·7 | 9·3 | 10·5 | 13·6 | 21·2 |
| University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate | 11·2 | 15·5 | 11·5 | 12·1 | 23·0 |
| University of London School Examinations Council | 9·1 | 14·5 | 14·4 | 15·6 | 17·3 |
| Joint Matriculation Board | 10·2 | 14·2 | 10·9 | 15·0 | 18·9 |
| Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations | 9·9 | 14·5 | 12·3 | 16·0 | 19·4 |
| Oxford & Cambridge Schools Examinations Board | 18·9 | 19·7 | 17·2 | 16·3 | 14·1 |
| Southern Universities Joint Board for School Examinations | 9·6 | 15·1 | 12·6 | 16·0 | 19·1 |
| *1984* | | | | | |
| Associated Examining Board for the GCE | 5·3 | 10·5 | 11·4 | 12·9 | 20·9 |
| University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate | 11·8 | 16·2 | 11·3 | 13·0 | 22·4 |
| University of London School Examinations Council | 9·3 | 14·5 | 14·3 | 15·5 | 17·6 |
| Joint Matriculation Board | 10·1 | 14·6 | 10·8 | 14·2 | 19·6 |
| Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations | 10·6 | 14·6 | 12·2 | 16·2 | 18·7 |
| Oxford & Cambridge Schools Examinations Board | 18·9 | 20·5 | 17·8 | 16·3 | 13·2 |
| Southern Universities Joint Board for School Examinations | 9·1 | 15·2 | 13·7 | 15·7 | 18·0 |
| *1985* | | | | | |
| Associated Examining Board for the GCE | 5·1 | 11·4 | 11·1 | 12·5 | 21·9 |
| University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate | 12·1 | 16·1 | 12·3 | 13·1 | 22·2 |
| University of London School Examinations Council | 9·9 | 13·9 | 14·4 | 15·5 | 17·8 |
| Joint Matriculation Board | 10·1 | 14·5 | 11·0 | 16·1 | 17·3 |
| Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations | 10·9 | 14·4 | 13·0 | 16·1 | 18·5 |
| Oxford & Cambridge Schools Examinations Board | 19·7 | 20·6 | 18·4 | 16·5 | 12·8 |
| Southern Universities Joint Board for School Examinations | 9·8 | 15·8 | 12·5 | 16·4 | 19·1 |

*Source:* Survey of Examining Boards in England.

### Assisted Places Scheme

**Mr. Radice** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will list in the *Official Report* for each local education authority in England for pupils of secondary age *(a)* the amount spent within that local education authority on assisted places, *(b)* the number of assisted places, *(c)* the average expenditure per assisted place pupil and *(d)* the percentage of the local education authority budget represented by expenditure on the assisted places scheme.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker** [*pursuant to his reply,* 22 January 1987, c. *640*]: I regret that, due to arithmetical errors, the information given in respect of the Derbyshire, Essex, Hertfordshire and Lancashire local education authorities contained inaccuracies. Revised figures are as shown in the following table:

| | *Derbyshire* | *Essex* | *Hertfordshire* | *Lancashire* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Expenditure (£) on assisted places scheme schools in the area | 320,861 | 434,924 | 827,900 | 683,804 |
| Number of assisted pupils at schools in the area | 146 | 220 | 539 | 579 |
| Average expenditure (£) per assisted place pupil | 2,198 | 1,977 | 1.536 | 1,181 |
| Assisted places expenditure as percentage of LEA secondary budget | 0·4 | 0·3 | 0·9 | 0·6 |

## PRIME MINISTER

### Falkland Islands

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister when she next plans to visit the Falkland Islands.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Legislative Procedures

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had regarding alterations in the system of handling Northern Ireland legislation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tom King:** Under direct rule special procedures for handling Northern Ireland legislation apply. I am always ready to consider suggestions for improvements to these procedures. In particular, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister indicated on 25 February 1986 that she was prepared to discuss these matters with leaders of the Unionist parties. They have not so far taken up that offer.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Drink-Drive Campaign

56. **Mr. Roger King** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many motorists were stopped and breathalysed over the Christmas 1986 period; how many were found to be positive; and what were the comparable figures for Christmas 1985.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Mr. Bruinvels) on 12 January 1987 at column 71. Statistics for 1985, including separate figures for the Christmas period, are published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin 19/86, "Statistics of Breath Tests, England and Wales, 1985", tables 6 and 7.

### Police

**Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on recent progress in the programme of civilianisation of the police force.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** It is estimated that civilianisation resulted in the release of about 500 police officers for operational work in provincial forces in England and Wales in 1985. The figure for 1986 is not yet available.

### Crimes of Violence

**Mr. Raynsford** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of crimes of violence against the person *(a)* in the 12 months ended March 1979 and *(b)* in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Mellor:** In the 12 months ending March 1979 police in England and Wales recorded 88,000 offences of violence against the person, compared with 125,000 in the 12 months ending September 1986. Statistics of recorded notifiable offences are published each quarter in a Home Office statistical bulletin, issue 39/86 being the nost recent.

### Myra Hindley

**Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Warrington, North on 26 January, *Official Report,* column 20, why he is unable to distinguish the cost of *(a)* police overtime, *(b)* the helicopter used to transport Myra Hindley, *(c)* security for Myra Hindley and *(d)* transport for each police force involved; what costs were incurred other than those of the police service; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The £12,000 to which I referred in my earlier reply on 26 January at column 358, represents the cost of overtime for the 135 police officers involved in the operation. No charge was made for the use of the Metropolitan police helicopter. The cost of providing security for Miss Hindley is included in the cost of the police officers involved and cannot be separately identified. The cost of transport for each police force involved is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. In addition to police service costs, the prison service incurred additional costs of about £90 representing the cost of overtime for the two prison officers who escorted Miss Hindley.

### Cardiff Prison

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the ratio of prisoners to prison officers in Cardiff gaol in each year from 1980 to 1986.

**Mr. Mellor:** The ratio of prisoners to staff in the prison officer class at Cardiff prison during the period in question was:

| | *Ratio* |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 2·26 : 1 |
| 1981 | 2·23 : 1 |
| 1982 | 2·55 : 1 |
| 1983 | 2·32 : 1 |
| 1984 | 1·89 : 1 |
| 1985 | 2·29 : 1 |
| 1986 | 2·38 : 1 |

### News International, Wapping

**Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been the total cost to date of giving police protection to the News International plant at Wapping; and if he will give separate figures for the cost of the operation on the night of 24 January.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I will reply as soon as possible.

### Devon and Cornwall Police

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out the terms of reference of the Devon and Cornwall police in their investigations relating to the conduct of certain police officers allegedly involved in the ill treatment of prisoners on 21 to 24 November 1974 at Queens road police station, Birmingham, and Morecambe police station, Lancashire.

**Mr. Hurd:** The chief constable of the Devon and Cornwall constabulary has been asked to undertake inquiries into the allegations made by the former West Midlands police officer, Mr. Thomas Clarke, that while he was on duty at Queens road police station he witnessed intimidation of, and saw signs of injury on, five of the six men who were later convicted of offences arising from the Birmingham pub bombings in November 1974.

### North Wales (Detention of Persons)

**Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he makes of the number of persons normally residing in north Wales who are at any particular time detained in prison.

**Mr. Mellor:** The home address of persons received into prison department establishments is not recorded centrally.

### Criminal Inquiries Compensation Scheme (Railwaymen)

**Mrs. Golding** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the annual amount paid to railwaymen under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme for each year they were eligible to claim under the scheme.

**Mr. Mellor:** The amounts paid to railwaymen are not readily identifiable and information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mrs. Golding** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many railwaymen received compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board between 1979 and 1983.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information requested is not readily available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Police Widows

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 12 January, *Official Report*, columns 73-4, what estimate he has made of the costs to Her Majesty's Government in each of the next five years of the proposed increase of £1·41 per week to all police widows who are in receipt of the preserved rate pension in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The cost of agreeing the claim is estimated to be £455,000 in the first year. This will reduce with the death of claimants, but no precise estimate can be made. The figure takes no account of the cost of meeting comparable claims to other Departments.

### Sinn Fein (Visit to Wales)

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he will take to ban the proposed visit of members of Sinn Fein to Wales at the invitation of Cymdeithas yr Iaith, the Welsh Language Society; what representations he has received; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** I have no power to ban such visits. I have received one letter asking me to consider the security implications of this visit.

### Mrs. Cherry Groce

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 26 January, *Official Report*, columns 22-23, when he expects the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis to submit proposals to the Police Complaints Authority on whether disciplinary charges should be brought against any of the officers involved in the armed raid which resulted in the shooting of Mrs. Cherry Grose; and whether he will require such proposals to be published.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand that the Police Complaints Authority has received from the commissioner a memorandum under section 90 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 containing proposals in respect of disciplinary action arising from this incident. The authority will announce its decision shortly. Memoranda under section 90 of the 1984 Act are not published.

### Vauxhall Tavern

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many officers were involved in the raid on the Vauxhall Tavern public house on 24 January; from which police divisions they were drawn; and what was the cost to public funds of the operation;

(2) if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to the grounds on which protective clothing was worn by officers during the police raid on the Vauxhall Tavern public house on 24 January; and what specific terms of protective clothing were issued to officers and on whose authority.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that 35 officers were involved in the operation, 22 from the Territorial Support Group and the remainder from Kennington police station. The raid was a routine operation carried out during a normal police shift and so represented no additional cost to the Metropolitan police. The only protective clothing used was disposable gloves issued on the authority of the officer in charge of the operation to protect officers from the risk of infection by Hepatitis B or AIDS as a result of accidental injury from any drugs paraphernalia which might have been found on individuals searched during the operation.

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how many complaints concerning alleged drunkenness of persons using the Vauxhall Tavern public house on the night of 24 to 25 January had been made by persons resident in the Vauxhall constituency.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that there were no complaints of drunkenness from Vauxhall residents on the night of 24 to 25 January.

### Lambeth (Reported Crimes)

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to the number of reported crimes by main category in the London borough of Lambeth between the hours of 6 pm on 23 January and 6 am on 24 January and as to how many of these were investigated, within what time period, by the Metropolitan police.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that this information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Mr. Mehmet Karipinar

**Mr. Silkin** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the right hon. Member for Lewisham, Deptford may expect a reply to the urgent letter concerning Mr. Mehmet Karipinar sent to his Department on Monday 19 January; and how long he proposes to keep Mr. Karipinar in detention.

**Mr. Waddington:** I replied to the right hon. Member on 29 January. Mr. Mehmet Karipinar chose to make a voluntary departure and left the country on 26 January.

### West Midlands (Passport Office)

**Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider establishing a passport office in Birmingham or the west midlands.

**Mr. Waddington:** We have no plans to do so.

### Wrexham Prison

**Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to his reply of 20 January, *Official Report*, column 489, how many of the 300 permanent new jobs at Wrexham prison will be filled as a result of national advertising.

**Mr. Mellor:** It is not possible to give a firm prediction, but in normal circumstances approximately 250 posts—mainly prison service grades—would be filled as a result of national advertising.

### Armley Prison (Prisoner's Petition)

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he received a petition from Mr. B. H., a prisoner currently in Armley prison, No. R07634; and when he expects to respond to that petition.

**Mr. Mellor:** Petitions were received from prisoner No. R07634 on 24 February 1986, 15 April 1986, and 17 July 1986 about a board of visitors' adjudication. The prisoner was sent an interim reply on 7 October 1986. Further investigation is needed into a procedural point raised about the conduct of the adjudication. A reply will be sent as soon as possible.

### Mr. Ray Buckton

**Mr. Kaufman** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to respond to the letter to him from Mr. Ray Buckton, concerning the compensation provisions of the Criminal Justice Bill; and if he will agree to meet Mr. Buckton to discuss this matter.

**Mr. Mellor:** My hon. Friend the Minister of State wrote to Mr. Buckton on 28 January, replying to his points and indicating that a meeting could be of assistance.

### Customs Clearance (Dundee)

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provisions exist for immigration control and customs clearance for individuals arriving aboard ship at Dundee and subsequently leaving their ship.

**Mr. Waddington** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987, c. *345*]: Immigration control at Dundee is carried out by Customs officers employed as immigration officers in accordance with paragraph 1(1) of schedule 2 to the Immigration Act 1971. The assistance of immigration officers from Edinburgh airport is available as necessary.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the discovery of four people who arrived by ship in Dundee on or about 20 January and came ashore without immigration control or customs clearance.

**Mr. Waddington** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987, c. *345*]: On 21 January two men were detained by the police in Dundee on shoplifting charges and two others by the British Transport Police in Edinburgh. Inquiries conducted so far suggest that these persons arrived at Dundee as stowaways on board the "Banglar Robi" and that they had come ashore clandestinely. If this is established, they will be dealt with as illegal entrants to the United Kingdom.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Asbestos Regulations

**Mr. Michie** asked the Paymaster General if he will take action to amend the Asbestos Regulations 1969 so that single demolition operations are brought within the scope of the regulations in the light of the recent successful appeal brought by AI Industrial Products plc in the Appeal Court.

**Mr. Trippier:** The Asbestos Regulations 1969 are due to be replaced by the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations which will apply to all work with asbestos. These regulations are in the final stages of preparation and should be laid before Parliament later in the year.

Meanwhile, I am advised that the 1969 regulations will continue to apply to building operations, including demolition. If in any cases the regulations do not apply, the general provisions of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 will.

### Employment Measures (Statistics)

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Paymaster General if he will estimate the numbers of unemployed people who have benefited from the Government's employment measures since May 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I will reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

### Hazard Legislation

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General if he will provide for extra Health and Safety Executive inspectors to enforce hazard legislation.

**Mr. Trippier:** The resources and staffing of the health and safety inspectorates are the responsibility of the Health and Safety Commission and Executive, subject to the limits set by the Government on their total manpower and running costs. Recruitment to all inspectorates is in progress.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Paymaster General if he will give the number of people registered as unemployed in the constituency of York for one year or more and for three years or more in 1979, 1983 and at the date for which the latest figures are available.

**Mr. Lee:** Following is the available information, which is also in the Library. The table shows the number of unemployed claimants in the York parliamentary constituency who had been unemployed for more than one year and for more than three years in October 1983 and October 1986. The comparison is affected by the change in the compilation of the statistics in March 1986. Statistics of unemployment for parliamentary constituencies are derived from the ward-based system and are available only from June 1983.

| | *Unemployed more than one year* | *Unemployed more than three years* |
|---|---|---|
| October 1983 | 1,317 | 385 |
| October 1986 | 2,225 | 770 |

**Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Paymaster General if he will give both as a figure and as a percentage the number of persons *(a)* in the entire workforce and *(b)* classified as unemployed who are classed as (i) skilled, (ii) semi-skilled and (iii) unskilled.

**Mr. Lee:** The available information, which is from the Labour Force Survey, is set out in the table.

*Great Britain, Spring 1985*

| *Social Class* | *Unemployed*[1] *Number* | *percentage of total* | *Labour Force*[2] *Number* | *percentage of total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I-III Professional, intermediate and skilled occupations | 1,041,000 | 37 | 19,219,000 | 72 |
| IV Partly skilled occupations | 419,000 | 15 | 4,352,000 | 16 |
| V Unskilled occupations | 199,000 | 7 | 1,564,000 | 6 |
| Not Classified[3] | 1,155,000 | 41 | 1,418,000 | 5 |
| Total | 2,814,000 | 100 | 26,553,000 | 100 |

[1] People without a job and looking for work.

[2] Economically active people (employees, self employed, and unemployed).

[3] Includes 554,000 people looking for work for more than three years who were not asked about their previous occupation and 347,000 people who had never had a job.

## Sheltered Placement Scheme

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General what representations he has received from voluntary organisations about the current difficulties experienced in the sheltered placement scheme regarding shortages of places.

**Mr. Lee:** My Department has received representations about the sheltered placement scheme from or on behalf of the following voluntary organisations:

Cambridgeshire Mental Welfare Association.
Enham Village Centre/Papworth Village Settlement.
National Star Centre for Disabled Youth, Cheltenham.
Reading Industrial Therapy Organisation Limited.
The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR).
The Spastics Society.
Walsall Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults (MENCAP).
The Shaw Trust.

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General if he will undertake a full review of the financing, organisation and structure of sheltered employment, in the light of experience gained through the sheltered placement scheme.

**Mr. Lee:** I have no immediate plans for a review of the sheltered employment programme. Work to examine certain aspects of the sheltered employment programme, including the sheltered placement scheme, is already in hand or is being planned and I do not rule out the possibility of further work in the light of the outcome of consultations on the report on the Tomlinson principles, prepared by a working party of the National Advisory Council on Employment of Disabled People.

## Restart Programme

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General if he will give details of the numbers of disabled people who have been interviewed as part of the Government's restart programme.

**Mr. Lee:** We do not know how many people with disabilities have been interviewed as part of the restart programme. However, of the 779,051 people counselled by 8 January 1987, 32,246 were referred to a disablement resettlement officer for specialist advice and a further 3,015 were referred to an employment rehabilitation centre.

## Disabled People

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General if he is satisfied with the level of quota compliance in the public sector, particularly with regard to the figures to be published in the *Employment Gazette*; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** We are firmly committed to encouraging all employers, including those in the public sector, to employ more people with disabilities, both registered and unregistered. The key to success is continuous education and persuasion to promote the adoption and implementation of constructive policies and practices towards the employment of people with disabilities. We seek to apply such policies in central Government and will be continually striving to improve our performance.

We shall be considering further the role of the quota scheme in this overall approach of education and persuasion when we have the results of the research into the numbers and characteristics of people with disabilities in the working population, which we are commissioning on the advice of the working group set up by the Manpower Services Commission to examine ways of improving the effectiveness of the quota scheme.

## Electronics Industry

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Paymaster General if he will provide his most recent estimates for employment in electronics, class 34, by regional area, Scotland and Wales; and if he will indicate for each area the net loss, or gain, of jobs between June 1979 and June 1986.

**Mr. Lee:** Estimates of the numbers of employees in employment in the electrical and electronics engineering industry in the regions, Scotland and Wales are available only from censuses of employment. For other dates, the survey sample is not large enough to provide reliable estimates other than for Great Britain.

The following table gives, for the areas specified, the numbers of employees in employment in the industry at September 1984, the most recent date for which a census of employment was held. It also gives the net changes between September 1981 (the date of the previous census of employment, and the earliest date for which comparable figures are available) and September 1984. The estimates are subject to considerable potential estimation error due to the relatively small number of employees in the industry in each region, Scotland and Wales.

*Emploees in Employment in the Electrical and Electronic Industry*[1]

| | *September 1984* | *Change between September 1981 and September 1984* |
|---|---|---|
| South East | 245,000 | −32,000 |
| East Anglia | 19,000 | Nil |
| South West | 38,000 | +4,000 |
| West Midlands | 77,000 | −17,000 |
| East Midlands | 33,000 | −4,000 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 19,000 | −5,000 |
| North West | 66,000 | −7,000 |
| North | 32,000 | −5,000 |
| Wales | 25,000 | −4,000 |
| Scotland | 45,000 | +4,000 |

[1] Class 34 of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

## YTS

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General what proportion of disabled young people leaving the YTS find full-time employment (i) six months after completion, (ii) one year after completion and (iii) 18 months after completion.

**Mr. Lee:** Information is not available in the form requested. The Manpower Services Commission's regular follow-up of YTS leavers shows that of those young people identified as disabled who left YTS schemes between April 1985 and March 1986, 26 per cent. were in full-time work, and 45 per cent. were either in work or further education/training, some three months after leaving.

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General what proportion of able-bodied young people leaving the YTS find full-time employment (i) six months after completion, (ii) one year after completion and (iii) 18 months after completion.

**Mr. Trippier:** The information is not available in the form requested. The Manpower Services Commission's regular follow-up survey of YTS leavers shows that between April 1985 and March 1986, nationally 53 per cent. of able-bodied leavers were in full-time work, and 67 per cent. were in either work of further education/training, three months after leaving. Longer term research has also shown that of those able-bodied young people on YTS in September 1984, 67 per cent. were in full-time work 18 months later.

## EC (Labour Statistics)

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Paymaster General by how much in numerical and percentage terms unemployment in the European Economic Community altered during the British presidency.

**Mr. Lee:** Figures for the European Community are not yet published for the whole period of the British presidency, which ended on 31 December 1986. In the first four months from the end of June 1986 to October 1986, the seasonally adjusted level of registered unemployment increased by 18,000 to 16·079 million—a rise of 0·1 per cent.

## Tourism

**Mr. Steel** asked the Paymaster General what is his Department's policy towards the concept of partnership, in the promotion of tourism, between central Government, local authorities, and the commercial sector; and if he will take steps to ensure that the Government maintain their current percentage share of the total grant.

**Mr. Trippier:** The Government believe that tourism is best promoted nationally and locally by a partnership between the commercial sector and both central and local government. We are continuing to make funds available to the British Tourist Authority and the national tourist boards for the promotion of tourism both regionally and nationally. The national tourist boards are best placed to decide on the allocation of resources based on identified priorities and needs.

## New Workers Scheme

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the extent to which the new workers scheme is able to meet the needs of disabled youngsters.

**Mr. Lee:** I am satisfied that the new workers scheme, by supporting full-time permanent jobs for young people under 21, meets the needs of all such young people—including those who are disabled—who might otherwise be unemployed.

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General what consultation took place with voluntary organisations and interested parties prior to the introduction of the new workers scheme.

**Mr. Lee:** The new workers scheme built on the experience of its predecessor, the young workers scheme. Both the CBI and the TUC were consulted prior to its introduction.

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General if he will consider extending to the new workers scheme the flexibility which was introduced into YTS for disabled young people by extending age limits and by offering additional financial support.

**Mr. Trippier:** There are currently no such plans. Although the upper age limit for entry to the new workers scheme is set at 20, it is nonetheless universal in its application to all young people, including those with special needs or disabilities.

## Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Paymaster General, further to his reply to the hon. Member for South Shields on 12 January, *Official Report*, column *53*, concerning public levels of radiation exposure, whether maximum annual exposure of five millisieverts is the only recommendation or guidance given by Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate in relation to a new nuclear power station; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Industrial Tribunals

**Mr. Terry Davis** asked the Paymaster General whether he will list in the *Official Report* the names of those people who sit as chairmen of industrial tribunals in Birmingham.

**Mr. Lee:** The information is as follows:

*Full-time chairmen*
Mr. Richard Smith (Regional Chairman)
Mr. Bernard Owen

Mr. John Shand
Mr. Nathan Myers
Mr. John Haslam
Mr. David Pugsley
Mr. Manual Delgado

*Part-time chairmen*
Mr. Dennis Akehurst
Mr. Allen Rees
Mr. Michael Arrowsmith
Mr. Williams Senior
Mr. Gerald Sneath
Mr. John Croom-Johnson
Mr. Gerald Foster

### Gas Mains

**Dr. Glyn** asked the Paymaster General if he will introduce regulations to provide for a minimum depth at which gas mains pipes made of plastic may be laid under streets and pavements.

**Mr. Trippier:** I will reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

### Availability for Work

**Mr. Hayward** asked the Paymaster General in what circumstances the new availability for work questionnaire is being given to current as well as new benefit claimants.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The new questionnaire is the latest revision of a form which has been in use since at least 1947. It has been the usual practice since then to use a similar questionnaire as the basis on which the independent adjudicating authorities can decide entitlement. As in the past, we are using the form for current claimants whenever doubts arise about the availability of an unemployed claimant for work. Such doubts may arise, for example, following an inquiry to the claimant's last employer, a routine interview with benefit staff or in any circumstances in which there is a need to confirm availability.

As I informed the House on 29 October, in a few offices claimants who are permitted to sign every quarter instead of every fortnight have also been given the questionnaire. This is an experiment and the results are now being considered.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Entry Clearance

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the maximum, minimum and average periods between the receipt of a first application for settlement at the post in Dhaka and the decision on whether or not to grant entry clearance.

**Mr. Eggar:** In straightforward cases the minimum time between first application and a decision is currently three to four months for those in queue 1—priority cases. For straightforward cases in queue 2—spouse and children—and queue 3—fiance(e)s—the period is six months. In cases where further local inquiries or reference to the Home Office have to be made, the time taken to resolve these cases varies according to the circumstances of each individual case. Average times could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Swedish consulate in Iran still accepts applications for entry clearance to enter the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Eggar:** The British Interests Section of the Royal Swedish embassy in Tehran still accepts such applications, giving priority to urgent and compassionate cases. However, such is the demand for non-urgent, private visit visas that the waiting list for interview for applicants in that category currently extends to the end of March.

### Central America

**Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Dorset, West (Mr. Spicer), *Official Report*, 3 December, column 650, what evidence, of the nature set out in his reply, Her Majesty's Government have of similar intervention by other countries in central America and elsewhere.

**Mr. Eggar:** The evidence to which I referred was available from published sources. These have not produced evidence of similar intervention by other countries in central America.

### General Sikorski

**Mr. Alfred Morris** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received about the repatriation of the remains of General Sikorski to Poland; what replies he has made; what consideration has been given to the wishes of the family; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tim Renton:** In 1981 the Polish authorities proposed that the remains of General Sikorski be removed to Poland. My right hon. and noble Friend the then Secretary of State for the Home Department, Lord Whitelaw, considered a formal application from Major Kycia, acting as Madame Sikorska's executor, for a licence to remove the remains from Newark cemetery to the crypt of the cathedral in Krakow. The Home Secretary fully and carefully considered all the issues involved. He was unconvinced that the relevant criteria for agreeing to a licence had yet been satisfied, and did not, therefore, grant the licence. That decision was recorded in a reply he gave on 30 June 1981 to my hon. Friend the Member for Davyhulme (Mr. Churchill). It was also conveyed to Major Kycia and to the Polish Government.

The Polish Embassy raised the matter again with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1983. The embassy was informed that the Home Secretary regarded the 1981 application for a licence as concluded. Later in 1983 a letter to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister from the Association of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy in Warsaw was answered on my right hon. Friend's behalf by Her Majesty's ambassador at Warsaw in the same sense. That remains the position.

### South Africa (Oxfam Workers)

**Mr. Freeson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he is making to the South African Government over the continued detention of Oxfam workers, Mr. Sarangalis Mkhatshwa, Arthur Mkhwanaji, Rev. Abraham Major and Janet Cherry; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Chalker:** Her Majesty's ambassador at Pretoria raised the cases of those named, and others, as part of the representations which we made to the South African Government on 19 December 1986 on behalf of the Twelve about human rights abuses in South Africa.

### EC (Unemployment)

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what view he took as European Economic Community President of the European Commission's proposals on reducing unemployment.

**Mrs. Chalker:** The Commission put forward no new formal proposals for reducing unemployment during the United Kingdom Presidency. We, with the Governments of Italy and the Republic of Ireland, put forward an action programme for employment growth which had the support of the President of the Commission and was adopted by the Labour and Social Affairs Council on 11 December. For an account of the programme, I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. and learned Friend's reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Kingswood (Mr. Hayward) on 15 December 1986, at column 368.

### Falkland Islands (Conservation Zone)

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the successful applicants for licences to fish in the Falklands Islands conservation zone.

**Mr. Eggar:** Details of licence allocations for vessels to fish in the Falkland Islands interim conservation and management zone (FICZ) are given in the table. British companies have an interest in over 70 vessels licensed for the first season—until 30 June—in addition to those British flag vessels shown in the table. Allocations for the second half of the year have yet to be made.

Vessels permitted to fish in more than one area are issued with separate licences for each, that is north and south.

*FICZ licences allocations: 1 February to 30 June 1987*

| Country | Squid illex fishery north | North and south | Squid loligo fishery south | Totals Vessels | Licences |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Japan | 58 | 7 | 6 | 71 | 78 |
| Taiwan | 30 | | | 30 | 30 |
| Korea | 25 | | | 25 | 25 |
| Poland | 14 | 14 | 12 | 40 | 54 |
| Spain | 1 | 2 | 33 | 36 | 38 |
| Chile | | | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Italy | | 4 | 2 | 6 | 10 |
| Greece | | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| France | | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| United Kingdom | | | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 128 | 28 | 59 | 215 | 243 |

*Notes:*

Total number of licences in north: 156 (ie 128+28).

Total number of licences in south: 87 (ie 59+28).

### Channel Tunnel (Passport Control)

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs where French passport control for passengers coming to England from France via the Channel fixed link will take place.

**Mr. Eggar:** Article 4 of the treaty signed between France and the United Kingdom on the Channel fixed link deals in general terms with frontier controls. The detailed arrangements are still under discussion between us and the French Government.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### Nigeria

53. **Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will increase technical assistance to Nigeria so as to provide more support for integrated health and family planning programmes.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** We plan to increase our technical cooperation programme in Nigeria. Much of the programme will be devoted to training and we shall respond positively to requests for training in integrated health and family planning. We already participate in the World Bank's family health project in Imo State by providing training fellowships.

### SADCC (Gaborone)

54. **Mr. Jackson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how Her Majesty's Government will be represented at the forthcoming Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) in Gaborone; and what British assistance is being provided to SADCC member states.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** I shall be representing Her Majesty's Government at the forthcoming meeting in Gaborone of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference. We have so far pledged £25 million to SADCC. In the last financial year we provided £108 million in bilateral aid to SADCC member states. We expect to maintain substantial programmes of assistance.

### Mozambique

55. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he makes of the food situation in Mozambique; and what plans he has for further aid.

**Mr. Chris Patten:** We are concerned at reports of declining food supplies in Mozambique. We provided 14,500 tonnes of Zimbabwean maize in 1986. We are now sending a further 7,000 tonnes. We shall continue to watch the situation closely.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Canary Wharf Consortium

**Mr. Mikardo** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether the sale price of land to the Canary wharf consortium will be made public.

**Mr. John Patten:** The land price paid by the consortium cannot be published until after an agreement has been concluded and when confidentiality restrictions can be lifted.

**Mr. Mikardo** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much per acre the Canary wharf consortium will be required to pay for land in the Isle of Dogs enterprise zone; and what was the price paid for Heron quay.

**Mr. John Patten:** The price for the land which the Canary wharf consortium is seeking to purchase will be a major factor in negotiations on the master building agreement. For reasons of commercial confidentiality neither this land price nor the price paid for Heron quay can be disclosed at present.

### Nuclear Accidents

**Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment his Department has made of the long-term effects on the environment of a worst case nuclear accident under adverse meteorological conditions.

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment his Department has made of the long-term effects on the environment of a worst case nuclear accident under adverse meteorological conditions.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The National Radiological Protection Board prepared several reports for the Sizewell inquiry which considered, among other things, the consequences of releases of radioactivity following a nuclear accident under adverse meteorological conditions.

### Water Pollution

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what measures are being taken by his Department to improve the water quality of Britain's rivers, lakes, reservoirs and offshore waters; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The Department is continuing with the implementation of part II of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, which provides comprehensive controls over discharges to all significant waters, and is considering the need for making further regulations under the Act aimed at reducing pollution risks. Other measures set out in the consultation paper "The Water Environment: The Next Steps" issued last year in connection with water privatisation, including proposals for introducing statutory water quality objectives, are also being actively pursued. On 1 April 1987, Her Majesty's inspectorate of pollution will come into being with a specific water pollution capability. The inspectorate will take on a number of functions aimed at improving water quality, including the monitoring and enforcement of water quality objectives.

### Allotments

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his policy towards the building of council housing upon public allotments; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Local authorities wishing to use statutory allotments for other purposes such as housing may not do so without the consent of the Secretary of State under section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925. Consent may be given only if adequate alternative provision is made for displaced plotholders, or if such provision is considered unnecessary or not reasonably practicable. Consent is not required for the disposal of non-statutory allotments.

### Consumer Safety

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make extra provision within the rate support grant for local authorities to cover the extra spending which has arisen out of the requirements of the Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986.

**Mr. Chope:** The Consumer Safety (Amendment) Act 1986 introduced measures which allow local authorities to prevent unsafe consumer goods coming on to the market in the first place. This will enable more effective and efficient enforcement of existing consumer legislation and overall should not result in a need for extra resources.

### ReChem International

**Mr. Abse** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will place in the Library both the letter he has received from the European Economic Community Commissioner for the Environment relating to ReChem International, and his reply.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I have seen reports that the Commission intends to open infraction proceedings relating to ReChem International, under article 169 of the EC treaty. I have not seen any formal communication from the Commission on this subject. The Commission and the United Kingdom regard correspondence on infraction proceedings as confidential between them. It would not therefore be appropriate to place any such letter in the Library of the House.

### Owner-occupiers

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of the people in each inner London borough are owner-occupiers.

**Mr. Tracey:** The most recent information available is data from the 1981 census. The percentages of households living in owner-occupied housing are shown in table H of "Census 1981, County report, Greater London, Part I", which is available in the Library.

### London Zoo

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how much money the Government allocated to London Zoo in the last financial year; how much has been allocated for the current financial year; what is the purpose of his grant; and what information he has about animal experiments carried out at the zoo.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** In 1985-86 Government support for the Zoological Society of London amounted to £3 million, made up of a pump-priming capital grant of £1 million and a block revenue grant of £2 million. In the current financial year 1986-87, Government are making available a further £2 million revenue grant, and £34,300 in capital grant to match sums the society raised privately in 1985-86. The grant is given to maintain the society's nationally and internationally recognised work in conservation and scientific research.

Responsibility for the control of animal experiments rests with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department. However, I understand that it is an internal rule of ZSL that no animal in its collection is used for experiments requiring a licence under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which has recently replaced the Cruelty to Animals Act 1876. The society's research arm, the Institute of Zoology, is inspected under this Act and the Government are thus able to be satisfied that the law is being complied with and that experiments are neither cruel nor unnecessary. A full account of the activities of the institute is published in the Scientific Report (1984-86) available from ZSL.

### Local Authority Work (Competition)

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will take steps to ensure that competition between private firms and local authority work forces will be carried out on wholly fair terms.

**Mr. Ridley:** I am glad to have the hon. Member's support for the principle that local authorities, in carrying out their duties under the forthcoming competition legislation, must ensure fairness of treatment as between their DLOs and private contractors. I also expect his support for the necessary powers to deal with those who attempt to protect their DLOs from fair competition; and for similar rules to protect the private sector from unfair competition from local authority businesses.

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if the powers he proposes to take to oblige local authorities to seek competitive tenders for their services will enable him, without further primary legislation, to oblige councils to tender for the provision of *(a)* teaching, *(b)* police, *(c)* fire, *(d)* planning control and *(e)* environmental health services; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ridley:** The Government do not envisage using the enabling power in the forthcoming Local Government Bill to introduce compulsory competitive tendering for the provision of the services listed by the hon. Member. However, I believe that the power is necessary so that the competitive process can be extended to other support services after the initial tranche of activities. Orders made under this enabling power would be subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has conducted or intends to commission any research to establish the administrative implications of introducing compulsory tendering procedures for *(a)* vehicle maintenance, *(b)* office cleaning, *(c)* street cleaning, *(d)* refuse collection, *(e)* the management of leisure centres, *(f)* ground maintenance and *(g)* catering services.

**Mr. Ridley:** There is already a considerable amount of independent professional advice on the administrative implications of competitive tendering. The Government therefore have no plans to commission any research at present.

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has made any estimate, in accordance with the principles of the financial management initiative, of the overall savings that he expects to secure by introducing compulsory competitive tendering in relation to *(a)* vehicle maintenance, *(b)* office cleaning, *(c)* street cleaning, *(d)* refuse collection, *(e)* the management of leisure centres, *(f)* ground maintenance and *(g)* catering services; and how he proposes to monitor whether those savings are achieved.

**Mr. Ridley:** Local authorities which have contracted out service provision as a result of competitive tendering regularly report savings of 20 per cent. to 30 per cent. on previous costs. If all authorities matched this, savings would exceed £500 million per annum. Decisions on how best to monitor the future level of savings will be taken in due course.

### Homes Insulation

**Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what consideration he has given to extending the scope of the homes insulation scheme to cover draughtproofing for low income households.

**Mr. Tracey:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham Edgbaston (Dame J. Knight) on 28 January, at column 244.

### Homeless Persons

**Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* figures for the number of households accepted as homeless in each London borough, and in the London boroughs in total, for each year since such figures were first compiled.

**Mr. John Patten:** I refer the hon. Member to the Department's regular quarterly statistics about homelessness, copies of which are available in the Library.

### Housing Land

**Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give details of any studies or research sponsored by his Department on the effects of circular 15/84 about land for housing.

**Mr. John Patten:** The Department has commissioned two research studies on land for housing recently. A report on a study of land use planning and the housing market by Coopers and Lybrand was published by it in 1985. A supplementary report on the same study will be published shortly. A study on land used for residential development in the south-east by Roger Tym and Partners has been completed and a report will be published by the consultants.

### Defective Housing

**Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest information which he has concerning the number of houses of the defective categories designated under the Housing Act 1985 which were built for, and have remained in, private as opposed to public ownership.

**Mr. John Patten:** I am aware that such properties were built in certain locations, including Basingstoke, Chesham, Taunton and Dartford. The Department is currently obtaining further information.

**Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now consider giving the owners of houses of the defective categories designated in the Housing Act 1985, but which never formed part of public housing stock, rights comparable to those given to owners of such housing which did once form part of the public housing stock.

**Mr. John Patten:** I will answer this question shortly.

### Urban Development Agency (Birmingham)

**Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has received further proposals in respect of an urban development agency for Birmingham.

**Mr. John Patten:** Yes. Birmingham city council wrote to my right hon. Friend on 23 December and he will be replying very shortly.

### Nuclear Installations (Radiation)

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) if he will publish a list of the estimated maximum exposures to radiation of any member of the public from any possible combination of exposure pathways for each licensed nuclear installation, expressed in millisieverts; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will publish a table showing for each licensed nuclear installation *(a)* when the date certificates of authorisation for radioactive discharges were last issued, *(b)* whether such certificates contain numerical limits for all types of radioactive discharges, *(c)* when habits surveys relating to all possible pathways of significant radiation exposure of members of the public were last undertaken, *(d)* when detailed studies of possible individual membership of more than one critical group were last undertaken and *(e)* whether review work for new certificates of authorisation following Cmnd. 9852 has been started; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I will write to the hon. Member.

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what professional staff in his Department are engaged in the programme of reviewing certificates of authorisation for radioactive discharges following Cmnd. 9852; whether such staff are only engaged in review work for installations in England; whether the individuals concerned have other duties; what other organisations are involved in the review work; if he will publish a timetable for issuing the new certificates for each nuclear installation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Officers of Her Majesty's Radiochemical Inspectorate are engaged in the programme of reviewing certificates of authorisation on my behalf. These officers are engaged only in review work for installations in England but will participate in reviews of Welsh installations as requested by the Secretary of State for Wales. These officers have a range of other duties including regulation of discharges under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960 and the inspection of premises. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is also involved in the review work. As stated in paragraph 63 of Cmnd. 9852, it is our aim to complete the review of liquid and gaseous authorisations for all nuclear installations in the United Kingdom within three years. It is not practicable to publish a timetable for issuing new certificates.

### County Halls (Sale)

**Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has received from the various residuary bodies about progress on the sale of the former metropolitan county halls.

**Mr. Chope:** The residuary bodies for the metropolitan areas are already marketing the headquarters buildings of the abolished councils which remain in their ownership.

### Council Housing (Loans)

**Mr. Warren** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the latest data he has on the average total cost of building and financing loans on council flats and houses with one, two and three bedrooms, respectively.

**Mr. Tracey** [*pursuant to his reply,* 30 January 1987]: Provisional figures for the mean construction costs, excluding land, site works and fees, in tenders accepted by English local authorities, and the implied loan charges, are as follows.

| *Dwelling type* | *Average construction costs* £ | *Loan charges in first year* £ | *Total loan charges (present value)* £ |
|---|---|---|---|
| One bedroom | 18,700 | 2,107 | 37,347 |
| Two bedroom | 18,200 | 2,051 | 36,349 |
| Three bedroom | 20,900 | 2,355 | 41,741 |

These averages include dwellings for special needs. The figures for loan charges have been calculated on the assumption that construction costs are financed by loans for 60 years at an interest rate of 10 per cent. repaid through a sinking fund with an accumulation rate of 5 per cent.

### Trafalgar Square (Students' Meeting)

**Mr. Straw** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what decision he has made in respect of the application by the National Union of Students for the use of Trafalgar square for a public meeting on 21 February; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave** [*pursuant to his reply,* 30 January 1987]: Permission is being refused. It is not appropriate on public safety grounds for such demonstrations to take place while Nelson's column is being cleaned.

## Council House Sales

**Mr. Burt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each London borough for the years 1980 to 1986 the numbers of tenants who have initiated purchase of their council house, and the numbers who have completed; and if he will break these figures down to show purchases of flats and houses.

**Mr. Tracey** [*pursuant to his reply*, 27 January 1987, c. *174*]: The table gives the available information on claims received and sales completed under the right-to-buy provisions, up to September 1986. Corresponding information is not available on the progress of voluntary sales to tenants.

*Right to buy sales: London Boroughs*

| | *1980-81* | | *1981-82* | | *1982-83* | | *1983-84* | | *1984-85* | | *1985-86* | | *1986-87 first half* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims reeived* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* |
| City of London | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | [1] | 5 | [1] | 6 | 3 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| —flats | 547 | 0 | 216 | 52 | 82 | 232 | 83 | 91 | 134 | 65 | 226 | 103 | 129 | 66 |
| Barking and Dagenham | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 4,717 | 0 | 1,023 | 678 | 1,205 | 2,558 | 1,130 | 885 | 1,521 | 787 | 1,338 | 1,040 | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | [1] | 0 | 27 | 58 | 87 | 23 | 95 | 14 | [2] | [2] |
| Barnet | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 989 | 0 | 512 | 159 | 499 | 461 | 635 | 405 | 782 | 637 | 647 | 551 | 534 | 243 |
| —flats | 468 | 0 | 175 | 0 | 219 | 7 | 236 | 224 | 309 | 204 | 348 | 161 | 255 | 100 |
| Bexley | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| —flats | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Brent | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 791 | 0 | 335 | 185 | 230 | 328 | 217 | 206 | [2]56 | [2]49 | [2]270 | [2]119 | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | 253 | 0 | 113 | 2 | 117 | 50 | 97 | 55 | [2]38 | [2]10 | [2]179 | [2]60 | [2] | [2] |
| Bromley | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 706 | 120 | 815 | 550 | 785 | 478 | 922 | 583 | 995 | 899 | 788 | 552 | 490 | 300 |
| —flats | 207 | 0 | 158 | 0 | 145 | 151 | 110 | 70 | 116 | 67 | 205 | 94 | 101 | 52 |
| Camden | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 760 | 0 | 383 | 8 | 546 | 51 | 244 | 32 | 546 | 35 | 631 | 10 | 540 | 14 |
| —flats | [1] | 0 | [1] | 5 | [1] | 120 | [1] | 91 | [1] | 65 | [1] | 66 | [1] | 56 |
| Croydon | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 1,202 | 0 | 647 | 678 | 917 | 793 | 868 | 659 | 943 | 501 | 816 | 581 | 545 | 277 |
| —flats | 41 | 0 | 78 | 65 | 38 | 0 | 58 | 0 | 137 | 29 | 151 | 66 | 114 | 34 |
| Ealing | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 540 | 3 | 759 | 199 | 516 | 398 | [2]171 | [2]73 | 120 | 102 | 572 | 405 | [2]227 | [2]115 |
| —flats | 304 | 0 | 187 | 50 | 111 | 94 | [2]35 | [2]26 | 37 | 20 | 252 | 78 | [2]151 | [2]29 |
| Enfield | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 697 | 0 | 530 | 330 | 863 | 436 | 781 | 720 | 754 | 658 | 612 | 400 | 439 | 186 |
| —flats | 231 | 0 | 132 | 0 | 217 | 26 | 269 | 139 | 176 | 163 | 215 | 84 | 194 | 60 |
| Greenwich | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 2,214 | 0 | 553 | 205 | 1,333 | 1,019 | 463 | 295 | 587 | 313 | 625 | 402 | 554 | 188 |
| —flats | [1] | 0 | [1] | 0 | [1] | 6 | [1] | 65 | [1] | 18 | [1] | 25 | [1] | 15 |
| Hackney | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 414 | 1 | 96 | 23 | 189 | 104 | [2]145 | [2]85 | 345 | 149 | 523 | 124 | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | [1] | [1] | [1] | 0 | 0 | 0 | [2]0 | [2]0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | [2] | [2] |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 92 | 0 | 178 | 27 | 218 | 90 | 250 | 105 | 251 | 110 | 307 | 107 | 207 | 38 |
| —flats | 186 | 0 | 170 | 24 | 227 | 89 | 268 | 100 | 277 | 125 | 300 | 103 | 280 | 91 |
| Haringey | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 1,072 | 0 | 373 | 390 | 361 | 445 | 387 | 242 | 536 | 229 | [2]770 | [2]216 | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | 211 | 0 | 65 | 6 | 82 | 73 | 97 | 47 | 159 | 35 | [2]232 | [2]51 | [2] | [2] |
| Harrow | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 510 | 1 | 268 | 200 | 292 | 315 | 275 | 208 | 369 | 171 | 291 | 213 | 253 | 92 |
| —flats | 150 | 0 | 97 | 0 | 49 | 82 | 45 | 26 | 75 | 25 | 106 | 49 | 51 | 29 |

| | *1980-81* | | *1981-82* | | *1982-83* | | *1983-84* | | *1984-85* | | *1985-86* | | *1986-87 first half* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims reeived* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* | *claims received* | *sales* |
| **Havering** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 284 | 0 | 519 | 239 | 569 | 382 | 567 | 459 | 565 | 234 | 565 | 322 | [2]167 | [2]74 |
| —flats | 199 | 0 | 176 | 58 | 123 | 81 | 67 | 69 | 89 | 35 | 134 | 43 | [2]40 | [2]7 |
| **Hillingdon** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | [2] | [2] | 630 | 135 | [2]648 | [2]612 | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | [2] | [2] | 115 | 0 | 76 | [2]28 | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] |
| **Hounslow** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 1,794 | 0 | 498 | 279 | 490 | 858 | 489 | 491 | 600 | 232 | 647 | 213 | 476 | 151 |
| —flats | 239 | 0 | 92 | 0 | 71 | 8 | 64 | 56 | 83 | 33 | 88 | 21 | 89 | 61 |
| **Islington** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 259 | 0 | 167 | 9 | 105 | 102 | 88 | 68 | [2]34 | [2]6 | [2]45 | [2]23 | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | 436 | 0 | 379 | 2 | 211 | 96 | 198 | 147 | [2]62 | [2]19 | [2]193 | [2]61 | [2] | [2] |
| **Kensington and Chelsea** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 17 | 0 | 9 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 18 | 5 | 16 | 4 | 192 | 3 |
| —flats | 210 | 0 | 128 | 11 | 66 | 83 | 101 | 39 | 211 | 55 | 172 | 73 | 176 | 47 |
| **Kingston upon Thames** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 184 | 0 | 198 | 62 | 243 | 193 | 174 | 187 | 197 | 105 | 179 | 123 | 120 | 49 |
| —flats | 236 | 0 | 82 | 0 | 119 | 157 | 46 | 42 | 91 | 31 | 91 | 40 | 71 | 28 |
| **Lambeth** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 650 | 0 | 383 | 29 | 1,074 | 231 | [2]346 | [2]129 | 682 | [2] | 758 | 0 | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | [1] | 0 | [1] | 1 | [1] | 36 | [1][2] | [2]183[2] | [1] | [2] | [1] | 0 | [2] | [2] |
| **Lewisham** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 1,385 | 0 | 429 | 180 | 425 | 947 | [2]540 | [2]234 | 691 | 255 | [2]370 | [2]197 | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | 329 | 0 | 117 | 0 | 110 | 25 | [2]135 | [2]72 | 182 | 54 | [2]77 | [2]19 | [2] | [2] |
| **Merton** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 336 | 0 | 435 | 407 | 493 | 278 | 442 | 335 | 331 | 126 | 421 | 235 | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | 25 | 0 | 28 | 27 | 41 | 41 | 46 | 42 | 54 | 24 | 90 | 29 | [2] | [2] |
| **Newham** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 1,930 | 0 | 710 | 241 | 786 | 1,328 | [2]461 | [2]408 | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | [2]0 | [2]0 | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] |
| **Redbridge** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| —flats | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Richmond upon Thames** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 411 | 105 | 198 | 81 | 326 | 189 | 327 | 197 | 390 | 202 | 302 | 211 | 170 | 36 |
| —flats | 243 | 2 | 87 | 5 | 95 | 95 | 119 | 63 | 143 | 81 | 97 | 88 | 95 | 21 |
| **Southwark** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 589 | 0 | 341 | 120 | 226 | 294 | 141 | 148 | 387 | 132 | [2]137 | [2]159 | 105 | 86 |
| —flats | 476 | 0 | 277 | 0 | 224 | 128 | 153 | 103 | 293 | 63 | [2]187 | [2]49 | 139 | 38 |
| **Sutton** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 345 | 3 | 284 | 159 | 392 | 227 | 451 | 310 | 458 | 361 | 379 | 258 | 310 | 127 |
| —flats | 198 | 0 | 106 | 20 | 119 | 65 | 104 | 55 | 115 | 59 | 111 | 56 | 75 | 24 |
| **Tower Hamlets** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 391 | 0 | 69 | 20 | [2]120 | 178 | 26 | 99 | [2]0 | [2]14 | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | 228 | 0 | 0 | 0 | [2]0 | 30 | 21 | 42 | [2]0 | [2]2 | [2] | [2] | [2] | [2] |
| **Waltham Forest** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 1,419 | 0 | 369 | 532 | 480 | 602 | 315 | 87 | 507 | 220 | [2]335 | [2]199 | [2] | [2] |
| —flats | 148 | 0 | 51 | 0 | 111 | 64 | 5 | 27 | 0 | 88 | [2]107 | [2]34 | [2] | [2] |
| **Wandsworth** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 1,080 | 0 | 683 | 110 | 794 | 342 | 874 | 478 | 594 | 491 | 504 | 307 | 367 | 120 |
| —flats | 408 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 0 | 288 | 1,146 | 334 | 954 | 570 | 947 | 341 | 874 | 209 |
| **Westminster** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| —houses | 44 | 0 | 61 | 14 | 43 | 34 | [2]34 | [2]20 | [2]134 | [2]69 | 131 | 63 | 85 | 37 |
| —flats | 827 | 0 | 240 | 51 | 174 | 186 | [2]135 | [2]64 | [2]366 | [2]94 | 551 | 184 | 486 | 45 |

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[1] Figure which includes, or may include, both houses and flats.

[2] Incomplete reporting.

### Thames Barrier

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment, in relation to the Thames barrier, what was (i) the length of time between the final grant of planning permission and the coming into full-scale operation of the barrier; (ii) the estimate either made by his Department, assessed by his Department, or made available to his Department, at the time of the final grant of planning permission and (iii) the cost of construction estimated by his Department, assessed by his cost of construction, including all associated costs; (iv) actual cost of construction converted into constant prices at a convenient date close to the final grant of planning permission and (v) the cost of construction estimated by his Department, assessed by his Department, or made available to his Department, at the time of the final grant of planning permission.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have been asked to reply. The information is as follows:

(i) Planning permission was not necessary for the construction of the Thames barrier — exemption was granted in the Thames Barrier and Flood Prevention Act 1972. The period between this enactment and operation of the Barrier was 10 years and two months.

(ii) The estimate of the length of this period at the time of enactment was five to six years.

(iii) Some work remains to be completed. It is estimated that the final cost will be about £450 million.

(iv) At December 1973 prices the estimated final cost would be about £170 million.

(v) The estimated cost of construction in December 1973 was £88 million. However, designs were not fully complete at the time that estimate was made.

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has prepared an analysis of the difference in cost of the Thames barrier between that estimated at the time of the final grant of planning permission and outcome.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have been asked to reply. No.

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has prepared an analysis of the difference in construction time of the Thames barrier between that estimated at the time of the final grant of planning permission, and outcome.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have been asked to reply. No.

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has available to it any analysis prepared by the former Greater London Council, or any department thereof, of the difference in cost of the Thames barrier between that estimated at the time of the final grant of planning permission, and outcome; and if he will place a copy of such analysis in the Library.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have been asked to reply. No.

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department has available to it any analysis prepared by the former Greater London council, or any department thereof, of the difference in construction time of the Thames barrier between that estimated and the time of the final grant of planning permission, and outcome; and if he will place a copy of such analysis in the Library.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I have been asked to reply. No.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### British Telecom (Strike)

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the effect on the telephone service of the strike by British Telecom engineers.

**Mr. Butcher:** British Telecom's network is designed to be resilient. There has been little disruption of significance to services overall so far. The company is taking all the steps it can to maintain services. Services provided over the Mercury network are not directly affected.

### Rolls-Royce plc

**Mr. Millan** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give the figure for the net borrowings of Rolls-Royce plc at 31 December 1985 using the definition indicated in his answer to the hon. Member for Hastings and Rye (Mr. Warren) on 18 December 1986, *Official Report*, columns *607-8*, along with details of how the figure is made up.

**Mr. Pattie:** The net borrowings of Rolls-Royce plc at 31 December 1985 were £273 million. This sum is based on the following figures taken from the company annual report for 1985:

| | | *£ million* |
|---|---|---|
| Bank loans, overdrafts and other borrowings | | |
| falling due within one year | 180 | |
| falling due after more than one year | 62 | |
| | | 242 |
| Obligations under financial leases | | |
| payable within one year | 17 | |
| payable after more than one year | 47 | 64 |
| | | 306 |
| *LESS* | | |
| Cash at bank and in hand | | 33 |
| | | 273 |

### Regional Aid

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list, by region, the amount granted in regional assistance as regional development grants in each financial year since 1976-77 at current and outturn prices.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The question has been interpreted as asking for information at current and constant prices.

Payments of regional development grants since 1976-77 at current or outturn prices were as follows:

*Payments of Regional Development Grants at current or outturn prices*

*£ million*

| *Area* | *1976-77* | *1977-78* | *1978-79* | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | [1]*1986-87* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North-East | 143·7 | 127·3 | 123·0 | 107·0 | 101·0 | 109·7 | 91·4 | 68·8 | 61·6 | 46·4 | 70·9 |
| North-West | 63·4 | 59·9 | 76·5 | 74·1 | 122·2 | 177·5 | 133·1 | 115·5 | 107·4 | 83·0 | 85·3 |
| Yorkshire & Humberside | 23·5 | 22·1 | 30·2 | 21·5 | 38·7 | 47·1 | 36·4 | 23·5 | 26·8 | 24·2 | 21·1 |
| East Midlands | 1·3 | 1·4 | 2·3 | 2·4 | 3·2 | 7·2 | 8·8 | 8·2 | 3·8 | 4·4 | 7·1 |
| West Midlands | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| South-West | 5·2 | 7·2 | 6·0 | 5·0 | 8·5 | 10·3 | 11·0 | 7·8 | 9·5 | 8·6 | 13·3 |
| Scotland | 108·2 | 105·0 | 107·3 | 70·2 | 113·3 | 142·7 | 287·3 | 143·0 | 109·2 | 107·5 | 148·8 |
| Wales | 62·4 | 70·4 | 71·5 | 50·7 | 103·5 | 122·2 | 121·5 | 72·1 | 92·7 | 84·4 | 71·8 |
| Great Britain Total | 407·7 | 393·3 | 416·8 | 330·9 | 490·5 | 616·7 | 689·5 | 438·9 | 411·0 | 358·5 | 418·3 |

[1] 1986-87 data are latest available and provisional.

*Payments of regional development grants at constant 1986 prices[2] were as follows:*

*£ million*

| *Area* | *1976-77* | *1977-78* | *1978-79* | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | [1]*1986-87* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| North-East | 347·6 | 270·6 | 236·7 | 176·1 | 140·2 | 138·7 | 107·7 | 77·6 | 66·6 | 47·2 | 70·8 |
| North-West | 153·4 | 127·3 | 147·2 | 122·0 | 169·5 | 224·4 | 156·8 | 130·3 | 116·1 | 84·4 | 85·2 |
| Yorkshire & Humberside | 56·9 | 47·0 | 58·0 | 35·4 | 53·7 | 59·5 | 42·8 | 26·5 | 28·9 | 24·6 | 21·1 |
| East Midlands | 3·1 | 3·0 | 4·4 | 3·9 | 4·4 | 9·1 | 10·3 | 9·2 | 4·2 | 4·4 | 7·1 |
| West Midlands | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| South-West | 12·6 | 15·3 | 11·5 | 8·2 | 11·8 | 13·0 | 12·9 | 8·8 | 10·3 | 8·8 | 13·3 |
| Scotland | 261·8 | 223·2 | 206·5 | 115·5 | 157·1 | 180·4 | 338·4 | 161·3 | 118·1 | 109·4 | 148·6 |
| Wales | 151·0 | 150·0 | 137·5 | 83·4 | 143·5 | 154·4 | 143·1 | 81·4 | 100·2 | 85·9 | 71·7 |
| Great Britain Total | 986·4 | 836·4 | 801·8 | 544·5 | 680·2 | 779·5 | 812·0 | 495·1 | 444·4 | 364·7 | 417·8 |

[1] 1986-87 data are latest available and provisional.

[2] Expenditure on a 1986 price basis for each year is calculated by applying the appropriate deflator to expenditure at current prices.

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list, by region, the amount granted in national selective assistance under section 8 of the Industry Act, in each year since the inception of the scheme at current and outturn prices.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** Cumulative expenditure by region to 31 March 1986 for certain forms of assistance under section 8 of the Industry Act 1972 and the Industrial Development Act 1982 is as follows:

| *Region* | *Amount (£'000)* |
|---|---|
| Scotland | 50,599 |
| Wales | 28,503 |
| North East | 19,015 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 81,887 |
| East Midlands | 64,702 |
| West Midlands | 84,767 |
| South East | 158,987 |
| South West | 43,220 |
| North West | 97,942 |
| Northern Ireland/Mixed | 5,275 |
| TOTAL | 634,897 |

The forms of assistance included are the following schemes: Wool Textiles (Parts 1 & 2), Ferrous Foundries, Machine Tools, Clothing, Paper and Board, Non-ferrous Foundry, Instrumentation, Drop Forging, Printing Machinery, Textile Machinery, Poultrymeat Processing, Footwear, Accelerated Project, Selective Investment, Support for Major Projects, Redment Slaughterhouse, Electronic Components, Microelectronics Industry Support 1, Coal Firing, Fibre Optics and Opto-electronics, Private Sector Steel, Small Engineering Firms Investment (1 & 2), Advanced Manufacturing Technology, Computer Aided Design and Test Equipment, Innovation Linked Investment, Quality Assurance, and Support for the Microelectronics Industry.

The more detailed information requested by the hon. Member could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

## Cordless Telephones

**Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consideration is being given to the possibility of laying an order under the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1967 which would outlaw the manufacture, sale, leasing, keeping and importation of cordless telephones.

**Mr. Butcher:** I plan to lay an order under section 7 of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1967 restricting the import, sale, and manufacture and possession of unapproved cordless telephones within the next two months.

The open sale of this appraratus, which it is unlawful to use, has led to interference to authorised radio services, including, most worryingly, to emergency services.

**Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether there is any evidence that cordless telephones and the frequencies on which they operate cause interference to emergency services.

**Mr. Butcher:** There is clear evidence that the use of unapproved cordless telephones causes interference to other radio services, including those used by the emergency services. Where unapproved apparatus is not well designed, it generates harmonic frequencies and this, coupled with the power used, can interfere with authorised services on a large number of different frequencies.

The Department's radio investigation service has records of a number of incidents of interference to police and fire services' radio systems as a result of the use of unapproved cordless telephones, and to a radio telemetry system used by a water authority for monitoring water levels. Other radio services to have suffered similar interference include local and water authority mobile systems, those used by the Automobile Association and other business users, and those operated by the Ministry of Defence. While these are not emergency services as such, the use of radio by this kind of agency is often related to emergencies, some of which involve safety of life. The number of instances of interference is rising in line with the increased use of unapproved equipment.

**Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why he has not yet allocated frequencies for cordless telephones with a range of approximately one mile.

**Mr. Butcher:** Radio apparatus must meet specifications laid down to avoid interference. In general, the greater the range of any radio apparatus, the smaller the number of users that can be accommodated on any set of frequencies. The present specifications were drawn up to allow a reasonable density of use in urban areas and the range had to be limited to achieve this. Nevertheless, we recognise that there may be a demand for instruments with a rather longer range than the present limits, and will be discussing with manufacturers whether a suitable specification can be drawn up, and if so whether a suitable frequency allocation can be made. Existing unapproved apparatus is not suitable for this purpose.

**Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give details of any prosecutions brought, and penalties imposed, where cordless telephones have been proved to have caused interference to emergency services.

**Mr. Butcher:** A successful prosecution was brought following interference to fire brigade radio communications as a result of the use of unapproved cordless telephone. The defendant was fined £50, orderd to pay £20 costs to my Department, and ordered to forfeit the equipment. In a case of interference to a radio telemetry system used by a water authority for monitoring water levels, a defendant was fined £200, ordered to pay £60 costs, and ordered to forfeit the equipment.

## Emergency Services (Radio Frequencies)

**Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what radio frequencies are currently used by the emergency services.

**Mr. Butcher:** The police and fire services use the radio frequency bands 80-84 MHz—base receive mode for the mobile radio service — and 97·6-102·1 MHz — base transmit for the mobile radio service. In addition they operate on certain frequencies in the range of 143-168 MHz. The ambulance services operate on 165-168 MHz and on 170-173 MHz.

## Radio Bands (Allocations)

**Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to whom the 49 and 69 MHz radio bands are allocated.

**Mr. Butcher:** The 49 MHz radio band is allocated to land mobile services generally, to paging services including hospital pagers and low power services including alarms for the elderly. The 69 MHz radio band is allocated to Government use.

## EC (United Kingdom Presidency)

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the internal market opening measures *(a)* adopted and *(b)* agreed during the British presidency.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** During the United Kingdom presidency—July-December 1986—the Council adopted or agreed 48 individual measures which will help remove barriers to trade in the Community. Details of 41 measures were given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in an answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Southend, East (Mr. Taylor) on 19 December 1986 at columns 765-68. I provided details of the seven remaining measures in and answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Altrincham and Sale (Sir F. Montgomery) on 12 January 1987, at column 5.

Forty-four of the measures were formally adopted by the Council. Four others were agreed and await adoption. These are one of the measures dealing with the marketing of pharmaceuticals; and measures dealing with roll-over protection structures on narrow-track wheeled agricultural and forestry tractors; the supplies directive; and energy labelling tolerance levels.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the internal market opening measures that were programmed for agreement or adoption during the British presidency of the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** Work during the United Kingdom Presidency was based on a Presidency action programme of internal market measures to be discussed by the Council during the period 1 July 1986 to 1 July 1987. Details of these were given in an answer to the hon. Member for Newham, South (Mr. Spearing) on 25 June 1986, at columns 174-78. A copy of the programme is available in the Library of the House.

The programme does not specify target dates for the adoption of individual measures during the period it covers.

## House of Fraser

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, pursuant to his answer of 28 January, *Official Report*, columns *328-9*, what resources and what priority his Department is according to the consideration of the new information supplied by Lonrho plc in December 1986 about the purchase of House of Fraser by the Al Fayed family; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** My right hon. Friend is considering the material submitted on behalf of Lonrho carefully. He will devote to this such time and resources as he considers necessary in order to reach his conclusions on the material.

### Reed Corrugated Papers, Coatbridge

**Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he intends to reply to the letter dated 20 January from the hon. Member for Monklands, West concerning the problem raised by Reed Corrugated Papers, Coatbridge.

**Mr. Alan Clark** [*pursuant to his reply*, 30 January 1987]: I will be replying to the hon. Gentleman shortly. I am glad that a settlement has now been reached between the Community and the United States which avoids any imposition of restrictions by the United States on imports from the Community.

## WALES

### Welsh Water Authority

**Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what has been the cost incurred by the Welsh water authority for all work undertaken in preparation for privatisation.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** This is a matter for the Welsh water authority and I have asked the chairman to write to the hon. Gentleman.

### Home Education

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) how many children are being educated out of school and in the home in Cardiff; and if he will make a statement;

(2) how many children are being educated out of school and in the home in Cardiff West; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Informaton on numbers of children educated otherwise than at schools is not collected by the Department.

### General Certificate of Secondary Education

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if the leaflets explaining the new general certificate of secondary education to parents will also be available in Welsh; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** All GCSE explanatory leaflets issued in Wales for the informaton of the general public, including parents, have been in the English and Welsh languages.

### Cot Deaths

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many cot deaths have occurred in Wales in each of the last seven years.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The number of registered deaths in Wales for which cot death — sudden infant death syndrome — was mentioned on the death certificate — whether or not it was given as the underlying cause—is given in the following table:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 57 |
| 1980 | 77 |
| 1981 | 67 |
| 1982 | 66 |
| 1983 | 65 |
| 1984 | 49 |
| 1985 | 75 |
| [1]1986 | 49 |

[1] 1986 data is for January to July inclusive and is a provisional figure.

*Source:* Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

### Unemployment Costs

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his estimation of the cost to the Exchequer of the present level of unemployment on Alyn and Deeside on an annual basis.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** I regret that the estimates requested cannot be provided. A regional breakdown of benefits paid to unemployed people is not available, nor is it possible to estimate the revenue forgone.

### Urban Development Corporations

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he is considering setting up urban development corporations in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** An order to designate an urban development area and establish an urban development corporation in Cardiff was laid before Parliament on 12 January. We are not at present considering the establishment of any other urban development corporations in Wales.

### Loft Insulation

**Mr. Rowlands** asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether, following his announcement confirming that all local authorities' bids for loft insulation had been met, he intends to implement the changes to the regulations governing loft insulation grants announced by the Minister for Housing and Construction, the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten), on 19 December, *Official Report*, column 757.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The changes to the regulations governing loft insulation grants announced by my hon. Friend the Minister for Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction will apply in both England and Wales.

### Housing (Disabled Persons)

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish a table showing how many houses specifically designed for disabled people have been built in each housing authority area in Wales in each quarter since 1979.

**Mr. Mark Robinson** [*pursuant to the reply*, 22 January, c. *674*]: The information the hon. Gentleman requires is given in the following table:

*House completions specifically designed for disabled people (including houses built to mobility standards)*

| | 1979 Quarter | | | | 1980 Quarter | | | | 1981 Quarter | | | | 1982 Quarter | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Aberconwy | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 18 | — | — | — | — |
| Alyn and Deeside | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Arfon | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Blaenau Gwent | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Brecknock | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Cardiff | 4 | 4 | — | — | — | — | 4 | 2 | — | — | — | 8 | 18 | 21 | — | — |
| Carmarthen | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | 22 | — | — | 25 | 3 | 1 | — |
| Ceredigion | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 5 | 1 | — | — | 1 | — | — |
| Colwyn | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Cynon Valley | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Delyn | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Dinefwr | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Dwyfor | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Glyndwr | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Islwyn | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Llanelli | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Lliw Valley | 4 | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — |
| Meironnydd | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Merthyr Tydfil | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Monmouth | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | — |
| Montgomeryshire | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Neath | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Newport | — | 4 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Ogwr | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Port Talbot (Afan) | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Presili | 6 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Radnor | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Rhondda | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Rhuddlan | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Rhymney Valley | — | — | — | — | 4 | — | 6 | — | 1 | 1 | — | 2 | — | — | 2 | — |
| South Pembrokeshire | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Swansea | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | — | — | — |
| Taff-Ely | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | 1 | 3 | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| Torfaen | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | — | — | 2 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Wrexham Maelor | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Ynys Mon | — | — | — | — | 5 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — |
| WALES | 16 | 11 | — | 3 | 11 | — | 12 | 6 | 5 | 28 | 1 | 30 | 52 | 26 | 3 | 2 |

*House completions specifically designed for disabled people (including houses built to mobility standards)*

| | 1983 Quarter | | | | 1984 Quarter | | | | 1985 Quarter | | | | 1986 Quarter | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Aberconwy | — | — | 5 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Alyn and Deeside | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Arfon | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Blaenau Gwent | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Brecknock | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Cardiff | 21 | 3 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 29 | 34 | 21 | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Carmarthen | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 |
| Ceredigion | — | — | — | — | 21 | — | 2 | 43 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Colwyn | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Cynon Valley | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Delyn | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Dinefwr | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — |
| Dwyfor | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Glyndwr | 12 | 3 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Islwyn | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Llanelli | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 26 | 3 | — | — | — | — |
| Lliw Valley | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Meironnydd | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Merthyr Tydfil | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Monmouth | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Montgomeryshire | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 9 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Neath | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | 3 | — | — | — | — |
| Newport | — | — | — | — | 33 | 16 | 15 | — | — | 4 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Ogwr | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 3 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Port Talbot (Afan) | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Presili | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Radnor | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |

| | 1983 Quarter | | | | 1984 Quarter | | | | 1985 Quarter | | | | 1986 Quarter | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4[1] |
| Rhondda | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Rhuddlan | 11 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 12 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Rhymney Valley | 1 | — | 36 | 1 | 24 | 24 | 4 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | | |
| South Pembrokeshire | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Swansea | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | 3 | — | — | — | — | — |
| Taff-Ely | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Torfaen | — | 6 | 9 | 9 | — | — | — | — | 1 | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Vale of Glamorgan | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 2 | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — |
| Wrexham Maelor | — | 7 | 16 | 12 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 5 | 3 | 4 | — | — |
| Ynys Mon | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| WALES | 46 | 21 | 79 | 30 | 87 | 45 | 55 | 105 | 23 | 10 | 32 | 11 | 10 | 5 | 3 | |

[1] Not available.

### Housing Renovation Grants

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how much each of the district councils of Wales have allocated for housing renovation grants during each year since 1979.

**Mr. Mark Robinson** [*pursuant to his reply*, 16 January 1987, c. *320*]: The information requested is given in the following table:

*Housing renovation grants paid by district councils in Wales*

*(£'000s)*

| *Welsh districts* | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aberconwy | 140 | 222 | 269 | 301 | 723 | 624 | 542 |
| Alyn and Deeside | 113 | 150 | 204 | 387 | 749 | 650 | 388 |
| Arfon | 376 | 400 | 555 | 901 | 1,994 | 1,894 | 1,848 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 314 | 453 | 445 | 1,520 | 3,676 | 4,393 | 1,561 |
| Brecknock | 161 | 249 | 208 | 458 | 1,942 | 1,127 | 454 |
| Cardiff | 543 | 671 | 1,150 | 2,082 | 9,442 | 7,618 | 7,363 |
| Carmarthen | 421 | 715 | 545 | 797 | 5,459 | 3,494 | 1,691 |
| Ceredigion | 269 | 352 | 226 | 570 | 2,273 | 1,817 | 1,109 |
| Colwyn | 216 | 289 | 377 | 536 | 1,075 | 739 | 544 |
| Cynon Valley | 494 | 415 | 819 | 701 | 2,058 | 1,724 | 1,059 |
| Delyn | 187 | 256 | 244 | 497 | 1,111 | 461 | 403 |
| Dinefwr | 278 | 298 | 190 | 96 | 835 | 1,318 | 478 |
| Dwyfor | 170 | 188 | 177 | 669 | 2,560 | 1,067 | 370 |
| Glyndwr | 53 | 129 | 113 | 461 | 1,388 | 1,589 | 646 |
| Islwyn | 314 | 386 | 443 | 636 | 2,144 | 2,807 | 2,514 |
| Llanelli | 511 | 551 | 261 | 808 | 2,131 | 2,061 | 770 |
| Lliw Valley | 402 | 548 | 788 | 810 | 1,619 | 1,381 | 904 |
| Meirionnydd | 195 | 163 | 168 | 373 | 2,555 | 3,137 | 1,485 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 364 | 340 | 351 | 855 | 2,563 | 1,509 | 1,174 |
| Monmoutyh | 228 | 198 | 160 | 616 | 2,347 | 1,586 | 720 |
| Montgomeryshire | 110 | 131 | 118 | 606 | 2,590 | 1,109 | 452 |
| Neath | 456 | 440 | 315 | 1,163 | 2,393 | 1,897 | 693 |
| Newport | 419 | 621 | 868 | 2,353 | 3,957 | 2,505 | 1,618 |
| Ogwr | 592 | 552 | 620 | 1,350 | 1,817 | 3,535 | 2,528 |
| Port Talbot (Afan) | 180 | 215 | 261 | 345 | 417 | 382 | 422 |
| Preseli | 291 | 260 | 459 | 647 | 2,411 | 2,512 | 1,215 |
| Radnor | 102 | 99 | 123 | 294 | 925 | 539 | 391 |
| Rhondda | 769 | 899 | 1,062 | 1,942 | 8,084 | 8,839 | 6,677 |
| Rhuddlan | 27 | 38 | 19 | 31 | 71 | 97 | 72 |
| Rhymney Valley | 428 | 421 | 634 | 1,211 | 2,523 | 3,328 | 1,645 |
| South Pembrokeshire | 220 | 243 | 426 | 1,195 | 2,484 | 3,017 | 1,814 |
| Swansea | 1,104 | 1,443 | 1,505 | 2,605 | 4,984 | 7,448 | 5,689 |
| Taff-Ely | 605 | 568 | 1,160 | 2,827 | 6,325 | 3,879 | 1,780 |
| Torfaen | 95 | 160 | 206 | 270 | 993 | 2,199 | 1,033 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 285 | 391 | 429 | 1,313 | 3,146 | 2,635 | 1,057 |
| Wrexham Maelor | 136 | 114 | 131 | 246 | 446 | 424 | 335 |
| Ynys Mon | 197 | 222 | 116 | 510 | 3,671 | 1,131 | 1,444 |
| WALES | 11,765 | 13,790 | 16,144 | 32,985 | 95,882 | 86,472 | 54,884 |

Figures have been rounded separately to the nearest digit; therefore, there may be slight discrepancies between the sum of the constituent items and the totals as shown.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Departmental Review

**Mr. Colvin** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will make a statement about the recent review which examined his Department's regional organisation.

**Mr. Jopling:** Following a review last year of the management and structure of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service, a wider review has been carried out of my Department's regional organisation as a whole. It is more than five years since the last such review and in that time there have been important developments in the scope of the Department's work and the way in which it is run. The latest review has taken these into account.

I am now considering a report from the review team. Changes recommended include a reduction in the number of regional offices from five to four and in divisional offices from 19 to 15. The offices affected would be changed in status but they would be retained as bases for the advisory service. Changes in management structure are also recommended.

As regards the system of regions and divisions, my preliminary view is that there is a case for moving in the direction recommended in the report. I am now beginning consultation on that basis, and I am inviting all concerned to submit comments on the report's proposals by 31 March 1987. A copy of the report is being placed in the Library of the House.

My intention is that any changes resulting from this review should be introduced not later than 1 April 1988 with the aim of ensuring that my Department should be fully adapted to meet the challenge of servicing the agricultural industry and others with an interest in the countryside, and should do so as efficiently as possible.

### Coast Protection

**Sir Julian Ridsdale** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will make a statement bringing up to date the position concerning coast protection of the Naze at Walton on the Naze.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The coast protection scheme proposed by Tendring district council has met several objections and the council was directed last June to make application for planning permission to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment. However, I am informed that further site investigations are now under consideration, pending the outcome of which the council has deferred submission of the application.

### EC Budget

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food by how much the proportion of the European Economic Community budget devoted to agriculture was altered during the British presidency.

**Mr. Jopling:** Decisions taken during the British presidency, notably the agreement in December on milk and beef, will result in considerable savings in expenditure. Agriculture Their effect on agriculture's share of the total budget will depend on the overall resources available and decisions taken on other Community activities.

### Surplus Food (Distribution)

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what arrangements have been made by his Department to reimburse the charitable organisations which have undertaken to distribute the free food from the European Economic Community for their legitimate expenses.

**Mr. Jopling:** The European Commission is making payments available at a flat rate per tonne for re-packing foodstuffs into small amounts where necessary and for transporting them to charitable organisations' distribution points. The rates of payment for butter and beef are still under discussion in Brussels and will be announced to the charitable organisations as soon as possible. Costs of further distribution to individual recipients are for the charitable organisations themselves.

### Radioactive Discharges

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what professional staff in his Department are engaged in the programme of reviewing certificates of authorisation for radioactive discharges following Cmnd. 9852; whether such staff are only engaged in review work for installations in England; whether the individuals concerned have other duties; what other organisations are involved in the review work; if he will publish a timetable for issuing the new certificates for each nuclear installation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Jopling:** Officers of the fisheries radiological inspectorate and the atomic energy unit of my Department are engaged in the programme of reviewing certificates of authorisation on our behalf in respect of installations in England and will participate on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales in the review of authorisations for installations in Wales. The officers concerned undertake a range of other duties relating to inspection and regulation of discharges under the Radioactive Substances Act 1960, related monitoring and research programmes and provision of technical advice.

The Department of the Environment is also involved in the review work in England, as is the Welsh Office in respect of Welsh installations and the Scottish Office in respect of Scottish installations. As was stated in paragraph 63 of Cmnd. 9852, the intention is to complete the review work within three years. I regret that it is not possible to publish a timetable for issuing new certificates.

### Dairy Quotas (Compensation)

**Mr. Colin Shepherd** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what compensation will be payable to dairy farmers who are obliged to accept compulsory reductions of quota in the event that, at the end of the period for obtaining the overall reduction of quota by voluntary means, the required 2 per cent. has not been achieved; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** Under Community rules, we would be required to make compulsory cuts in producers' quotas if the reduction in our national quota could not be fully met by quota purchased under the Community outgoers scheme. This would mean that some of the Community funds made available to finance the scheme would remain unspent. The Council of Ministers in December agreed that such funds may be used to pay direct compensation to producers for compulsory cuts in quota. Alternatively, they may be used to buy quota under a national outgoers scheme for re-allocation to specified categories of producer. In the event that it proves impossible to secure the full uptake of the Community outgoers scheme, we will of course consult fully with the industry before deciding which of these options should be chosen.

### Foodstuffs (Levies)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will bring up to date for the whole or part of 1986 the information on duties and levies on foodstuffs provided in his written answer to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 7 March 1984, *Official Report*, column *582*.

**Mr. Brooke:** I have been asked to reply.

Figures for the whole of 1986 are not yet available. The table shows, for the first 10 months of 1986, the duties and levies on imports of food and live animals chiefly for food —Standard International Trade Classification (Rev 2) Section 0—from countries for which no preferential duty rates apply:

*January to October 1986*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| Customs duty | 43·1 |
| Agricultural levy | 125·5 |
| Total charges | 168·6 |
| | *percentage* |
| Total charges as a proportion of the value of the goods subject to duty and/or levy | 20·8 |

The basis on which the proportion shown in the table has been calculated differs from that used for the 1983 data in the earlier written answer to which the hon. Member refers. This is because no information on the value of imports subject only to levy was then, or is now, readily available, and the charges were calculated as a percentage only of the value of goods charged with customs duties. I am sorry that this was not made clear at the time.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Breach of Confidence

43. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Attorney-General what steps he is taking to implement the recommendations of the Law Commission on breach of confidence.

**The Solicitor-General:** The Government intend to introduce legislation based on the recomendations made by the Law Commission in its report No. 110, cmnd. 8388, on the law in England and Wales relating to breach of confidence. But since the commission's report amounts essentially to a recommendation for a restatement of the common law it is not a matter to which the Government propose to give high priority at present.

### Crown Prosecution Service

45. **Mr. Neale** asked the Attorney-General how many visits have been undertaken by law officers to areas of the Crown Prosecution Service.

**The Solicitor-General:** Each of the six areas comprising a former metropolitan county has received an extensive visit from me since the service came into operation, as have Durham and parts of two London areas. I have been greatly impressed by the universal commitment of staff at all levels to the success of this new and independent service.

### Fraud (Prosecutions)

46. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Attorney-General whether figures are yet available for fraud prosecution under the fraud investigation group proceedings up to 31 December 1986.

**The Attorney-General:** During 1986, 86 trails on indictment were handled by the fraud divisions of the Crown Prosecution Service. In 74 of these trials convictions were secured. These trials involved 195 defendants, of whom 121 pleaded guilty and 52 were convicted.

Of the 86 cases, 22 were formally designated as FIG cases. In 21 of these cases convictions were secured.

The total sum at risk in the cases dealt with in 1986 was £171 million.

The average time from first reference to the fraud divisions to plea or verdict was 16 months.

### Barristers' Fees

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Attorney-General what progress has been made in negotiations with the Bar regarding the fee levels for prosecuting counsel for 1987-88.

**The Attorney-General:** Agreement has now been reached with the Bar regarding the levels of fee to be paid in 1987-88 to prosecuting counsel instructed by the Crown Prosecution Service. The agreement provides for increases in fees to be weighted in favour of the more substantial contested cases and improves the provisions relating to appearance fees. These changes will take effect from 1 April 1987.

### Northern Ireland (Cash Limits)

**Mr. Hind** asked the Attorney-General what change he proposes to make to the 1986-87 cash limits for Class XX Vote 22, Administration of Justice, Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland court services' running costs limit.

**The Attorney-General:** Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the running costs limit for the Northern Ireland court service will be increased by £34,000 from £10,737,000 to £10,771,000, thereby increasing the cash limit for Class XX, Vote 22 by the same amount from £9,731,000 to £9,765,000. The increase relates to undertakers' charges in coroners' courts which are being transferred from the Law, Order, Protective and Miscellaneous Services, Northern Ireland, Vote—Class XVIII, Vote 1—where there will be an offsetting reduction. There is therefore no net increase in public expenditure or aggregate running costs.

### Zircon Satellite

**Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Attorney-General whether, before initiating inquiries into the action of the *New Statesman* in publishing details concerning project Zircon, he satisfied himself that some or all of the same material had not already been published in other organs; and if he will make a statement.

**The Attorney-General:** I was satisfied that there were sufficient grounds for inviting the Director of Public Prosecutions to request a police investigation.

## DEFENCE

### Nuclear Storage

**Mr. Couchman** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to add new nuclear contaminated material to the residual nuclear storage at the former Royal Navy dockyard in Gillingham, Kent.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The residual nuclear storage facility known, as MOD Gillingham consists of a storage facility for radioactive materials and contaminated equipment and a disposal site for low level radioactive waste. The latter was used for disposal of waste up to the end of last year, but there are no plans for its further use. The storage facility was used for contaminated equipment when Chatham dockyard was in operation and now contains intermediate level waste awaiting disposal. Its use for storage of containers of radioactive material and contaminated equipment from other dockyards is being considered and items may be transferred temporarily from Devonport and/or Rosyth, pending the extension of their own storage facilities. There will be no hazard to members of the public arising from storage of such items as the radiation levels just outside the building will be such that no special restrictions on movement will be required.

### Convoy Accident (Wiltshire)

**Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many recovery vehicles were dispatched to the scene of the convoy accident in Wiltshire on 10 January and of what type; if a military recovery vehicle was sent to the scene of the accident; and by whom the crane that successfully completed the recovery operation was supplied.

**Mr. Stanley:** Two recovery vehicles were dispatched to the scene of the accident in Wiltshire on 10 January. These were a military Scammell recovery vehicle for towing operations and a 50-ton crane to right the vehicle involved in the accident. The crane was supplied by Scott-Greenham Limited of Southampton, an approved MOD contractor.

**Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for Defence why he will not set up an inquiry of Privy Counsellors into the convoy accident in Wiltshire on 10 January.

**Mr. Stanley:** Because the accident is the subject of a board of inquiry.

### Dangerous Cargoes

**Mr. Hoyle** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will set up an inquiry of Privy Counsellors into the general question of transporting dangerous military cargoes on minor roads.

**Mr. Stanley:** No.

### Royal Air Force, Binbrook

**Mr. Ashton** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what plans exist for the future of Royal Air Force, Binbrook, Lincolnshire; how many civilians are currently employed there: for how long the base is expected to remain in use after the departure of the Lightning aircraft; and for what purpose.

**Mr. Stanley:** I cannot add at present to what was said by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for the Armed Forces at columns 1118-19 in the debate on the Royal Air Force on 22 January.

The number of civilians currently employed at RAF Binbrook is 109.

### Radioactive Materials

**Mr. Redmond** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the occasions during the course of the last calendar year when his Department had reason to meet or consult with the chief fire officer for South Yorkshire or the South Yorkshire fire and civil defence authority concerning incidents involving radioactive materials.

**Mr. Stanley:** Liaison is conducted with those civil authorities, including fire services, which have a need to know. I am not prepared to go into further detail, as that could indicate routes and methods of transport of defence nuclear materials, which is contrary to the policy of successive Governments.

### Ex Gratia Payments

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men and service women are receiving ex gratia payments for injuries incurred during their service.

**Mr. Freeman:** None are currently receiving ex-gratia payments. Those discharged as a result of injuries received during service receive lump sums and/or pensions under the armed forces pension scheme and, where appropriate, the DHSS war pension scheme, depending upon the circumstances of their injury.

### Major Projects (Expenditure)

**Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether, pursuant to his answer of 26 January, *Official Report,* column *131,* agreement has now been reached with the Public Accounts Committee regarding early warning from his Department to the Committee of projects during project definition which are likely to exceed the £250 million expenditure limit; and how, in this context, projects in respect of which it would not be in the public interest to reveal details, are treated.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Defence equipment projects appear in the major project statement when they have been authorised for full development or production and meet the appropriate cost criteria; and since 1983, in response to the request of the Public Accounts Committee, projects which are expected at some stage to meet the criteria have been noted separately in the statement when they have incurred expenditure exceeding £10 million up to the end of project definition.

In its 35th report, 1985-86, the Public Accounts Committee expressed the wish that as much as possible of the information in future statements should be published and my Department in its response gave an undertaking that we would do our best to facilitate this. In the major project statement for 1986, therefore, we have separately annotated those details which are sensitive from the security or commercial standpoint and seek the Committee's co-operation in preventing their public disclosure.

**Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the date for the submission of the major projects statement to the Public Accounts Committee each year; and what is the timing and procedure for informing the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of any project which would qualify for inclusion in the major projects statement but which cannot be submitted to the Public Accounts Committee as a whole due to considerations of national security.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** There is no set date for submission of the major project statement to the Public Accounts Committee. The statement is submitted to the Committee towards the end of the calendar year. In the case of a project which is excluded from the major project statement on grounds of national security, the National Audit Office would be informed by the time when, but for national security considerations, the project would have been included in the statement for the first time; and would have continuing access to the relevant papers. It would then be for the Comptroller and Auditor General to decide when to inform the Chairman of the PAC.

**Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether any criteria relating to the precise stage a project has reached apply to the inclusion of such a project in the major projects statement submitted annually to the Public Accounts Committee, over and above the cost criteria specified in his answer of 26 January, *Official Report*, column *131*.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Defence equipment projects appear in the major project statement when they have been authorised for full development or production and meet the appropriate cost criteria; since 1983, in response to the request of the Public Accounts Committee, projects which are expected at some stage to meet the criteria have been noted separately in the statement when they have incurred expenditure exceeding £10 million up to the end of project definition.

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## L/Cpl. S. J. Cockton

**Mr. Raison** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to receive the results of the inquiry into the death of L/Cpl. S. J. Cockton on 6 June 1982; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Stanley** [*pursuant to his answer*, 26 January 1987, c. *132*]: In my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk, North-West (Mr. Bellingham) on 25 June 1986 at c. *161-3*, I set out the circumstances surrounding the loss of an Army Gazelle helicopter in the Falkland Islands on 6 June 1982. I subsequently decided that a board of inquiry should be held into the loss.

The board of inquiry's report has now been carefully considered. It has been the practice of successive Governments not to publish reports of this kind. Evidence is given to boards of inquiry in confidence and the report is likely to contain a significant amount of classified information. This is indeed the case in this instance. I wish, however, to give as full an account of the board's findings as is possible within those constraints.

So far as the circumstances of the accident are concerned, the board's independent inquiry confirmed and amplified the account of the Gazelle's mission and the role of HMS Cardiff which I gave in my answer on 25 June. Because the Gazelle's sortie was to be flown within the airspace of 5 Infantry Brigade on a brigade task, there was no requirement under the standard operating procedures in force at the time for any authority outside the brigade to be informed. Nor did the board find any evidence to suggest that anybody outside 5 Brigade had prior knowledge of the flight. At the time of the accident, HMS Cardiff was operating off the east coast of East Falkland on a naval gunfire support mission in support of 3 Commando Brigade. Concurrently, HMS Cardiff had been tasked with enforcing the total exclusion zone and, as part of this, to deter or destroy Argentine aircraft attempting to use Port Stanley airfield. The missile engagement zone of the ship's Seadart missiles covered a large part of East Falkland.

Ships, including HMS Cardiff, had been used for similar tasks on frequent occasions before 6 June. Indeed on the night of 2-3 June, HMS Cardiff had engaged an Argentine aircraft attempting to use Port Stanley airfield. When HMS Cardiff detected a radar contact over East Falkland on 6 June, it was heading towards Port Stanley airfield along a route previously used by Argentine aircraft. No friendly aircraft movements had been forecast; HMS Cardiff was unaware of the rebroadcast station on Mount Pleasant peak; and there were no identification friend or foe (IFF) or other friendly transmissions from the contact. It was accordingly assessed to be an Argentine aircraft, probably fixed wing, and in accordance with the approved criteria for engaging such contacts, HMS Cardiff fired her Seadart missiles and shot it down.

The board of inquiry noted that all staff were most conscious of the risk of accidental engagements between units of the task force and took great pains to prevent them throughout the campaign. Nevertheless, there was a lack of experience in both Army and Navy staffs with each other's procedures and capabilities.

Procedures were developing during the campaign, but neither the Navy nor the Army staffs appreciated in time the significance of a ship's missile engagement zone overlapping the land. There was a widespread lack of perception of the conflict between the air interdiction task of the Naval ships using the Seadart system over the land and the autonomous nature of land force helicopters in their own brigade airspace.

The board confirmed that the Gazelle helicopter had been fitted with IFF but that, as I said in my reply on 25 June, it was switched off because it had been established that at that time the use of this equipment caused interference with other weapon systems critical to the battle.

The particular complexities of the Falklands campaign and the involvement at short notice of staff and units unfamiliar with amphibious and joint warfare put great pressure on individuals and procdures. This was exacerbated by the difficulties of communication within the land forces, which were at that time fully stretched in the crucial advance to Port Stanley, and between them and the Royal Navy. The board concluded that the loss of the Gazelle was caused by an accumulation of adverse factors and errors among naval and military staffs at all levels. The board recommended that neither negligence nor blame should be attributed to any individual and that no action should be taken against any individual.

Since the Falklands campaign, considerable improvements have been made in joint warfare procedures and in the capabilities of 5 Brigade. In addition, staffs and units have planned and exercised the deployment of joint forces out of area, most recently in Oman last November. Everything possible has been and continues to be done to learn the lessons from the tragic loss of the Gazelle helicopter on 6 June 1982.

Our deepest sympathy goes to the relatives of the four men who died.

## TRANSPORT

### Bus Services

2. **Mr. Dickens** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the present level of commercial registration of bus services.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** Currently there is broadly the same level of services overall as before deregulation, about 75 per cent. commercial and the balance on subsidised contracts.

### Pennines (Major Roads)

14. **Sir John Osborn** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the total number of days for which the major roads across the Pennines, with the exception of the M62, have been closed to traffic between Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Lancashire and Cheshire this Janary mainly due to heavy snow; and for which months in each of the past 30 years the number of such days has been the highest.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** None. There was no day last month when all the major roads across the Pennines were close. I will write to my hon. Friend with details of those roads which were closed.

I cannot answer the second part of my hon. Friend's question.

### Driving Tests (Impersonation)

15. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to ensure that there is no impersonation of those undertaking driving tests.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** There are checks which examiners make. I do not wish to give details. Perhaps my hon. Friend would let me know if he has a particular case in mind.

### One-man Buses

16. **Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what advice his Department issues on the operation of one-man buses; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** The Department has issued a code of practice on safety and other special requirements for public service vehicles intended for one person operation. In all other respects the way in which such vehicles are employed is the matter for the operator concerned.

### National Bus Company

17. **Mr. Forth** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the progress of the privatisation of the National Bus Company.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I am very pleased with the progress made by the National Bus Company, 14 subsidiaries have been sold, 13 of them to their managements, and in every case provision has been made for employees to participate in the success of their undertaking. Many more sales are being negotiated and NBC is confident that a substantial part of its business will have been privatised by the end of this year.

### Road Schemes

18. **Sir Trevor Skeet** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many road schemes will be supported with transport supplementary grant in 1987-88.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We aim to support 340 major schemes costing £1 million or more, 70 schemes to be supported for the first time in 1987-88. The remaining 270 maintain support for schemes in previous settlements where local authorities continue to make satisfactory progress. Schemes bring road safety and environmental benefit as well as ensuring the effective flow of goods and people on more important local roads.

### Manchester Airport (Rail Link)

19. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will seek to meet with the chairman of British Rail to discuss the rail link to Manchester airport.

**Mr. Moore:** There is no need for me to do so since British Rail has already put forward proposals for its share of the funding. I should be happy to meet representatives of Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority and Manchester Airport plc, together with British Rail, as soon as they have presented me with details of their proposals.

### Motorways

20. **Mr. Stevens** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if there has been any improvement in the time taken to repair motorways.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Yes. The increasing use of lane rental contracts has produced a dramatic improvement. In 1985-86 lane rental contracts were completed on average 38 per cent. faster than normally expected. They produced a saving of about 500 days of traffic delay worth over £8 million to the nation.

Conventional contracts are also being completed more quickly.

We currently apply lane rental to most major maintenance schemes on our motorways.

### London Regional Transport

21. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the level of and plans for capital investment in London Regional Transport.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** London Regional Transport's annual business plan, published in December 1986, shows a planned investment of £280 million in 1987-88. That compares with a forecast expenditure of £259 million this year and with an expenditure of £234 million in 1985-86. I welcome this continuing trend as evidence of LRT's commitment to the highly successful modernisation of their system.

Their investment programme contains many projects of benefit to the travelling public, including provision for new buses with easier access for the disabled; a £135 million scheme to automate the Underground's ticketing and ticket control system; a £45 million scheme to provide additional Underground trains; replacement of the Underground's power stations with equipment to permit cheaper access to the national grid; and a continuing programme of station modernisation to enhance passengers' environment and save future maintenance costs.

28. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will review with the chairman of London Regional Transport safety standards on the underground and buses.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I have no plans at present to call for such a review. The primary responsibility for maintaining safety of both bus and Underground systems rests with the operators. They are governed by the relevant statutory requirements and the bodies responsible for ensuring compliance. I shall be happy to consider carefully any matters my hon. Friend brings to my attention.

### Channel Tunnel

22. **Mr. Dykes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received about the safety of travellers in the Channel tunnel.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** In the last six months, my Department has received some 260 representations from members of the public about the Channel tunnel. Only about 20 of these referred to safety issues. The public can be assured that the British and French Governments attach the utmost importance to safety in the tunnel, on which they will be advised by an independent binational safety authority.

### Heathrow-London (Traffic Flow)

23. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to facilitate traffic flow from Heathrow airport to central London.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We appointed consultants last March to look at options for improving travel between Heathrow and central London. Their report is expected in the spring.

### Motorways (Speed Limits)

24. **Mr. Madel** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what recent representations he has received concerning any change in the maximum speed limits allowed on motorways; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Department receives representations on a wide range of road safety issues, including speeds on motorways. Ninety-eight per cent. of accidents are on other roads.

If my hon. Friend has a particular point in mind, perhaps he would let me know.

### British Rail

25. **Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he next intends to meet the chairman of British Rail; and what he intends to discuss.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** We are next due to meet on 18 February and will be discussing a wide range of matters of mutual interest.

### Lifeboats

26. **Mr. Maclennan** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he is satisfied with the present lifeboat provision for north-west Scotland.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Provision of lifeboats around the coast of the United Kingdom is a matter for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. I understand it is presently reviewing lifeboat cover for north-west Scotland and will inform the United Kingdom Search and Rescue Committee of its intentions when next it meets in May.

### British Rail (Privatisation)

27. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to privatise British Rail.

**Mr. Moore:** I have no plans to privatise British Rail.

### Lay-bys (Caravan Cafes)

29. **Sir David Price** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his Department's policy towards the operation of caravan cafes from lay-bys on trunk roads unauthorised by local planning departments.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Department's policy is to secure the removal of unauthorised developments of this kind where there is a safety hazard or interference with traffic flows or an environmental nuisance. Alternatively, it may agree action to this end by the local planning authority.

### A13 (Southend)

30. **Dr. Michael Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans and proposals exist to extend the dual carriageway on the A13 into Southend; when work will commence on the final sections; and when they are due to open for traffic.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** This part of the A13 is not a national road. Its improvement is the responsibility of Essex county council.

### Rural Areas

31. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what means are available to his Department to monitor the effects of bus deregulation in rural areas.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** My Department, together with the Scottish and Welsh Offices, is financing a programme of research into bus deregulation which is being carried out by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory with the support of consultants, and include studies of the effect on rural areas.

### Woolwich Ferry

32. **Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what action he is planning to take in response to the review of the operation of the Woolwich ferry.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I will decide what action to take after considering the consultants' findings and recommendations from the London borough of Greenwich.

### Driving Tests

33. **Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many people in the Basildon constituency took driving tests in each of the last five years and how many people were successful on the first occasion.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Records of driving test applications are not kept in these ways. The information is not available.

### Railways (Electrification)

34. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what rail lines he expects to be electrified in the next five years.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** The following railway electrification schemes are due to be completed within the next five years:

| | *Year* |
|---|---|
| Ayr-Largs | May 1987 |
| Bishops Stortford-Cambridge | May 1987 |
| Blackfriars-Farringdon | May 1987 |
| Ipswich-Norwich | May 1987 |

### Bypasses

35. **Mr. Ashby** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many towns have benefited from the completion of bypasses since 1979.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Sixty-seven trunk road bypass or relief road schemes have been completed since 1979. Some of these have relieved more than one community. Certain other completed schemes have also taken traffic out of communities.

### East London River Crossing

36. **Mr. Evennett** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the inspector's report from the public inquiry relating to the proposed east London river crossing to be published.

**Mr. Moore:** The inspector's report will be published at the time Ministers announce the decisions they have taken in the light of the inspector's findings. Given the exceptional length and complexity of this inquiry and volume of evidence which will need to be considered by both the inspector and Ministers, this is bound to take some time.

### Trunk Roads

37. **Mr. Hicks** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce the results of his Department's review of the trunk road building programme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I expect to announce the results of the present review in the spring.

### Stoke-Derby Road

38. **Mr. McLoughlin** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he proposes to make a statement about his proposals for the Stoke to Derby road.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** What was, in earlier years, referred to as the proposals for a Stoke-Derby link now comprises a series of improvement or bypass schemes within the road programme. Of these, improvement of the 8 ½ mile length of A50 between the Uttoxeter and Blythe Bridge bypasses was completed in April 1985. On 18 December 1986, I announced a further trunk road scheme to improve the A50/A5007 route between Blythe Bridge and Queensway in Stoke on Trent. Subject to statutory processes, work on that scheme should start in 1990 and take two years to build.

To the east of Uttoxeter a series of bypass schemes are proposed for Doveridge, Hatton-Hilton-Foston, Etwall and Derby Southern bypass. It has been necessary to reappraise the traffic, economic and environmental benefits of these schemes and various alternative routes. For this purpose a new traffic model was developed which was validated last year and for the past few months our consultants have been producing new traffic forecasts and appraising the various options. I hope to be able to make an announcement about the future of these schemes soon.

### Manchester (Rail Links)

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the current estimated cost of constructing a rail link to Manchester airport; if the funding has now been agreed; and when the work will commence.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I understand that the latest estimated cost of the proposed rail link is about £15 million and that British Rail has agreed in principle with Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority and Manchester Airport plc on their share of the costs. It is for them to decide in the first instance on when the scheme could start.

### Search and Rescue Helicopter (Western Isles)

**Mr. Donald Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to station a search and rescue helicopter in the Western Isles.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Tendering action is now in hand. The precise date on which a search and rescue helicopter will be stationed in the Western Isles will depend on consideration of the responses to the invitations.

### Civil Aviation Authority

**Mr. Bright** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will now make a statement on the framework for monitoring airline leisure traffic being set up by the Civil Aviation Authority as a result of his decision on the appeal by Britannia Airways against decision 1/86 of the Civil Aviation Authority;

(2) if he will now make a statement on the framework for monitoring part-charter arrangements by airlines being set up by the Civil Aviation Authority as a result of his decision on the appeal by Britannia Airways against decision 1/86 of the Civil Aviation Authority;

(3) if he will now make a statement on the progress of consultations with the Office of Fair Trading being undertaken by the Civil Aviation Authority as a result of his decision on the appeal by Britannia Airways against decision 1/86 of the Civil Aviation Authority;

(4) if he will now make a statement on the progress of the consultations with the airline industry being undertaken by the Civil Aviation Authorty as a result of his decision on the appeal by Britannia Airways against decision 1/86 of the Civil Aviation Authority.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The Civil Aviation Authority only recently instituted consultations with the industry, users and the Office of Fair Trading following my right hon. Friend's request last year that the authority should review the adequacy of the information available to it on airlines' activities. A copy of the consultation letter has been placed in the Library and those consulted have until 31 March to reply. I look forward to seeing the authority's proposals in due course.

### Buses

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to amend the regulations relating to tests on buses carrying more than eight passengers in relation to comfort and convenience for public use; and if he will make a statment.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Department has recently consulted about proposals to increase the number of safety checks at the annual tests of private vehicles with more than 12 passenger seats. We also propose to delete or change the checks of certain items in the annual tests of public service vehicles with more than eight passenger seats. In the latter group, a small number of checks on comfort and convenience would be dropped.

### M4 (Lane Closure)

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the time lapse on 26 January between the clearing of obstacles to the free passage of vehicles on the fast lane of the eastbound carriageway of the M4 approximately three miles west of junction 10 and the removal of the advanced road traffic signs indicating that the lane was closed.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The advance warning signs were removed about three-quarters of an hour after the removal of the lane coning. This time was reasonable given the journey via the motorway junctions taken by the removal team.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the time lapse on 26 January between the clearing of obstacles to the free passage of vehicles on the fast lane of the eastbound carriageway of the M4 approximately three miles west of junction 16 and the removal of the advanced road traffic signs indicating that the lane was closed.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** About half an hour.

### Modbury-Bigbury Road (Car Count)

**Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what has been learnt from the car count on the Modbury to Bigbury road since the count started in September 1982; and to what uses the information so far gained has been put;

(2) what steps he is planning to take to improve or alter the Modbury to Bigbury road as a result of information gained since the car count there began in September 1982.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Data from the Modbury to Bigbury road site indicate an average flow of 1,900 vehicles per day in 1985, of which some 60 were heavy lorries. This represents an increase of some 10 per cent. since 1982, less than the growth of over 20 per cent. recorded for rural class B roads generally. These data are obtained for the compilation of national statistics. I know of no plans to change the road as a result of their collection.

Data from this site, together with similar data from other randomly selected core census sites, are used to asses traffic trends for different types of vehicle over the whole country. The principle uses of this information are:

*(i)* providing traffic forecasts for national and local roads planning,

*(ii)* determining traffic management and maintenance needs, in particular the circulation of road track costs and grant-related expenditure, and

*(iii)* assessing road accident trends and road safety priorities, through the calculation of accident rates.

Maintaining regular monitoring throughout the year at core census sites avoids the need for extensive traffic counting at a large number of places on the road system. Seasonal profiles obtained from the core census enable short period counts to be converted into estimates of total flow throughout the year.

### Traffic Census

**Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the cost to the taxpayer of the traffic census currently being undertaken throughout the country.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Expenditure on traffic monitoring, including roadside interviews by this Department in the financial year 1986-87 is expected to be some £5 million. Of this, about a quarter (£1·35 million) is spent on national traffic monitoring. The remainder (£3·62 million) relates to schemes undertaken for regional offices and includes, for the first time, traffic monitoring in London.

### Expenditure

**Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what was the amount per head expended in each passenger transport authority area and in each county for the most recent 12-month period for which figures are available.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** The table shows 1986-87 budgeted expenditure on passenger transport revenue support (PTRS) and concessionary fares by local authorities and PTAs in each shire county and PTA area, expressed as a single £ per head figure. It is not possible to exclude from PTA figures their expenditure on British Rail services under section 20 of the Transport Act 1968. Such expenditure amounted to £4·99 per head across all Metropolitan county council areas in 1984-85.

*1986-87 budget expenditure on passenger transport and concessionary fares*

| | *PTRS + conc. fares £/head* |
|---|---|
| *Passenger transport authority* | |
| Greater Manchester | 29·60 |
| Merseyside | 51·76 |
| South Yorkshire | 45·46 |
| Tyne & Wear | 43·68 |
| West Midlands | 21·30 |
| West Yorkshire | 29·11 |
| *County* | |
| Avon | 3·93 |
| Bedfordshire | 3·82 |
| Berkshire | 5·70 |
| Buckinghamshire | 4·32 |
| Cambridgeshire | 3·05 |
| Cheshire | 8·68 |
| Cleveland | 19·44 |
| Cornwall | 3·50 |
| Cumbria | 5·18 |
| Derbyshire | 9·05 |
| Devon | 3·23 |
| Dorset | 2·49 |
| Durham | 8·61 |
| East Sussex | 3·55 |
| Essex | 4·81 |
| Gloucestershire | 2·53 |
| Hampshire | 6·88 |
| Hereford & Worcestershire | 4·28 |
| Hertfordshire | 8·09 |
| Humberside | 7·27 |
| Isle of Wight | 4·09 |
| Kent | 3·18 |
| Lancashire | 13·75 |
| Leicestershire | 6·12 |
| Lincolnshire | 3·28 |
| Norfolk | 1·49 |
| Northamtonshire | 2·13 |
| Northumberland | 4·91 |
| North Yorkshire | 3·87 |
| Nottinghamshire | 9·79 |
| Oxfordshire | 3·00 |
| Shropshire | 3·93 |
| Somerset | 2·08 |
| Staffordshire | 4·83 |
| Suffolk | 4·23 |
| Surrey | 5·62 |
| Warwickshire | 2·90 |
| West Sussex | 4·69 |
| Wiltshire | 3·49 |

*Notes:*

(1) Expenditure figures are budgets based on Return of Expenditure and Rates (RER87) and includes all districts + county expenditure in each case.

(2) Population figures used for this table are from 1986/87 RSG Settlement Data.

## Railway Level Crossings

**Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will instruct British Rail to install barriers at automatic open level crossings over classified roads throughout the United Kingdom.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** It would be premature for me to ask British Rail to make any alterations, including the installation of barriers, at automatic open level crossings until I have seen the report of the safety review now being carried out by Professor Stott.

**Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many automatic open level crossings have been in operation in each of the past 10 years.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** The number of automatic open level crossings in operation in each of the last 10 years is as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1977 | 58 |
| 1978 | 68 |
| 1979 | 84 |
| 1980 | 107 |
| 1981 | 114 |
| 1982 | 122 |
| 1983 | 136 |
| 1984 | 169 |
| 1985 | 227 |
| 1986 | [1]251 |

[1] Provisional.

**Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when was the last occasion his Department changed the regulations for the installation of automatic open level crossings.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** The Department's published "Railway Construction and Operations Requirements—Level Crossings" were last changed in 1981 following a working party set up in 1976. An additional section dealing with the protection of pedestrians was added in 1985, as a result of recommendations made in the Oppenheim report.

## Regional Airports

**Mr. Snape** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the growth in percentage terms in total passenger traffic at each United Kingdom regional airport during 1986 or that part of the year for which the information is readily available.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** Information for the period January to September 1986 is readily available in respect of the 18 regional airports listed. Percentage growth is in relation to the same period in 1985.

| *Airport* | *Growth per cent.* |
|---|---|
| Aberdeen | −9·4 |
| Belfast | 12·5 |
| Birmingham | 27·3 |
| Bristol | 14·7 |
| Blackpool | −14·7 |
| Bournemouth | −16·7 |
| Cardiff | 25·2 |
| Edinburgh | 4·0 |
| East Midlands | 21·2 |
| Glasgow | 15·2 |
| Leeds/Bradford | 8·4 |
| Liverpool | −6·2 |
| Manchester | 24·4 |
| Newcastle | 22·4 |
| Norwich | −7·1 |
| Southend | −16·2 |
| Southampton | −13·4 |
| Teesside | −3·1 |
| TOTAL | 14·8 |

### Birmingham International Airport

**Mr. Snape** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, in view of the continuing growth of traffic at Birmingham international airport, he will now reconsider the granting of gateway status at that airport.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** I welcome the traffic growth at Birmingham international airport. I do not propose to make any changes in the policy on gateway international airports set out in the 1985 airports policy White Paper, Cmnd. 9542. However, the Government will not allow the question of gateway status to inhibit constructive negotiations with any foreign Governments which have airlines interested in serving Birmingham international airport.

### British Airways

**Mr. Kennedy** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what safeguards will exist following the privatisation of British Airways to ensure the continuation of their air services within the Highlands and Islands.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The continuation of these services will remain, as it has been in the past, a matter for the commercial judgment of the board of British Airways.

### Channel Fixed Link

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Secretary of State for Transport, further to the reply to the hon. Member for Altrincham and Sale of 12 January, *Official Report*, column *23*, if he will set out the timetable for the proposed fixed-link beneath the Channel; what further discussions he has had with British Rail concerning the London terminus and the possible dispersal of services; and if he will make a statement on the employment implications of such dispersed services.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** Subject to the Channel Tunnel Bill receiving Royal Assent, ratification of the Channel Tunnel treaty and the coming into operation of the concession agreement, we understand that Eurotunnel intend to start construction of the Channel tunnel in the autumn of this year and to bring it into operation in 1993.

British Rail's services through the Channel tunnel will not be eligible for Government subsidy, and it is for BR to determine on commercial grounds the pattern of services it will provide. Its plans for a passenger terminal in London are designed to accommodate those passengers likely to want to travel to and from London. It also plans to run direct passenger services between the continent and points north of London. It expects to run direct freight services between a pattern of points throughout Britain and centres in mainland Europe.

BR estimates that these dispersed passenger and freight services will create about 500 new jobs in the first year of operation. This figure is included in the total of 1,500 for the operational phase of the project which I gave in my reply to my hon. Friend on 12 January.

### BR (Rolling Stock)

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate British Rail's expenditure on new rolling stock in the current year and for 1987-88.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** BR is investing substantially in new rolling stock. We have approved investment in 1,681 new passenger vehicles worth some £464 million (in 1986-87 prices) in the last three years alone. BR estimates that it will spent over £70 million on locomotives and rolling stock in 1986-87. The spread of expenditure between future years is a matter for BR.

### Dim-dip Lighting

**Mr. Roger King** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the proposed introduction of motor vehicle dim-dip lighting.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Regulations require dim-dip to be fitted to motor vehicles, except motor cycles and slow moving vehicles, first registered from 1 April 1987 and manufactured after 1 October 1986. Motorists will appreciate dim-dip's merit in preventing vehicles being driven on sidelamps and allowing them to be seen in well-lit streets without the risk of dazzling other road users.

### M25 (Traffic Flows)

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if for each section of the M25 and for the M25 as a whole he will give *(a)* the pre-construction traffic flow estimates and *(b)* the latest estimates for future traffic flows; if he will specify those sections of the M25 where traffic flows exceed 50,000 vehicles per day; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I refer my hon. Friend to the pre-construction estimates of traffic flows given to him in my answer of 25 February 1986, at columns 501-502. Traffic flows on those sections of the M25 equipped with automatic counting loops are listed below. Loops are being installed on the remaining sections this year.

Drivers will use only part of the M25 during their journey. Some journeys on the motorway are short. Aggregate figures for the M25 as a whole would not be significant.

The motorway has been fully open for three months. It is premature to estimate future traffic flows before traffic patterns have settled down. When measures to relieve congestion on the south-western sector of the motorway were announced on 28 August 1986, it was made clear that traffic would be monitored closely — which is why automatic counting loops are being installed on all sections—and that further studies would be undertaken as necessary.

Traffic flows for December 1986 are as follows:

*24 hour average daily flow*

| *Section (Junction numbers)* | *000s* |
|---|---|
| 1-2 | — |
| 2-3 | — |
| 3-4 | 48 |
| 4-5 | 53 |
| 5-6 | 68 |
| 6-7 | 75 |
| 7-8 | — |
| 8-9 | 75 |
| 9-10 | 78 |
| 10-11 | 94 |
| 11-12 | 106 |
| 12-13 | — |
| 13-14 | 117 |
| 14-15 | 108 |
| 15-16 | 95 |

| *Section (Junction numbers)* | *000s* |
|---|---|
| 16-17 | 92 |
| 17-18 | — |
| 18-19 | — |
| 19-20 | 87 |
| 20-21 | — |
| 21-22 | — |
| 22-23 | — |
| 23-24 | — |
| 24-25 | — |
| 25-26 | 74 |
| 26-27 | 72 |
| 27-28 | — |
| 28-29 | — |
| 29-30/31 | 68 |

## Cash Limits

**Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what changes he proposes to make to the cash limits on his votes and to his Department's running costs limit.

**Mr. Moore:** The cash limit for Class VIII, Vote 1 is to be reduced by £4 million from £894,197,000 to £890,197,000 and the cash limit for Class VIII, Vote 4 is to be reduced by £2,290,000 from £113,705,000 to £111,415,000, these reductions offsetting an increase of £6,129,000 from £175,242,000 to £181,371,000 on the cash limit for Class VIII, Vote 2, which is subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate.

Also subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the cash limit for Class VIII, Vote 5 is to be increased by £2,711,000 from £194,011,000 to £196,722,000. The increase will be offset by savings on Class VIII, Vote 3 and will not therefore add to the planning total of public expenditure.

Running costs of the Department of Transport on Class VIII, Vote 2 have been increased by £2,129,000 and on Class VIII, Vote 4 have been decreased by £2,290,000, reducing the running costs limit by £161,000, from £286,504,000 to £286,343,000. This £161,000 will be transferred to Customs and Excise's running cost limit to cover the cost of an origins and destinations survey which it is undertaking on behalf of the Department of Transport.

## SCOTLAND

### Teachers' Salaries

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a table in the *Official Report* showing the cost of teachers' salaries in Scotland as a proportion of total expenditure on education in each year since 1978-79 and the amount spent by local education authorities on books and equipment over the same period at 1985-86 prices.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is shown in the table, which has been compiled from local authority financial returns. The figures refer to nursery, primary, secondary and special schools.

| *Teachers' salaries as a proportion of net expenditure on education*[1] | | *Expenditure on books and equipment at 1985-86 prices* [2,3] *(£000)* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Year* | *Percentage* | *Text and library books* | *Educational tools, equipment and materials* |
| 1978-79 | 60·79 | 11,501 | n/a |
| 1979-80 | 60·45 | 11,448 | n/a |
| 1980-81 | 62·25 | 9,489 | n/a |
| 1981-82 | 61·38 | 9,068 | n/a/ |
| 1982-83 | 60·64 | 8,626 | 17,860 |
| 1933-84 | 60·26 | 10,522 | 15,246 |
| 1984-85 | 59·85 | 10,176 | 16,924 |

[1] The salary costs used in calculating the above table include employers' National Insurance and superannuation contributions.

[2] Before 1982-83 expenditure on educational tools, equipment and materials was not separately identified in local authority financial returns.

[3] The cash terms for each year have been repriced to 1985-86 prices using the gross domestic product (market prices) deflator.

### One-parent Families

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has about the number of children in *(a)* Greenock and Port Glasgow, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Scotland resident with a one-parent family.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The 1981 census showed that the numbers of children in households consisting of one adult and one or more children under 16 were as follows:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* the localities of Greenock and Port Glasgow | 1,361 |
| *(b)* Strathclyde | 34,693 |
| *(c)* Scotland | 70,666 |

The information at *(b)* is contained in volume 1, table 38 of the 1981 census report for Strathclyde region and that at *(c)* in volume 1, table 38 of the 1981 census Scottish summary report, copies of which are in the Library.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has as to the number of households in Greenock and Port Glasgow which are one-parent families; and if he is able to disaggregate the figures to show how many of them are (i) divorced mothers, (ii) separated mothers, (iii) unmarried mothers, (iv) divorced fathers and (v) widowed mothers.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The 1981 census showed that in the localities of Greenock and Port Glasgow there were 719 households containing one adult and one or more children under 16. Of the adults, 87 were male and 632 were female. There are no figures readily available by marital status.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will indicate the number of one-parent families in Greenock and Port Glasgow in *(a)* 1980, *(b)* 1981, *(c)* 1982, *(d)* 1983, *(e)* 1984 and *(f)* 1985 where the head of the household was unemployed.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The 1981 census showed that in the localities of Greenock and Port Glagow there were 79 households consisting of one adult and one or more children aged under 16, in which the adult, though economically active, was out of employment the week before the census. There are no figures available for the other years.

### Fishing Industry

**Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he is considering any amendment to the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John MacKay:** My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to amend the Act. I have indicated in the past that I expect to review the operation of the Inshore Fishing (Prohibition of Fishing and Fishing Methods) (Scotland) Order 1985 once it has had two or three years in which to prove itself.

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the long-term effects of the EEC common fisheries policy on the Scottish fishing industry; what measures he is taking to restore confidence to the industry; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The Scottish fishing industry has performed extremely well since the settlement of the common fisheries policy in 1983. Total fish landings in Scotland in 1982 were worth around £149 million, and this had risen to £215 million by 1985. The industry's performance was even better in 1986, with landings provisionally estimated at around £234 million. The confidence of the industry is reflected in the number of new vessels being built or on order. Although there will be some problems in 1987 because of the need to conserve white fish stocks, I believe that the common fisheries policy will continue to provide the basis for a healthy and prosperous fishing industry in Scotland.

### Land Use

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will review land use in Scotland with particular reference to rural areas; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** The Government's principal objective on rural land use remains that of supporting the economic and social base of the communities concerned, while having regard to the claims of other legitimate countryside users.

### Surplus Food (Distribution)

**Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement outlining the arrangements he has made to distribute the proposed EEC food aid to those in need in Scotland.

**Mr. John MacKay:** I refer the hon. Member to the replies given by my right hon. Friend on 30 January to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar).

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish details of his plans to release food from European Economic Community intervention food stores within Dundee and Tayside; what charity organisations will be involved in its distribution and what criteria will be used in deciding to whom such foods will be distributed.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The following charitable organisations have agreed to co-operate in arranging the distribution of free food in Scotland:

Salvation Army
Women's Royal Voluntary Service
Age Concern Scotland
Royal British Legion Scotland
Help the Aged
British Red Cross
Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility
Catholic Social Care Commission

Food will be released, so far as possible, from stores conveniently located for the charities' distribution work. It is to be given to needy people whose resources have been further stretched by the recent extremely cold weather.

### Kymmene-Stromberg Paper Mill

**Mr. Dewar** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects the Kymmene-Stromberg paper mill at Irvine to become fully operational; how many permanent *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time jobs it will provide; and over what time scale those jobs will become available.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The Kymmene Stromberg paper mill at Irvine is expected to come into operation during 1989 and to be employing around 430 full-time people by the end of that year. When fully operational in 1991 the mill is expected to employ 480 people full-time. No part-time employment is envisaged. The building of the plant will also provide a boost for the local construction industry providing at present over 1,000 jobs.

### Building Regulations

**Mr. Martin** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a list of all organisations and companies that responded to his Department's consultation paper of October 1986 on the Scottish building regulations; how many organisations and companies were in favour of the proposal to exclude section 'N' dealing with electrical installation work; and how many were against.

**Mr. Ancram:** Copies of all responses are available for inspection on a public file held in St. Andrew's House library. Not all of these can be classified simply as endorsing or opposing the deletion of part 'N' from the regulations. However, some 18 expressed clear views against its removal and seven in favour.

On balance, having taken account of the opinions of the consultees and of the views of the Building Standards Advisory Committee, I have decided to retain this statutory safeguard.

### Scottish Development Agency

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will update his answer of 6 March 1986, *Official Report*, column *251*, to show at 1986 prices Government expenditure on the Scottish Development Agency in each year since the agency was established; and what is his estimate for each year until 1988.

**Mr. Lang:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Development Area Status

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now examine proposals for the Banff and Buchan constituency to be restored to full development area status; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to review the assisted area status of Banff and Buchan. The present assested area structure was established only two years ago after a comprehensive review of regional policy and the assisted area map. In the interest of maintaining stability in regional incentives, the Government have concluded that it is too early for changes to be made to the present structure.

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will reconsider the restoration of development area status to the Grampian region; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans to reconsider the assisted area status of Grampian region.

The present assisted area structure was established only two years ago after a comprehensive review of regional policy and the assisted area map. In the interests of maintaining stability in regional incentives, the Government have concluded that it is too early for changes to be made to the present structure.

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the extent his responsibilities for the designation of, or the restoration to, development area status in Scotland.

**Mr. Lang:** Assisted areas in Great Britain are designated by order made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. Decisions on the coverage of the assisted area map and the designation of individual areas are taken in consultation with other relevant Ministers, including my right hon. and learned Friend the Secretary of State for Scotland. Questions and representations about assisted areas in Scotland are dealt with by the Scottish Office.

### Banff and Buchan (Employment)

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate future employment trends in the Banff and Buchan constituency; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** The outlook for employment in the Banff and Buchan constituency, as elsewhere, is dependent upon continued economic growth and pay restraint. I am aware that unemployment in the constituency has risen relatively rapidly over the past year. In part this reflects reductions in oil-related employment. However, I note that the overall unemployment rate in each of the three travel-to-work areas in the constituency remains below the Scottish average.

### Dalgety Foods Limited

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on his discussions with Dalgety Foods Limited on the proposal to close its potato crisp factory at Broxburn, West Lothian, on 31 July.

**Mr. Lang:** Following the announcement of the intention to close the factory at Broxburn, my officals immediately contacted the senior management of Golden Wonder Limited. I understand that it is the company's view that, in order to ensure the long-term survival of its crisp manufacturing business, it had to increase the efficiency of its production. After consideration of a number of options, it concluded that this would best be achieved by closure of the factories at Broxburn and Long Buckby in Northamptonshire.

The decision is a matter for the commercial judgment of the company. However, I share the concern that has been expressed about the impact of this closure on the Broxburn community and my officials would be ready to consider assistance for any viable use for the facility.

### Student Support

**Mr. Henderson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement about levels of student allowances and parental contributions for session 1987-88.

**Mr. John MacKay:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Sir B. Rhys Williams) on Friday 29 January 1987.

### Teaching Staff (Joint Negotiating Committee)

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has ever issued an order under section 14(1), subsection 91(2) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1981; whether he has ever issued an order under section 14(1), subsection 92(3) of the Education (Scotland) Act; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John MacKay:** An order was made under subsection 91(2) in November 1981 prescribing the numbers representing teaching staff, education authorities and the Secretary of State on the newly established Scottish Joint Negotiating Committee for Teaching Staff in School Education. The 1981 order remains in force. Under subsection 92(3) the Secretary of State has no power to make an order but he does from time to time appoint officials to represent him on the committee.

### Butter and Cereals Prices

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current average market price for *(a)* butter and *(b)* butter and *(c)* cereals per tonne.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Average Scottish farm gate prices per tonne for beef and cereals for the month of December 1986 were as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| Beef | 1,619·57 |
| Wheat | 112·89 |
| Barley | 115·57 |
| Oats | 119·69 |

No corresponding figure is available for butter, but the Scottish Milk Marketing Board selling price of the butter constituent of milk sold for butter manufacture in the same month was the equivalent of £1,574 per tonne.

### Intervention Storage Costs

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the average annual cost of storing the following foodstuffs per tonne in European Economic Countries intervention foodstores: beef, butter and cereals, respectively.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Figures are not available for storage costs incurred in other member states. For the United Kingdom, the average cost per annum for storing beef is £310 per tonne (bone-in) and £141 per tonne (boneless). The equivalent costs for butter and cereals are £81·50 per tonne and £12·50 per tonne respectively.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Deutschmark

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his estimate of the increase in cost to the European Economic Community budget of the decision not to revalue the deutschmark for the purposes of the common agricultural policy; and what effect this will have on (i) the United Kingdom contribution to the European Economic Community budget and (ii) trade between the United Kingdom and West Germany.

**Mr. Brooke:** As part of the 1984 CAP price fixing agreement, the Agriculture Council agreed to an immediate and substantial revaluation of the deutschmark for purposes of the common agricultural policy and that the remaining positive monetary gap would be removed not later than the 1987 price fixing. We expect the Commission to bring forward proposals to that effect shortly.

### Tobacco

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was raised from tobacco taxes in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Lawson:** It is estimated that £5,540 million was raised in 1986 from the excise duties and value-added tax on tobacco products.

### Value Added Tax

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his answer of 19 December 1986, *Official Report*, column 742, on the consultation document "VAT Input Tax: Origin and Scope of the Right to Deduct", if he will state, in relation to each of the categories of traders in each group making supplies listed in schedule 6 of the Value-Added Tax Act 1983, how much of the £300 million given in the parliamentary answer he expects to recover; and if he will give figures for the years 1979-80 to 1985-86 of the amount claimed by each of the categories of traders in each group in schedule 6 as a result of their exempt or partially exempt status.

**Mr. Brooke:** The ability of a VAT registered business or group to recover input tax can depend upon many factors and an individual business can have dealings in any number of the categories in Schedule 6 of the Value Added Tax Act 1983. I regret that the information is not available to make the apportionment which the hon. Member requests.

### Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions

**Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much will be deducted in income tax and national insurance contributions taken together from *(a)* a single person and *(b)* a married couple who earn £100, £150, £200, £250 and £300 per week respectively; and what percentage of gross income do the combined payments represent in each case.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

### Fishing Vessels (Capital Allowances)

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will seek to amend the provisions of the Finance Act 1984 with a view to restoring to fishing vessel owners the right to claim 100 per cent. first year capital allowances on their vessels; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will meet representatives of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation to discuss the impact of the provisions of the Finance Act 1984 insofar as it relates to first year capital allowances on fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will review the impact on investment in the Scottish fishing industry of the withdrawal of first year capital allowances on fishing vessels as a result of the provisions of the Finance Act 1984; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what representations he has received from the Scottish fishing industry in relation to capital allowances for fishing vessels under the Finance Act 1984; what action he proposes to take; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

### Hospitals (Funding)

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is Her Majesty's Government's policy in relation to the geographical inequalities in the funding of National Health Service hospital provision in the constituent parts of the United Kingdom.

**Mr. MacGregor:** The Ministers responsible seek to give equal access to health care in their countries for those in equal need.

### EC Budget

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer by how much in pounds million the European Economic Community budget was altered during the British Presidency.

**Mr. Brooke:** At the beginning of the United Kingdom Presidency the Community budget was the subject of a legal dispute. Following the ruling of the European Court of Justice on 4 July that the budget procedure was incomplete, an agreed budget was adopted on 10 July containing expenditure totalling £21,853 million. Full details are given in the statement on the 1986 Community Budget Council, Cmnd. 9907. This budget was not amended during the remainder of the British Presidency.

The budget procedure for 1987 was not complete at the end of the United Kingdom Presidency since the Parliament voted to exceed the maximum rate of increase for non-obligatory expenditure as laid down under the treaty. The Council of Ministers was not prepared to agree to this.

### Channel Tunnel (Customs and Excise)

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many meetings have taken place between the French and United Kingdom authorities responsible for Customs and Excise examination on future Channel tunnel traffic;

(2) whether French Customs and Excise officials will examine passenger luggage on trains using the Channel fixed link on the train; and if he will make a statement;

(3) under what circumstances there will be mutual inspection of passenger luggage by United Kingdom Customs and Excise officials at Frethune and by French customs officials at Ashford.

**Mr. Brooke:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Benefits

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will give the latest estimates of the average revenue gain which accrues to the Exchequer when *(a)* a person claiming benefit gains paid work and *(b)* a person not claiming benefit gains paid work, giving a gross figure and indicating the amount due to the tax gained, national insurance contributions gained, reductions in benefit expenditure and any other relevant factors.

**Mr. MacGregor** [*pursuant to his reply,* 29 January 1987]: It is not possible to estimate the revenue forgone in either case.

### Customs Staff (Dundee)

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many customs staff are employed at Dundee; and if he is satisfied that their numbers are adequate to deal with increased activity at the port of Dundee.

**Mr. Brooke** [*pursuant to his reply,* 30 January 1987]: For operational reasons it is not policy to disclose the numbers of customs staff employed at specific locations.

The staffing at Dundee is regularly reviewed and an assessment made of the risks having regard to variations in traffic. The fixed staff are supported by mobile teams and specialist staff who are organised on a regional basis.

## THE ARTS

### Royal Opera house

**Mr. Fisher** asked the Minister for the Arts who are the signatories to the Royal Opera House trust deed.

**Mr. Luce:** The signatories were the chairman and secretary-general of the Arts Council, and the director and secretary of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden Limited.

**Mr. Fisher** asked the Minister for the Arts whether any alterations have been made to the trust deed on the land acquired in Covent garden by Her Majesty's Government for the Royal Opera House since 1974.

**Mr. Luce:** I would refer the hon. Member to my reply to a question by the hon. Member for Moray (Mr. Pollock) on 18 December 1986 at columns 627-629. A memorandum of agreement between the Arts Council and the Royal Opera house Covent Garden Limited dated 5 December 1985 varied their respective entitlements under the original trust deed so that the Royal Opera House should have the first claim on the revenues and proceeds of sale of the part of the site which was developed for commercial purposes.

**Mr. Fisher** asked the Minister for the Arts whether he has any plans to seek alterations to the trust deed on the land acquired in Covent garden by Her Majesty's Government for the Royal Opera House in 1974.

**Mr. Luce:** No.

### Victoria and Albert Museum

**Mr. Frank Field** asked the Minister for the Arts if, pursuant to the answer given to the hon. Member for Birkenhead on museum collections not on show to the public of 26 January, *Official Report,* column 76, he will list similar information for the Victoria and Albert museum.

**Mr. Luce:** Due to the great variety of objects in the Victoria and Albert museum's collections, it is not possible to give a simple answer to this question.

All objects are available for viewing by the public including those that for conservation reasons cannot be constantly on display in public galleries—for example, light-sensitive works.

The percentage on show ranges from 95 per cent. for ceramics to only 5 per cent. for the light-sensitive objects.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### Benefits

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what special exercises geared specifically to providing more advice and information to elderly people for the purpose of ensuring that they are made aware of benefits to which they might be entitled were mounted in 1985-86 by the Department of Health and Social Security local offices at Stockton, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Redcar and Eston.

**Mr. Lyell:** In 1985-86 the mobile publicity officer based at the Department's Stockton local office gave 120 talks, displays and surgeries on benefits' advice and information in the Stockton, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Redcar, Eston, South Durham and North Yorkshire areas. Of these 47 were directed specifically at the elderly, 42 others were aimed at professional groups—for example, home helps, social workers — in frequent contact with the elderly. The regional information officer talked to five parish councils about subjects of concern to the elderly —for example, exceptionally severe weather—and staff from three local offices in the area gave 10 talks to retirement clubs.

The regional information officer also made 52 broadcasts and the mobile publicity officer held 21 exhibitions in the community covering the whole range of benefits' advice and information.

These initiatives complemented the normal flow of advice to the elderly through local offices, the Freefone service, leaflets, posters and order book notes.

**Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give details of the total number of recipients of housing benefit for 1979 and each subsequent year;

(2) if he will state the total number of recipients of housing benefit for each year from 1979 up to the present date.

**Mr. Lyell:** I regret that the information is not available in the precise form requested. The table combines information from different sources before and after the introduction of housing benefit in 1982-83.

*Average number of recipients (Great Britain)*

*(thousands)*

| *Year* | *Rent rebates* | *Rent allowances* | *Rate rebates*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 1,205 | 220 | 3,065 |
| 1980-81 | 1,330 | 240 | 3,350 |
| 1981-82 | 1,590 | 250 | 3,700 |
| 1982-83[1] | 3,050 | 260 | 5,320 |
| 1983-84 | 3,780 | 1,020 | 7,020 |
| 1984-85 | 3,790 | 1,120 | 7,220 |
| 1985-86 | 3,860 | 1,160 | 7,270 |
| 1986-87[3] | 3,745 | 1,190 | 7,120 |

[1] Figures for 1982-83 include those local authority tenants receiving housing assistance in supplementary benefit who in November 1982 were included in the partial start of the housing benefits scheme.

[2] Most recipients of rent rebates-allowances also receive rate rebates. Rate rebate recipients include owner occupiers.

[3] Estimates for 1986-87 are provisional and are subject to revision. Estimates for earlier years may be subject to minor revision.

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make available guidance given to local offices of his Department as to what cases are suitable and what cases are not suitable for referral to HQ sB3C for consideration of Secretary of State discretion under the Supplementary Benefit (Requirement) Regulations, schedule 2A paragraph 54)(m) and also the guidance that HQ sB3C uses in determining which cases qualify and which cases do not qualify for Secretary of State discretion under that same regulation.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to my predecessor's replies to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood) on 26 June 1986 at column *291* and on 12 February 1986 at columns *488-89*.

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many recipients of supplementary benefit in Wales in *(a)* 1980, *(b)* 1983 and *(c)* 1986 were one-parent families.

**Mr. Lyell:** The information is as follows:

*Number of lone-parent recipients*

*(thousands)*

| *Year* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 19 |
| 1983 | 27 |
| 1984[1] | 28 |

[1] Latest available date.

*Source:* Annual statistical inquiries.

**Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state the value in real terms, both in absolute figures and as a percentage, of retirement and other state pensions and all other welfare and national insurance benefits and allowances paid in November 1979 compared with those paid in November 1986; and if he will also indicate the actual figure for each benefit in each year.

**Mr. Major:** The information requested is shown in the table for the major social security benefits for November 1979 and July 1986, the date of the last benefit uprating.

*Benefit rates: Increases in real terms*

| *Benefit* | *A* *November 1979 actual* | *B* *November 1979 at July 1986 prices* | *C* *July 1986 actual* | *D* *Percentage increase (C over B)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. *Retirement pension* | | | | |
| single | 23·30 | 37·71 | 38·70 | 2·6 |
| couple | 37·30 | 60·37 | 61·95 | 2·6 |
| 2. *Non-contributory over-80s pension* | | | | |
| single | 14·00 | 22·65 | 23·25 | 2·6 |
| couple | 22·40 | 36·24 | 37·15 | 2·5 |
| 3. *Widows' Benefits* | | | | |
| Widow's allowance | 32·60 | 52·75 | 54·20 | 2·7 |
| Widowed mother's allowance | 23·30 | 37·71 | 38·70 | 2·6 |
| Widow's pension | 23·30 | 37·71 | 38·70 | 2·6 |
| Age-related widow's pension —30 per cent.—93 per cent. of rate of widow's pension | | | | |
| 4. *Invalidity pension* | | | | |
| single | 23·30 | 37·71 | 38·70 | 2·6 |
| couple | 37·30 | 60·37 | 61·95 | 2·6 |
| 5. *Unemployment benefit* | | | | |
| single | 18·50 | 29·93 | 30·80 | 2·9 |
| couple | 29·95 | 48·46 | 49·80 | 2·8 |
| 6. *Sickness benefit* | | | | |
| single | 18·50 | 29·93 | 29·45 | −1·6 |
| couple | 29·95 | 48·46 | 47·65 | −1·7 |
| 7. *Maternity allowance* | | | | |
| single | 18·50 | 29·93 | 29·45 | −1·6 |
| couple | 29·95 | 48·46 | 47·65 | −1·7 |
| Maternity grant (lump sum) | 25·00 | 40·45 | 25·00 | −38·2 |

| *Benefit* | *A*<br>*November 1979 actual* | *B*<br>*November 1979 at July 1986 prices* | *C*<br>*July 1986 actual* | *D*<br>*Percentage increase (C over B)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. *Severe disablement allowance*[1] | | | | |
| single | 14·00 | 22·65 | 23·25 | 2·6 |
| couple | 22·40 | 36·24 | 37·15 | 2·5 |
| 9. *Attendance allowance* | | | | |
| higher rate | 18·60 | 30·09 | 30·95 | 2·9 |
| lower rate | 12·40 | 20·06 | 20·65 | 2·9 |
| 10. *Invalid care allowance* | | | | |
| single | 14·00 | 22·65 | 23·25 | 2·6 |
| couple | 22·40 | 36·24 | 37·15 | 2·5 |
| 11. *Mobility allowance* | 12·00 | 19·42 | 21·65 | 11·5 |
| 12. *Child benefit* | [2]4·00 | 7·18 | 7·10 | −1·1 |
| 13. *One parent benefit* | 2·50 | 4·49 | 4·60 | 2·4 |
| 14. *Family income supplement* | | | | |
| Prescribed amount[3] for one-child family, where child is aged | | | | |
| under 11 | 56·00 | 90·61 | 98·60 | 8·8 |
| 11-15 | | | 99·60 | 9·9 |
| 16 and over | | | 100·60 | 11·0 |
| Maximum amount for one-child family, where child is aged | | | | |
| under 11 | 13·50 | 21·84 | 25·30 | 15·8 |
| 11-15 | | | 25·80 | 18·1 |
| 16 and over | | | 26·30 | 20·4 |
| 15. *Supplementary benefit*[4] | | | | |
| Long-terms rates | | | | |
| single (householder) | 23·70 | 36·64 | 37·90 | 3·4 |
| couple (householder) | 37·65 | 58·21 | 60·65 | 4·2 |
| non-householder 18 or over | 18·95 | 29·30 | 30·35 | 3·6 |
| non-householder 16-17 | 11·25 | 17·39 | 23·25 | 33·7 |
| Ordinary rates | | | | |
| single (householder) | 18·30 | 28·29 | 29·80 | 5·3 |
| couple (householder) | 29·70 | 45·92 | 48·40 | 5·4 |
| non-householder 18 or over | 14·65 | 22·65 | 23·85 | 5·3 |
| non-householder 16-17 | 11·25 | 17·39 | 18·40 | 5·8 |
| Dependent Children[5] | | | | |
| over 18 | 14·65 | 22·65 | 23·85 | 5·3 |
| 16-17 | 11·25 | 17·39 | 18·40 | 5·8 |
| 11-15 | 7·70/9·35 | 11·90/14·45 | 15·30 | 28·6/5·9 |
| under 11 | 5·20/6·25 | 8·04/ 9·66 | 10·20 | 26·9/5·6 |
| 16. *Industrial disablement pension* | | | | |
| over 18 | 38·00 | 61·48 | 63·20 | 2·8 |
| under 18 | 23·30 | 37·71 | 38·70 | 2·6 |
| reduced rates—10 per cent.—90 per cent. of basic rate | | | | |
| Maximum disablement gratuity (lump sum) | 2,530·00 | 4,093·54 | 4,200·00 | 2·6 |
| Unemployability supplement | 23·30 | 37·71 | 38·70 | 2·6 |
| Maximum special hardship allowance | 15·20 | 24·59 | 25·28 | 2·8 |
| Industrial death benefit | | | | |
| initial rate | 32·60 | 52·75 | 54·20 | 2·7 |
| higher permanent rate | 23·85 | 38·59 | 39·25 | 1·7 |
| lower permanent rate | 6·99 | 11·31 | 11·61 | 2·6 |
| Constant attendance allowance | | | | |

| Benefit | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | November 1979 actual | November 1979 at July 1986 prices | July 1986 actual | Percentage increase (C over B) |
| normal maximum rate | 15·20 | 24·59 | 25·30 | 2·9 |
| part-time rate | 7·60 | 12·30 | 12·65 | 2·8 |
| intermediate rate | 22·80 | 36·89 | 37·95 | 2·9 |
| exceptional rate | 30·40 | 49·19 | 50·60 | 2·9 |
| 17. Housing benefit[6] | | | | |
| Needs allowance | | | | |
| single | 31·05 | n/a | 48·10 | n/a |
| couple/single parent | 45·55 | n/a | 70·85 | n/a |
| single handicapped | 34·60 | n/a | 53·65 | n/a |
| couple—one handicapped | 49·10 | n/a | 76·40 | n/a |
| couple—both handicapped | 50·80 | n/a | 79·00 | n/a |
| pensioner addition | n/a | n/a | 0·85 | n/a |
| dependent child addition | 7·70 | n/a | 14·60 | n/a |
| 18. *Child dependency addition* | | | | |
| with short-term benefits[7] | 1·70 | 2·75 | — | — |
| with long-term benefits | 7·10 | 11·49 | 8·05 | −29·9 |
| 19. Death grant (lump sum) | 30·00 | 48·54 | 30·00 | −38·2 |

*Notes:* All benefits are weekly rates unless otherwise stated.

[1] Replaced non-contributory invalidity pension and housewives' non-contributory invalidity pension.

[2] April 1979 rates.

[3] These are *not* rates of benefit.

[4] Real values calculated using retail price index less housing costs, the normal index for this benefit.

[5] Supplementary benefit scale rates for children were restructured in 1980. Previously there had been separate scale rates for children aged 11-12 and under 5.

[6] Housing benefit was fully introduced only in April 1983. The 1979 figures are the most closely comparable figures from the previous rent and rates rebate scheme. They are not rates of benefit. The way in which the housing benefit needs allowances are constructed means that a real-terms comparison of their 1979 and 1986 levels using the RPI is inappropriate. A full explanation of the reasons for this is given in the reply to the hon. Member for Pontefract and Castleford, on 4 December 1986, at columns *729-730*.

[7] Child dependency additions with short-term benefits were abolished in 1984.

**Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will state the total number of supplementary benefit recipients and the total cost for each year since 1979.

**Mr. Lyell:** The information is as follows:

| *Supplementary benefit recipients* | | *Cost* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Date* | *Number (thousands)* | *Financial Year* | *£ (millions)* |
| November 1979 | 2,850 | 1979-80 | 2,436 |
| December 1980 | 3,120 | 1980-81 | 3,172 |
| December 1981 | 3,720 | 1981-82 | 4,840 |
| December 1982 | 4,270 | 1982-83 | 6,261 |
| December 1983 | 4,350 | 1983-84 | [2]5,592 |
| December 1984[1] | 4,610 | 1984-85 | 6,472 |
| | | 1985-86 | 7,512 |

[1] Latest available date.

[2] Reduction due to introduction of housing benefit.

*Sources:* Annual statistical enquiries.
Government expenditure White Papers.

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many chronically sick and disabled people are claiming unemployment benefit.

**Mr. Major:** To be entitled to unemployment benefit a person must, among other things, be capable of work. A chronically sick person should therefore receive incapacity benefits rather than unemployment benefit as should a disabled person whose disability makes him incapable of work. Statistics are not held on the number of disabled people who are capable of work and claiming unemployment benefit.

## Benefit Fraud Teams

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will place in the Library copies of any guidelines issued to members of the benefit fraud teams operating within the Department of Health and Social Security local offices.

**Mr. Lyell:** Instructions and guidance for the investigation of suspected social security fraud are set out in the fraud investigators' guide. It contains details of departmental policy on fraud and operational instructions and guidance for investigators, including those who are members of benefit fraud teams.

It is not in the public interest to publish the contents of this guide.

**Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish details of the numbers of benefit fraud teams both currently in existence and also planned; if he will define the local offices which form the geographical area for each team's work; if he will define the administrative location of each team; and if he will give details of the staff complement of each team.

**Mr. Lyell:** Thirty-one benefit fraud teams have been established nationally and there are no plans at present to increase this number. Each team operates within the boundaries of a management group of offices, providing support for the offices within that group. The teams are administered by their appropriate regional office, though for practical purposes they may be based within the group of offices they assist. Teams usually comprise 16 or 17 officers.

### Health Authorities (Staff Qualifications)

**Mr. Rowe** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many members of *(a)* regional health authorities and *(b)* district health authorities have professional qualifications in (i) nursing, (ii) medicine, (iii) dentistry, (iv) speech therapy and (v) physiotherapy.

**Mrs. Currie:** Each regional health authority and each district health authority includes a hospital consultant, a general medical practitioner and a nurse, midwife or health visitor. Other members may also have these or other professional qualifications but this would not necessarily be known to us.

### Organ Transplants

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what advice he is giving to doctors in relation to the screening of organ donors.

**Mrs. Currie:** In October 1985, at the Department's request, the United Kingdom transplant service advised all surgeons and physicians known to be concerned with renal, heart, liver and corneal transplantation and all laboratories who perform tissue typing for transplant recipients and donors that all donors should be tested for HTLV III antibody as they already were for hepatitits B. They also advised where this might be carried out. Separate guidance has also been issued about screening of semen and blood donors.

### Tobacco

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much was spent on research into cures for tobacco addiction in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mrs. Currie:** The Department is currently providing £70,000 per year for the purpose of running and monitoring the effectiveness of facilities at the Bethlem Royal hospital and the Maudsley hospital, London.

The main Government funded agency for carrying out biomedical research in the United Kingdom is the Medical Research Council, which receives its grant-in-aid from the Department of Education and Science. I understand that the council is funding research on additions including smoking.

Information on other research into cures for tobacco addiction is not held centrally.

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much was spent in the last calendar year for which figures are available on curing people addicted to tobacco smoking; and if he will give a breakdown of the figure.

**Mrs. Currie:** This information is not collected centrally.

### Drugs

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much was spent in the last calendar year for which figures are available on curing people addicted to drug taking; and if he will give a breakdown of that figure.

**Mrs. Currie:** £5 million has been made available to health authorities in England in the financial year 1986-87 specifically for the development of services for drug misusers. Grants totalling a further £5·2 million have been made to individual local projects. Information on amounts spent on services for drug misusers by health and local authorities from their normal allocations is not held centrally.

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many deaths were recorded as due to drug taking in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mrs. Currie:** The table shows the number of deaths registered in England and Wales in 1985, the latest available calendar year, where the underlying cause of death was stated as drug dependence or non-dependent abuse of drugs, excluding alcohol and tobacco.

*Number of deaths from drug abuse*
*England and Wales 1985*

| *Underlying cause* | | *Number* |
|---|---|---|
| [1]ICD 304 | Drug dependence | 127 |
| [1]ICD 305.2-305.9 | Non-dependent abuse of drugs (excluding alcohol and tobacco) | 52 |

[1] International Classification of Diseases 9th revision.

### Regional Health Authorities (Construction Expenditure)

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the expenditure on construction work to meet fire regulations by region for each of the last 10 years; and what expenditure is planned on this item, by region, for each of the next 10 years, as shown in the strategic plans by regional health authorities.

**Mrs. Currie:** Health authorities are required to comply with the general fire safety requirements of building regulations and, where appropriate, to hold fire certificates under the Fire Precautions Act 1971. They are also expected to comply with departmental fire precautions guidance. However, the costs of construction to meet these requirements are not separately identified in figures available to the Department.

### Basildon (Population Projections)

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has about the projected population of Basildon in the years 1990, 2000, and 2010.

**Mrs. Currie:** The official local authority projections produced by the Office of Population Census and Surveys are made for Essex as a whole and not for the individual districts.

### NHS (Health Hazards)

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will institute an immediate programme of education and training for senior and line management to help to identify and deal with hazards in the National Health Service;

(2) if he will advise all regional health authorities to submit to him, within the next six months, the cost implications of conforming with hygiene, hazard and pollution legislation;

(3) what steps he has taken to identify the extra costs to health authorities as a result of the abolition of Crown immunity;

(4) how much extra money is to be allocated to health authorities to meet their obligations when Crown immunity is abolished in their institutions;

(5) if he will give consideration to financial assistance to all health authorities which have transitional difficulties due to the abolition of Crown immunity.

**Mr. Newton:** Central guidance has been, for a number of years, that health authorities should establish working practices as if they were not immune from legal penalty. Complying with the requirements of sections 1 and 2 of the NHS (Amendment) Act 1986 should not, therefore, impose any new burdens on health authorities and we have no plans to allocate additional resources or seek reports on spending plans. Health authorities will themselves determine the need for any reordering of their priorities and the education and training requirements of their staff.

### NHS (Occupational Health and Safety)

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he proposes to take to ensure the adequate organisation and funding of an occupational health and safety service for the National Health Service which complies with the International Labour Organisation convention 161.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the right hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Nurses (Back Pain)

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will accept the recommendations of the report of the Robens Institute on back pain in nurses.

**Mr. Newton:** The report by the Robens Institute was circulated to general managers of health authorities on 20 August 1986, under cover of a letter DA(86)19, a copy of which is in the Library.

### Health Expenditure

**Mr. Key** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list total Government expenditure in real terms and in cash terms on provision for the elderly in each of the last 10 years.

(2) if he will list total Government expenditure in real terms and in cash terms on provision for the mentally handicapped in each of the last 10 years.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

### AIDS

**Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people have died with AIDS stated as a cause of death on the death certificate; what is his estimate of the total number of deaths where AIDS was a contributory factor but did not explicitly appear as such on the death certificate; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** There have been 220 deaths registered in England and Wales up to the end of 1986 where the cause of death AIDS or a similar term has appeared on the original death certifications.

We cannot make a sensible estimate of the number of deaths where HIV infection was a contributory factor but did not appear on the death certificate. However, by the end of December 1986, 285 deaths from AIDS in England and Wales had been reported to the Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre.

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what advice he has given to the prison staff and medical service and to special hospitals about the risk of the spread of HIV.

**Mr. Mellor:** I have been asked to reply.

Prison service management centrally, regionally and locally, has been active in disseminating to prison staff wide ranging information and advice in the form of operational guidelines, training programmes and specially convened meetings. Prison medical officers have also received advice on the medical management of cases and regular and detailed briefing on epidemiological and clinical matters. These measures will continue.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services has issued comprehensive guidance to the special hospitals. The guidance covers education, staff training and preventive measures, and advice on serotesting and patient and staff care. The guidance stresses the need for full information and counselling for staff and patients in relation to both the risk of transmission of HIV infection within the hospital and all aspects of serotesting, particularly the implications of a positive result. The Department of Health and Social Security is in touch with some centres about places for special hospital staff on courses in counselling skills. The hospitals will continue to receive relevant general guidance which is issued periodically by the DHSS and will be given further specific guidance if this is considered necessary.

### Irradiated Food

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to make a statement giving his response to the Burgen committee report on food irradiation.

**Mrs. Currie:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Basingstoke (Mr. Hunter) on 12 January at column *120*.

**Mr. Kennedy** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to increase the current level of research into the effects of the irradiation of food; if he has any plans to enhance the level of public awareness on this matter; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Supplementary Benefit

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims for supplementary benefit take more than 14 days before payment is made after first application in each social security office, what proportion of supplementary benefit claims this represents in each office, and what is the average number of weeks delay before supplementary benefit claims are met at each office.

**Mr. Lyell** [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 January 1987, c.*106-7*]: The number of claims for supplementary benefit which take more than 14 days to clear is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Details of the average time taken to deal with a fresh claim for supplementary benefit by each local social security office for the year up to and including 8 April 1986 have been placed in the Library.

### NHS Representatives (Business Interests)

**Mr. Ashton** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what rules govern the outside business interests of individuals either employed by the National Health Service or sitting as representatives on the various management boards; and whether their business interests have to be declared.

**Mr. Newton:** Members and employees of health authorities are subject to the Prevention of Corruption Acts in the same way as any others working in public service.

There are long standing instructions governing the conduct of members and employees in this respect and I am considering the issue of revised guidance.

Standing orders of health authorities require the declaration of any financial interest or relationship a member or employee may have with a manufacturer, supplier or contractor with whom the health authority may enter into a contractual relationship and any financial interest which may affect the authority's planning or policy decisions.

### Severe Weather Payments

**Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will extend the severe weather payment regulations to cover single women receiving supplementary pensions between the ages of 60 and 65 years; and if he will estimate the additional costs involved;

(2) if he will extend the severe weather payment regulations to cover single widows between the ages of 60 and 65 years; and if he will estimate the additional costs involved;

(3) if he will extend the severe weather payment regulations to cover assessment units with children under the age of five years; and if he will estimate the additional costs involved.

**Mr. Major:** Exceptionally cold weather payments have been targeted on those groups most at risk from the cold. No reliable estimate can be made of the cost of extending entitlement to other groups, since this will depend on how often, and in how many areas, a period of exceptionally cold weather is declared in any particular year, and on the number of claimants in those groups who have capital of less than £500 on the date of claim.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representations he has received about enabling neighbourhood energy action groups to insulate the homes of those receiving severe weather payments; and what reply he has given.

**Mr. Major:** "Neighbourhood Energy Action" wrote to me on 15 January 1987 asking me to consider using records of exceptionally cold weather payments to identify vulnerable people who may qualify for help with draughtproofing. I will be replying to its letter shortly.

**Sir Russell Johnston** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to reply to the letter sent to him by the hon. Member for Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber about exceptionally severe weather payments on 2 December 1986.

**Mr. Lyell:** I replied to the hon. Member on 29 January 1987.

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will instruct all his offices to accept telephone applications for severe weather payments; and if he will instruct each local office to write to pensioners and others on supplementary benefit informing them that they may be eligible for severe weather payments.

**Mr. Major:** The Department's local offices have already been instructed to accept claims for exceptionally cold weather payments by telephone.

Although there are nearly 5 million supplementary benefit recipients, it is estimated that only about 1·5 million of these will qualify for exceptionally cold weather payments. It is not, therefore, proposed to instruct local offices to write to all supplementary benefit recipients about the scheme. I am, however, satisfied that, in view of the widespread publicity in national and local newspapers and on local radio, all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that potential claimants are made aware of their entitlement.

### Breast Cancer Screening

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he expects to give his response to the Forrest committee report on breast cancer screening.

**Mrs. Currie:** The Government are urgently considering their responses and will make an announcement shortly.

### Meningitis

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the total number of diagnosed cases of meningitis which have occurred in each of the last three years; and how many of this number were found in the Eastern regional health authority area for each of these years.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### University College Hospital (Special Trustees)

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list the original endowments making up the funds administered by the special trustees for the University College hospital.

**Mrs. Currie:** Information of this sort is not held centrally. The nature and terms of the original endowments are confidential, and it is for the special trustees to decide whether they may be disclosed. The hon. Member may therefore wish to approach them himself.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he last checked that the special trustees for the University College hospital were disbursing funds in accordance with their trust instrument and the National Health Service Acts 1973 and 1977.

**Mrs. Currie:** The accounts of special trustees are examined each year by auditors appointed by my right hon. Friend under the provisions of the National Health Service Act 1977.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the special trustees for the University College hospital appointed by him under the National Health Service Act 1977 giving their occupations and qualifications together with the dates and periods of their appointments;

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the trust instrument of the special trustees for the University College hospital.

**Mrs. Currie:** The information requested is as follows:

| *Name and Qualifications* | *Occupation* | *Appointed to* |
|---|---|---|
| Dr. H Baderman BSc FRCP JP | Consultant | 31 March 1990 |
| Dr. P. M. Meadow MA PhD | Reader in Biochemistry | 31 March 1988 |
| Mr. J. J. Tobin MA LLB | Solicitor | 31 March 1988 |
| Dr. P Verrill MBBS FFARCS | Consultant Anaesthetist | 31 March 1990 |
| Mr. J. Whittley FCA (Chairman) | Chartered Accountant | 31 March 1990 |

A copy of the instrument of appointment has been placed in the Library.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the total value of funds currently held by the special trustees of the University College hospital.

**Mrs. Currie:** The annual accounts of the special trustees for 1985-86, the latest year available, show the total value of funds held on 31 March 1986 as £5,382,558.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what criteria must be applied by the special trustees for the University College hospital in disbursing funds.

**Mrs. Currie:** The powers of special trustees are prescribed in sections 90 to 96 of the National Health Service Act 1977, as amended by the Health Services Act 1980, but the detailed execution of their duties is governed by the statutes and common laws relating to trustees in general and charitable trustees in particular. These include the Trustee Act 1925, the Charities Act 1960, the Trustee Investments Act 1961, and associated case law.

### Primary Care

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures he has taken and what measures he proposes to take to reduce the geographical inequalities in the finance and provision of primary care.

**Mr. Newton:** The primary health care services comprise the family practitioner services and the community health services. Expenditure on the family practitioner services is not cash limited and resources are provided to meet demand. The level of resources devoted to community health services is a matter for regional health authorities and district health authorities whose overall financial allocations are determined so as to reduce, over time, geographical inequalities in health service provision relative to population need.

### Accident and Emergency Departments (Doctors' Posts)

**Mr. Randall** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps his Department is taking to fill vacant hospital doctor posts in accident and emergency departments (i) in the Hull royal infirmary and (ii) throughout the National Health Service.

**Mr. Newton:** Responsibility for the medical staffing of a particular hospital department lies with the local health authority. Information is not available centrally about vacant medical posts in accident and emergency departments although we are aware that some posts have been difficult to fill. We are keeping the position under review, but the underlying problem appears to be the imbalance in the hospital medical staffing structure which our proposals in "Hospital Medical Staffing—Achieving a Balance" are expected to correct. The number of doctors in post in England in the specialty of accident and emergency has increased by 16·5 per cent. since 1979—from 1,421 whole-time equivalents to 1,656 whole-time equivalents in 1986. The numbers in all medical specialties increased by 13 per cent. in the same period.

### Mortality

**Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for the Social Services what were the broad conclusions to be drawn from the "Occupational Mortality Decennial Supplement", published in July 1986; whether figures for mortality by social class will be given in the 1991 supplement; and in what document information about infant mortality by social class is published.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Adoptions

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is his policy with regard to transracial adoptions for children in the care of local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** In all decisions relating to the adoption of a child courts and adoption agencies, whether local authorities or voluntary societies, are required to give first consideration to the need to safeguard and promote that child's welfare throughout childhood and to take account of the child's wishes and feelings. Within this legal framework the choice of prospective adopters is the statutory responsibility of agencies and a matter of professional judgment. The child's needs arising from his ethnic, cultural and religious origins and identity are important factors in decisions about adoption placements and we welcome the efforts which are being made by statutory and voluntary agencies to recruit prospective adopters from ethnic minority groups.

### Artificial Limbs

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many primary fittings of limbs were carried out at artificial limb and appliance centres in each month since January 1985.

**Mr. Major:** The figures requested are not available.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many amputees were waiting for primary fittings in each month since 1985; and whether any amputations have been postponed as a result of the industrial dispute at J. E. Hanger.

**Mr. Major:** The figures requested are not available.

A decision on whether an amputation is to be carried out is made by the surgeon concerned. We are not aware of any postponement of an amputation on account of the J. E. Hanger industrial dispute.

### Perivale Hospital

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to the answer of 29 January, what is his estimate of the value of the Perivale hospital and its associated buildings, separate from the land attached to it; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Tuesday 3 February 1987*

## PRIME MINISTER

### Cold Weather Poverty

Q18. **Sir David Price** asked the Prime Minister whether, in the light of this winter's experience of exceptionally cold weather, she will review Her Majesty's Government's arrangements for mitigating the problems of cold weather poverty.

**The Prime Minister:** The Government already give substantial help with heating costs through the supplementary benefit scale rates and weekly heating additions.

The exceptionally cold weather payment scheme was amended from 26 January to provide help when the average temperature for an area falls to 0° Celsius or less over a fixed seven-day period. Future arrangements for extra help during periods of exceptionally cold weather will be considered in the light of this winter's experience.

### Rural Areas (Land Use)

Q118. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Prime Minister whether she is satisfied with the co-ordination of the various Departments studying alternative land use in rural areas.

**The Prime Minister:** Yes.

### State Security

Q180. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister when she first became aware that Sir Robert Armstrong had offered inaccurate evidence in the Wright case in Australia concerning the Attorney-General's alleged role in deciding whether to proceed against Mr. Chapman Pincher's book "Their Trade is Treachery", and if she will make a statement.

**Mr. Prime Minister:** It remains inappropriate to comment on matters at issue in the Peter Wright case in Australia.

### HMSO Publications (Distribution)

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Prime Minister if she will list in the *Official Report* those publications of Her Majesty's Stationery Office in respect of which the authorisation of persons or public bodies other than Government Ministers is required before copies may be sent to hon. and right hon. Members; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** A limited number of Her Majesty's Stationery Office publications are, on the instructions of the Home Office, issued only on production of a written authority signed by a senior officer in the police or a local authority. The publications concerned are as follows:

*Firearms forms*

| | |
|---|---|
| 2 | Firearm Certificate |
| 2A | Firearm Certificate Wallet |
| 4 | Permit to possess firearms or ammunition) |
| 5 | Removal of a firearm from or to a ship or signalling apparatus from or to an aircraft or aerodrome |
| 6A | Auctioneer's Permit (to sell firearms or ammunition |
| 9A Pt. 1 | Certificate of Registration of firearms' dealers |
| 9A Pt. 2 | Certificate of Registration of firearms' dealers |
| 12 | Authorisation to enter and inspect stock in hand of register (of firearms) |
| 16 | Shotgun Certificate |
| 16A | Shotgun Certificate—Welsh edition |
| 18 | Visitors' Shotgun Certificate |
| 19 | Permits to have shotguns in possession |
| 20 | Auctioneers' shotgun permits |

*Police Promotion Examinations manual*
3rd Edition — Amendment 1
3rd Edition — Amendment 2
3rd Edition — Amendment 3
3rd Edition — Amendment 4
3rd Edition — Amendment 5
3rd Edition — Amendment 6
Consolidated Edition 4 (3rd Edition + Amendments 1 to 6).

*Motor Vehicle Forms*
HO/RT1 — Duplicate pads of 30
HO/RT2 — Duplicate pads of 50
HO/RT4 — Log for Motor Vehicles

*Police National Computer Unit Forms*
PNC/C/352
PNC/C/353
PNC/C/354
PNC/C/356
PNC/W/374
PNC/R/451

*Training of Probationary Constables*
Student Lesson Notes:
Progress and monitoring Amendment 1
Progress and monitoring Consolidated Edition 1
Progress and Monitoring Amendment 2
Initial Course — Amendment 1
Initial Course — Amendment 2
Initial Course — Consolidated Edition
Initial Course — Amendment 3
Initial Course — Amendment 4

*House to House Collections Act*
Badge and Certificate
Certificate of Exemption

*Others*
Guidance to the Police Service on War Emergency Planning
Laboratory Aids to Criminal Investigation.

### Engagements

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Prime Minister, if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 3 February.

**Mr. Pike** asked the Prime Minister, if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 3 February.

**Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Prime Minister, if she will list her official engagements for Tuesday 3 February.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in this House, I shall be having further meetings later today.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Cigarettes (Imports)

**Mr. Pendry** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has about the extent and trend of subsidised imports of cigarettes; from which main countries they come; what information he has about the margin by which such imports undercut the price of domestically produced cigarettes; what representations he has received about the implications of these imports for the competitiveness and viability of the United Kingdom cigarette industry; and what action he proposes to take.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** Concern has been expressed by the United Kingdom cigarette manufacturing industry about the competitive impact of imports of cheap brands of cigarettes. According to estimates provided by the industry imports of cheap brands have risen from 0·1 billion in 1983 to 9·6 billion in 1986 of which about 90 per cent. come from the Federal Republic of Germany (including West Berlin). The 1986 import figure represents about 10 per cent. of United Kingdom cigarette consumption. The industry has estimated that these imports can undercut the retail prices of United Kingdom manufactured brands by up to 20p per packet of 20 cigarettes, particularly as a result of marginal costing policies pursued by foreign manufacturers. If it can be shown that the price differential is due to unfair subsidies the Government will take the matter up with the European Commission.

### Post Office (Consultants' Fees)

**Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has about spending by the Post Office on fees to outside consultants in the current year, in 1984-85 and 1985-86.

**Mr. Pattie:** The information I have relates to expenditure on consultancy in 1985-86 and is contained in paragraphs 6.76-6.77 of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on the Post Office's procurement activities (Cmnd. 9912), to which I refer my hon. Friend.

### Aircraft Manufacture

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made as to which aircraft manufacturers in Germany, France, Italy or Spain could manufacture the high-technology wings required for the A330 and A340 aircraft and of the high technology interchange which would result in air frame manufacture in collaboration between the MD11 manufacturers and Airbus Industrie; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Pattie:** No such assessments have been made. British Aerospace's application for launch-aid for its participation in the Airbus A330/A340 programme was submitted, and is being considered, on the basis that it would be manufacturing the high-technology wings for these aircraft. Airbus Industrie and McDonnell Douglas suspended last September their discussions on possible collaboration on the MD11 and the A330/A340, and have not since resumed them.

### Boeing Aircraft Corporation

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the direct or indirect support given to the Boeing Aircraft Corporation by the United States Government through research contracts, whether military, space or civil, by ordinary or special tax relief, or by any other means; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Pattie:** The American competitors of Airbus, of which Boeing is one, continue to derive benefit from a wide range of Government support, including public contracts and publicly funded programmes. According to consultancy estimates available to the Government last year, the combined aeronautics R and D expenditure by the United States Department of Defence, NASA and the Department of Transportation over the last 15 years exceeds $47.5 billion. In addition, tax concessions associated with the switch to foreign sales corporations are estimated to have benefited Boeing by $397 million. My Department keeps the position under close review.

### Airbus

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will give the cumulative order and optional orders for each of the following Airbus aircraft: A300, A310, A320, A330 and A340 for the following years: *(a)* 1980, *(b)* 1981, *(c)* 1982, *(d)* 1983, *(e)* 1984, *(f)* 1985, and *(g)* 1986 and the situation as at 1 February; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Pattie:** The information requested is as follows:

| | *A300* | | *A310* | | *A320* | | *A330* | | *A340* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Orders* | *Options* | *Orders* | *Options* | *Orders* | *Options* | *Orders* | *Options* | *Orders* | *Options* |
| 1980 | 222 | 91 | 68 | 64 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 1981 | 232 | 69 | 64 | 66 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 1982 | 240 | 19 | 66 | 72 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 1983 | 240 | 6 | 72 | 61 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 1984 | 251 | — | 83 | — | 51 | 45 | — | — | — | — |
| 1985 | 275 | — | 112 | — | 90 | 113 | — | — | — | — |
| 1986 | 282 | — | 129 | — | 236 | 151 | — | — | — | — |
| 1 February 1987 | 282 | — | 144 | — | 261 | 176 | — | — | — | — |

*Notes:*

(1) The recording of options for mature programmes (A300, A310) was discontinued in 1984.

(2) Two airlines have publicly announced their intentions to place firm orders for 22 A340s and options for a further 15 of these aircraft.

The sales record of the Airbus programmes, and in particular that achieved for the A320 before its first flight has been made, is one of which the European aerospace industry, including the many United Kingdom companies participating in these programmes, can justly be proud.

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he is now in a position to give an estimate of the profit his Department is likely to make from its investment in the A320 Airbus; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Pattie:** Based on information supplied by British Aerospace, my Department expects to obtain its agreed rate of return on launch-aid provided to British Aerospace for the Airbus A320. However, the details remain commercially confidential.

### British Sugar Corporation

**Mr. Wiggin** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when and in what form he expects to announce his decision on the recommendations of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission relating to the acquisition of British Sugar by Tate and Lyle or Gruppo Feruzzi.

**Mr. Howard:** My right hon. Friend will make an announcement as soon as is practicable.

### United States (Trade Relations)

**Mr. Carttiss** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the settlement of the Community's trade dispute with the United States of America.

**Mr. Channon:** I wish to explain the agreement by the Government to the adoption of a Council decision on the conclusion of negotiations with the United States before it was possible for the Select Committee on European Legislation to scrutinise it.

On 30 January the Council of Ministers approved the terms of an agreement negotiated between the Commission and the United States to settle the protracted dispute between the two parties over the terms of Community enlargement. The main elements of the agreement provide for the Community, subject to the transitional arrangements applying to Portugal and Spain in their treaties of accession, to restore in respect of the enlarged Community the tariff rates previously bound in GATT in relation to the Community of Ten. Reduced levy quotas will be opened by the Community for the period 1 January 1987 to 31 December 1990 for imports into Spain of at least 2 million tonnes of corn and 300,000 tonnes of sorghum. Community tariffs on a series of other products will be reduced autonomously for the same period of four years. The arrangements will be reviewed in July 1990.

In view of the urgency of concluding the agreement by 30 January I decided not to withhold agreement to decisions until the Select Committee had had the opportunity to consider it. I regret that it was not possible for the normal scrutiny procedures to be followed in this case.

The Government warmly welcome this agreement, which is the means of averting an exchange of retaliatory and counter-retaliatory trade measures between the United States and the Community which would have had very serious consequences for EC-US trade, for the multilateral trading system and for progress in the new round of multilateral trade negotiations which is now beginning in GATT.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Police (Firearms)

**Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a statement on the conclusion of the working group formed to review the procedures relating to the use of firearms by the police; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** On 26 February 1986 I announced that, in response to the concerns which have been expressed about the use of firearms by the police, a working group was to be formed, under Home Office chairmanship, to examine all aspects of the policy and procedures relating to the issue to and use by the police of firearms in England and Wales. I undertook to advise the House of the working group's conclusions.

The working party comprised representatives of the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Police Complaints Authority, the Police Federation and the Superintendents' Association as well as Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the Home Office. They have carried out a thorough review and have made a number of recommendations. In response to my invitation to police authorities and other organisations and individuals to submit their views for the working group's consideration, 12 such submissions were received. I should like to thank those whose contributions did much to inform the working group's deliberations.

I have today placed in the Library a complete list of the working group's recommendations and conclusions, together with its membership and terms of reference, a list of those who submitted evidence and the text of the revised Home Office guidelines for the police on the issue and use of firearms. I am asking all chief officers to accept and implement the working group's recommendations. I know that many have already done so or are in the process of doing so.

The working group's report is thoughtful and detailed. Because of the thoroughness with which the review was conducted the report necessarily contains a wealth of operational and tactical detail. It would not be sensible for all such information, which could be of considerable value in the wrong hands, to be publicly aired. The same considerations apply to te "Manual of Guidance on Police Use of Firearms" which is produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers and which is often referred to in the working group's report and in its conclusions and recommendations.

The working group looked closely at such matters as the selection and training of police officers for firearms duties; the criteria for authorisation to issue firearms for particular operations; the relevant instructions and guidelines; the planning, briefing for and supervision of armed operations; and the choice of weapons and ammunition.

The practical effect of carrying out the working group's recommendations will be to enhance the standards of professionalism and restraint exercised by the police in this difficult and dangerous area of police operations.

It recommends, for example, that there should be an increased operational role for specialist firearms teams, the members of which should be on 24-hour called to attend operations requiring the issue of firearms. The officers in these teams should not be dedicated solely to firearms duties, but those duties should take priority over their other police work. Nor should they be the only armed police response available within forces. These teams should be in addition to an equitable distribution of authorised firearms officers throughout the force area. The aim is to have fewer authorised firearms officers and a greater concentration of training and the development of tactical and operational skills on them.

As regards the selection of officers for firearms training, the working group recommends procedures which will probe carefully an officer's temperament, maturity and stability as well as his or her physical suitability for such training. Those who are selected, trained and authorised to carry firearms should be assessed both continuously and annually for their continued suitability for armed duties.

The working group does not recommend any changes in the length of initial and refresher training courses. Both of these have recently been increased. But it advises that developments in judgment training systems should be monitored so that suitable systems can be introduced into the training programmes. This will lead to a greater emphasis in training on the need for trainees to decide, under conditions of stress, whether to shoot, as distinct from how to shoot.

The working group also stresses the importance to armed operations for supervisory officers to be trained in the right tactics as well as in supervision itself, and for them to consult properly trained tactical advisers.

The working group also recommends that senior officers who may be called upon to authorise the issue of firearms for particular operations, as well as those responsible for planning armed operations and for briefing the personnel to be involved, should be provided with aides-memoire and checklists to ensure that no important point is overlooked. These documents will require specifically that the option of proceeding without the issue of firearms should be considered before authorisation for their issue is given.

In order to maintain the standards of firearms training throughout England and Wales and to ensure that best practice is spread the working group recommends a system of inspections of firearms training both at the national firearms training centres and within individual forces.

Contrary to what is often reported, neither the drawing nor the actual use of firearms by police officers in England and Wales has increased in recent years. Neither the Government nor the police have any desire to shift away from the traditional emphasis on unarmed policing. But public concern on the matters covered by the report is understandable, and I share it. This has been a valuable exercise. The outcome will be better protection for the public and police officers alike on those rare occasions when police officers have to carry guns, and the even rarer occasions on which they are required to use them.

### Life Sentences

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list, for each year of the past five years, how many people were serving life sentences in Her Majesty's prisons.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information requested is published annually in "Prison Statistics England and Wales" (table 1.4 of the latest issue for 1985, Cmnd. 9903). Information for 1986 is not yet available.

### Wandsworth Prison

**Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the number of staff and their rank employed at Wandsworth prison on 19 January.

**Mr. Mellor:** Staff employed at Wandsworth prison on 19 January were as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Governor I | 1 |
| Governor III | 1 |
| Governor IV | 2 |
| Assistant Governor | 4 |
| Chief Officer I | |
| (Discipline) | 1 |
| (Hospital) | 1 |
| (Works) | 1 |
| Chief Officer II | |
| (Discipline) | 2 |
| (Works) | 1 |
| (Caterer) | 1 |
| Principal Officer | |
| (Discipline) | 23 |
| (Works) | 5 |
| (PE) | 1 |
| (Hospital) | 2 |
| (Instructor) | 2 |
| (Caterer) | 1 |
| Senior Officer | |
| (Discipline) | 30 |
| (Works) | 3 |
| (PE) | 1 |
| Senior Officer | |
| (Hospital) | 5 |
| (Instructor) | 3 |
| Prison Officer | |
| (Discipline) | 271 |
| (Works) | 8 |
| (Dog Handler) | 16 |
| (PE) | 3 |
| (Hospital) | 24 |
| (Instructor) | 8 |
| (Caterer) | 6 |
| Medical Officers | 4 |
| Pharmacists | 2 |
| Chaplains | 5 |
| Education Officers | 2 |
| Civilian Instructors | 16 |
| Senior Executive Officer | 1 |
| Higher Executive Officer | 2 |
| Higher P&T Officer | 1 |
| Executive Officers | 7 |
| Administration Assistants | 12 |
| Typing Manager | 1 |
| Personal Secretary | 1 |
| Typists | 8 |
| Telephonists | 2 |
| Administration Officers | 29 |
| Civilian Drivers | 3 |
| Storemen | 8 |
| Cleaners | 4 |
| Industrial Craftsmen | 24 |

**Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement as to the proposals for the open land opposite Wandsworth prison and adjoining Alma terrace, Wandsworth, as to the proposed use of this land.

**Mr. Mellor:** As has been explained previously to the hon. Member in reply to his question of 28 October 1985, at column 344, this land is being used to provide temporary car parking facilities while building works within the establishment are in progress, and it is likely to continue to be needed for these purposes in the immediate future. We are aware that, in the longer term, the local authority wishes to see this land used to provide open space, and, when we no longer need the land for car parking, we shall discuss with the authority its future use.

**Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the present number of car parking spaces available for staff working at Wandsworth prison.

**Mr. Mellor:** 82 car parking spaces are at present available for staff at Wandsworth prison, including 19 spaces provided on a temporary basis on open land adjacent to the prison.

### Drug Abuse

**Mr. Nicholls** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further proposals he has for dealing with drug abuse.

**Mr. Mellor:** Recent developments were set out in my reply to my hon. Friend on 20 November, at column 302. Since then the Council of Europe Pompidou Group of Ministers, at its meeting in London last month, has agreed a wide-ranging new plan of action; the Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 has come fully into effect, and we have announced a £2·1 million scheme for drug-related teacher training in 1987-88, provision of an extra £1 million in 1987-88 to enable drug misuse agencies to reach more drug misusers and provide more counselling on AIDS.

### Crime (Basildon)

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many murders, rapes, armed robberies, and burglaries there were in Basildon in 1986.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information which is collected centrally is of notifiable offences recorded in the Essex police force area, figures for which are published annually in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, Supplementary Tables" (tables S.3.1 and S.3.1(A) of volume 3 of the issue for 1985).

### CRE Code of Practice

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Metropolitan police will implement the Commission for Racial Equality code of practice on employment.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the Metropolitan police are implementing the CRE code of practice on employment.

### Wapping (Public Houses)

**Mr. Leighton** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to why public houses in Wapping were raided by the police on the evening of 24 January.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis tells me there were no such raids.

### Racial Incidents

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis explaining why no consultation took place with relevant external organisations in respect of territorial operations instruction I/86, "Best Practice Guidelines for Recording and Monitoring Racial Incidents" between February and July 1986 and as to what management measures are being taken to enforce and monitor the implementation of the minimum requirements and to encourage and monitor initiatives taken in line with the best practice options set out in appendix A.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I am assured by the Commissioner that consultations with community organisations following the issue of the Metropolitan police best practice guidelines for recording and monitoring racial incidents did take place during the period concerned and have done so since. Given the need for the guidelines to be implemented in a way which takes proper account of local circumstances, implementation is a matter for local decision in consultation with the community.

### Victim Examination Suites

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many victim examination suites have been opened in cities with a population of 50,000 or more persons since 1985.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The provision of facilities for the examination of victims is a matter for individual chief officers of police. No information is held centrally.

### Rape

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Home Office has updated the circular concerning policies regarding rape since 1985.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Yes, in Home Office circular 69/1986, issued on 15 October 1986, which provided guidance to the police on their treatment of victims of violence against women.

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list by police force area the number of male and female officers trained for the interviewing and examining of rape victims.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** This is a matter for each chief officer of police. Information is not held centrally.

### Payments to Consultants

**Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 12 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *253*, whether he will break down the expenditure on payments to consultants between management and computer consultants.

**Mr. Hurd:** Records do not distinguish between management and computer consultants and this information is not therefore readily available.

### Winson Green Prison

**Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons have served prison sentences of less that one week at Winson Green prison, Birmingham since 31 January 1986.

**Mr. Mellor:** According to the records held centrally, about 80 persons were initially received into Birmingham prison in the period 1 February to 30 November 1986 to serve sentences of less than one week.

### BBC

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the chairman of the British Broadcasting Corporation governors; and what subjects were discussed.

**Mr. Mellor:** My right hon. Friend last met Mr. Hussey on 13 January to discuss the future arrangements for financing the BBC, a matter on which he made an announcement the following day.

### Opinion Polls

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to establish a code of conduct to cover the methodology and publication of political opinion polls and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No.

## DEFENCE

### Royal Naval Vessels (Collisions)

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if any Royal Navy vessel has been in collision with a Russian vessel in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement;

(2) on how many occasions in the last 12 months Royal Navy submarines have been involved in collisions with other seagoing vessels.

**Mr. Stanley:** No such collisions have occurred.

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how extensive was the damage to the stern of a Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarine, recently involved in a collision and repaired in Portsmouth;

(2) which nuclear-powered submarines have undergone repairs in Portsmouth in the last 12 months, and on what dates.

**Mr. Stanley:** No Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarines have been repaired at Portsmouth in the last 12 months.

## TRANSPORT

### Ports of London and Liverpool (Assistance)

**Mr. Hill** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if any form of financial assistance is currently being given to the ports of *(a)* London or *(b)* Liverpool.

**Mr. Moore:** Government grant to the Port of London Authority for the severance of non-registered employees ceased on 31 December 1986. So did grant for the special severance scheme for registered dock workers in the port of London in November and December. The payment of grant for severances in the port of Liverpool (and of grants in respect of any further severances in London) awaits a decision by the European Commission on whether they are compatible with the treaty of Rome provisions on state a ids. The Commission sought a justification for these grants only in late December of last year, although it has been aware of their existence for a number of years. Under the treaty of Rome we are debarred from continuing to make these grants until the Commission has made its decision.

This includes the current severance offer in Liverpool: I understand the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company has today told the unions that the terms of the severance offer stand but its implementation must await the outcome of the Commission's deliberation.

### Coaches (Speed Limiters)

**Mr. Roger King** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what penalties will be incurred by operators of coaches fitted with mandatory speed limiting devices when infringements take place caused by incorrect installation and or setting up; what discussions have taken place with the police about the allowable error in vehicle speed before prosecution; how he proposes to check such devices; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We propose to amend the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations so as to make compulsory the fitting of speed limiters to coaches. The maximum penalty for a breach of these regulations is currently a fine of £1,000. The regulations will be based on a British Standard, which will include clauses on accuracy of calibration. We shall be consulting interested parties, including the police, on a draft regulation and on arrangements for the frequency of calibration and checking.

### Bonby Lodge (Junction)

**Mr. Michael Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether it is the intention of his Department to provide resources to the Humberside county council to enable it to construct a grade separated junction at Bonby Lodge on the A15(T) with the B1206.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We have written to Humberside county council asking for a report on its proposals for this junction. Decisions will be taken on receipt of the report.

### Shipping Statistics

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will publish the most recent projection available to his Department of shipping using United Kingdom ports in the year 2000 in terms both of the number of ships and the values of cargoes at current prices in the following categories; *(a)* under 10,000 dwt, *(b)* 10,000-39,999 dwt, *(c)* 40-79,999 dwt and *(d)* over 80,000 dwt;

(2) if he will publish the most recent projection available to his Department for the trend between the current year and the year 2000 of shipping using United Kingdom ports in each of the following categories: *(a)* containers, *(b)* bulk cargoes and *(c)* cereal cargoes.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** As far as I am aware no one has made any such projections.

### Cycle Lanes

**Mr. Raynsford** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what evidence his Department has about the impact of the experimental cycle lanes in the Fulham road in the boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, and Kensington and Chelsea, on accidents to cyclists;

(2) what representations he has received concerning the exercise of powers by him under part II of schedule 5 to the Local Government Act 1985 in respect of the decision of Kensington and Chelsea council to terminate the experimental cycle lanes on the Fulham road; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We have a copy of the accident data included in the report on the cycle lanes considered by the royal borough of Kensington and Chelsea's town planning committee on 29 September 1986. My right hon. Friend's approval to its decision not to make permanent the cycle lanes when the experimental order lapsed is not required under the provisions of part II of schedule 5 to the Local Government Act 1985.

### Bus Lanes (Westminster)

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Transport, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Leicester, East of 19 January, *Official Report*, column *382*, whether he has any further information from Westminster city council concerning the future of the three bus lanes around the Houses of Parliament.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Yes. It has notified my right hon. Friend, under the requirements of the Local Government Act 1985, schedule 5, paragraph 5, of its intention to make permanent the two bus lanes on Millbank.

### Severn Crossing

**Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress regarding the proposed second Severn crossing.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The scheme for the second Severn crossing has some complex and unusual engineering, environmental, financing, contractual and legislative features which the consultants' study report and the announcement on 24 July by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales have shown. It is necessary to examine these aspects very fully before proceeding with the detailed development of the scheme. This is currently in hand.

As mentioned in the announcement, we wish to be in a position to provide the second Severn crossing by the mid-1990s if traffic growth warrants it by then and Parliament so decides. This is still the Government's aim.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Parliamentary Groups (Grants)

**Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the amount of grant his Department is making during the current year to *(a)* the British-United States of America Parliamentary Group; *(b)* the British-France Parliamentary Group; and *(c)* the British-Soviet Parliamentary Group.

**Mr. Eggar:** The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is not making a grant to any of these parliamentary groups during the current financial year.

### Vietnamese Refugees

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what countries have been approached with regard to permanent resettlement of Hong Kong's Vietnamese refugees; what was the number of refugees resettled in the periods 1983-84, 1984-85, 1985-86 and 1986-87 to date; and what agreements have been reached by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of the Hong Kong Government with respect to its refugee problem.

**Mrs. Chalker:** Since 1979 we have approached a very wide range of countries to seek their assistance in resettling refugees from Hong Kong. In response to our approaches and those of UNHCR the following countries have resettled Vietnamese refugees from Hong Kong:

Argentina
Australia
Austria
Belgium
Bermuda
Canada
China
Denmark
Finland
France (incl. New Caledonia)
German Federal Republic
Greece
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Ivory Coast
Japan
Luxembourg
Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
USA
Vanuatu

We have not, however, entered into formal agreements with any Government or organisation with respect to the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong. Substantial numbers of refugees have been resettled in the United Kingdom and in Hong Kong itself.

In 1983, 4,200 Vietnamese refugees were resettled from Hong Kong. The figures for 1984, 1985 and 1986 were 3,694, 3,953 and 3,816 respectively. We remain in close contact with resettlement countries and with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees as part of our continuing efforts to identify a durable solution to this sad problem.

### Departmental Expenditure Limits

**Mr. Hanley** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will propose to make any changes in the Foreign and Commonwealth cash limits and running costs limit for 1986-87.

**Mr. Eggar:** Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimates, the cash limit for Class II, Vote 1, (Overseas Representation) will be increased by £6,310,000 from £393,260,000 to £399,570,000 and the running costs limit by £6,225,000 from £369,300,000 to £375,525,000; the cash limit for

Class II, Vote 2 (Other External Relations) will be increased by £4,061,000 from £99,557,000 to £103,618,000 and the cash limit for Class II, Vote 4 (British Council) will be increased by £2,060,000 from £50,694,000 to £52,754,000. In all cases the increases take account of unavoidable increased costs. These include those associated with the introduction of a visa regime for certain Asian and African countries net of offsetting savings including reduced fuel and rent costs and increases in visa fees receipts.

Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate for Class II, Vote 3 (BBC External Broadcasting and Monitoring) the cash limit for this Vote will be reduced by £3,403,000 from £113,280,000 to £109,877,000. The cash limit increase of £1,643,000 announced by the Chief Secretary on 22 July 1986 under the end year flexibility scheme has been surrendered as well as a further reduction reflected by a declared underspend of £1,760,000.

The net increases reflecting these changes will be charged to the reserve.

### EC (Palestinian Imports)

**Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action has been taken to monitor the results of recent European Economic Community policies to encourage the flow of Palestinian products into the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I have been asked to reply.

I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

### EEC (Spanish Accession)

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out the proposals and concessions agreed with the United States of America following its complaint under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade rules on the Spanish accession to the European Economic Community; and what will be the estimated reduction in European Economic Community revenue in consequence over the anticipated period of the settlement.

**Mr. Alan Clark:** I have been asked to reply.

I will reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Research Councils (Fees)

**Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what information he has about spending by the research councils on fees to outside consultants in the current year, in 1984-85 and 1985-86.

**Mr. Walden:** The information is as follows:

| *Financial year* | *£'000* |
|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 2,775·5 |
| 1985-86 | 3,132·4 |
| 1986-87[1] | 2,210·9 |

[1] period up to 31 December 1986.

### Burnham Grammar School

**Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science how many letters he has received about the proposed closure of Burnham grammar school; and how many of these have been returned to the sender.

**Mr. Dunn:** Section 12 of the Education Act 1980 requires local education authorities to publish notices of their intention to cease to maintain a school and provides for objections to such proposals to be made to the education authority in the two months following publication. Of 65 letters so far received by my right hon. Friend about the proposed closure of Burnham grammar school, 17 were objections made within the statutory period of notice: these were returned to the senders with an explanatory letter recommending them to address their objections to the local education authority. Copies of the correspondence were retained.

In considering the authority's proposals for Burnham school my right hon. Friend will take careful account of the points made by all objectors.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### EC (Food Sales)

**Mr. Terlezki** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he has had recent discussions with the Foreign Ministers of European countries about the sale of European Comission surplus wheat, beef, butter and wine to the Soviet Union; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Gummer:** I have spoken to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. Sales of surplus agricultural products to the USSR have not been discussed recently in the Council of Ministers.

### EC (Food Surpluses)

**Mr. Ian Mills** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will seek to extend the distribution of European Economic Community food surplus to those in receipt of housing benefit.

**Mr. Gummer:** No. The Community legislation provides for distribution of food to the most needy, whereas I am advised by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Social Services that housing benefit can be received at levels of income equal to or exceeding average earnings.

### Co-responsibility Levy

**Sir Anthony Grant** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will report on the operation of the co-responsibility levy in the United Kingdom; what proportion of the levy has been deducted by merchants from growers; and how much has been collected by the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce to date.

**Mr. Gummer:** The levy is payable on all grain that is bought into intervention, exported to non-community countries or which undergoes processing, except that processed by a producer on his holding for use as animal feed on that holding.

The EC regulations require that the levy be passed back to the cereals producer and shown in the documentation relating to each transaction through the marketing chain. How this is done is for the participants to individual transactions to agree. Information on the proportion deducted by merchants from growers is not available.

Up to 31 December 1986 the Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce had collected £6·95 million.

### Food Production

**Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in which areas of food production the United Kingdom is self-sufficient; and what proportion these represent of total production.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Data on supply, usage and self-sufficiency (production as a percentage of total new supply) in the United Kingdom for individual food commodities may be found in tables 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18 and 19 of the "Annual Review of Agriculture 1987" (Cm. 67), which is available in the Library of the House.

### Intervention Stocks

**Mr. Ashdown** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will indicate the average length of time from an application for removal from intervention stores and the carrying out of this request from *(a)* July 1986, *(b)* December 1986 and *(c)* the mean average for the year 1986.

**Mr. Gummer:** Purchasers of intervention commodities must take responsibility for the goods within the period specified in the regulations, but may choose to leave them in store at their own expense. Calculations of the average period before removal would entail checking the date of each discharge from store, numbering about 123,000 during the 1986 calendar year, and would involve disproportionate cost.

### Sludge (Sea Dumping)

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what representations Her Majesty's Government have received and from what sources regarding the United Kingdom's continued practice of dumping sludge at sea.

**Mr. Gummer:** A wide variety of points of view have been expressed from time to time on this matter, both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. I set out the position of Her Majesty's Government when the House debated a proposal from the European Commission on dumping at sea on 4 February 1986, at columns 245-59.

### Pesticides

**Mr. John Carlisle** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will indicate the time taken to process the registration for pesticides under the Control of Pesticide regulations 1986; and what was the equivalent period before they were introduced.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** An accurate comparison cannot be made because we are still dealing with applications received before the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986. However, during the five years before the entry into force of these regulations processing time varied from three weeks to 10 months depending on the type of application. The current estimates for the processing time of applications received since October 1986 is between three and 11 months.

**Mr. John Carlisle** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he will consider appointing additional staff at his Department's Harpenden station to cope with the implementation of the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** We have already increased by 10 the complement of staff at Harpenden laboratory to deal both with the implementation of the new pesticides controls and with an increasing work load. Nine of these additional officers are now in post. Unfortunately, the effect of these increases has been modified by the departure of two experienced senior scientists to the agrochemical industry. The need for further increases is currently under review.

### Chemical Imports

**Mr. John Carlisle** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) whether he has received evidence of chemicals being imported into the United Kingdom whose labelling contravenes existing copyright regulations;

(2) what action he intends to take against agricultural chemical imports that have been repackaged and substituted for identical products approved by registration.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** My Department has received and carefully considered reports that certain imported pesticide products may be being sold or supplied contrary to the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986. No similar reports about breaches of copyright have been received.

### Anti-fouling Compounds

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will introduce a statutory ban on the use of TBT anti-fouling compounds on salmon netting.

**Mr. Gummer:** I am asking the Advisory Committee on Pesticides for advice as to what measures should be taken under part III of the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985 to regulate the use of these and other TBT anti-fouling compounds. The Government will decide on the action to be taken in the light of its advice.

### Food Sales

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent sales of food have been negotiated in relation to the provision of butter and beef to the Soviet Union; and what is the sale price in terms of pence per pound.

**Mr. Gummer:** I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

### EC (National Budgets)

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what estimate he has made of the net additional cost to the national budget expenditure of member states of the European Economic Community in 1987 in consequence of the Council decisions of 16 December on milk and related issues.

**Mr. Jopling:** It is estimated that the decisions on milk quotas and beef will reduce United Kingdom public expenditure in the financial year 1987-88, including the United Kingdom's net contribution to the Community budget, by about £60 million. The programme for disposing of butter stocks with delayed reimbursement of losses to member states is estimated to have a neutral effect on United Kingdom expenditure, as the delay in reimbursement will be balanced by a saving in contributions to the Community budget. The effects in other member states will depend on their shares of disposals and contributions to the budget.

### North Sea (Report)

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish the United Kingdom's most recent quality status report on the North sea before the ministerial conference in November 1987.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I have been asked to reply.

The United Kingdom's contribution to the quality status report being prepared for the North sea conference will not be in final form until the summer of this year. I would then expect it to be made publicly available.

## WALES

### Job Losses

87. **Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales, what is the net loss of jobs in manufacturing in the Principality of Wales since June 1979.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** Information on the net change in employment levels is best obtained from the quarterly estimates of the number of employees in employment compiled by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Employment and published regularly in *Employment Gazette*. These estimates indicate that between June 1979 and June 1986 (the latest available figures) there was a decrease of 112,000 in the number of employees in employment in the manufacturing sector in Wales.

### EC (Regional Development Fund)

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the projects in Wales that have received financial assistance under article 15 of the European regional development fund.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** No projects in Wales have received financial assistance under article 15 of the European regional development fund regulation.

### Buses

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will place in the Library details of the research project into deregulation of bus services that is being carried out jointly by the Department of Transport and the Welsh Office in west Glamorgan and parts of Powys and Clwyd.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The west Glamorgan study is being undertaken by the Cranfield Institute of Technology. In the Powys and Clwyd study areas (the districts of Colwyn, Rhuddlan, Glyndwr and Montgomery) the study is being undertaken by Saint David's university college, Lampeter. Both research projects are due for completion in December 1987, though they are extendable.

Copies of the job specification applicable to both research projects have been placed in the Library of the House.

### Caravan Sites Act

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the source of funds for the setting up of sites under the Caravan Sites Act; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Grants may be payable by the Secretary of State under section 70 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 for approved capital expenditure incurred by any local authority under section 24 of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 in respect of caravan sites provided for the accommodation of gipsies.

### Killan Fach Farm, Dunvant

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will indicate the current position regarding the planning appeal on land at Killan Fach farm, Dunvant.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The decision on this appeal is expected to be announced this month.

### Road Accidents

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the total number of cyclists *(a)* killed in road accidents and *(b)* injured in road accidents in Wales in 1985.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The information requested is as follows:

*Wales 1985*

| *Class of road user* | *Severity of casualty* Killed | *Injured* |
|---|---|---|
| Pedal cyclists | 6 | 827 |
| Mopeds | 1 | 345 |
| Motor scooters | — | 121 |
| Motor cycles[1] | 36 | 1,674 |

[1] Includes motorcycle combinations.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of child pedestrians who were *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured on their way to or from school in Wales in 1985.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** During 1985 there were five child pedestrians aged 16 or under killed, and 288 injured on their way to or from school in Wales.

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of children aged 16 years or under who were *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured while riding pedal cycles in Wales in 1985.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** During 1985, one child aged 16 years or under was killed and 455 were injured while riding pedal cycles in Wales.

## ENERGY

### Nuclear Accidents

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury on 21 January, *Official Report*, column *569*, mentioning formal registers of accidents, incidents and untoward occurrences at licensed nuclear installations, what is the name of such registers; what are the instructions governing whether an entry is made in such a register; for what period such registers are retained in use; and what relevant copies or extracts are held either by his Department or by Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury on 21 January, *Official Report*, column *569*, mentioning formal registers of accidents, incidents and untoward occurrences at licensed nuclear installations, what is his policy with regard to openness of information in relation to such registers of events; if he will review the requirements imposed on licensees in order to make copies of such registers available for public inspection; if he will hold discussions with licensees on making such registers available without a review of licence requirements; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** The arrangements for reporting and publishing incidents at civil nuclear installations are currently under review. An announcement will be made shortly.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Unemployment Costs

**Mr. Parry** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the latest estimate of the anual net cost to the Exchequer of an unemployed person.

**Mr. MacGregor:** The latest estimate of the cost of unemployment and supplementary benefit paid to the unemployed in 1986-87 is £6·16 billion, or about £2,150 per head. In addition, it is estimated that £1·26 billion will be paid in housing benefit, a benefit which can continue to be paid if the recipient finds employment. It is not possible to estimate the revenue forgone.

### European Community (Budget)

**Mr. Gould** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the United Kingdom's value added tax share of the allocated European Economic Community Budget in 1986 and in 1987 and the corresponding receipt.

**Mr. Brooke:** The United Kingdom's VAT share of the 1986 allocated budget — that is what our VAT contributions would have been it all our contributions were in the form of VAT and we did not pay traditional own resources, but before allowing for VAT adjustments, the United Kingdom VAT abatement and contributions by other member states to our abatement — can be estimated, on the basis of Commission figures, at 6,199 mecu. The Commission has estimated our receipts from the allocated budget in 1986 at 3,724 mecu. The Community has not yet adopted a budget for 1987; estimates of our 1987 VAT share of the budget and our allocated receipts from it are not therefore available.

**Mr. Gould** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing for each year since 1980 the amount by which United Kingdom gross contribution to the European Economic Community budget exceeds receipts, excluding refunds and rebates, together with (i) the average amount of rebate or refund applicable to that year and (ii) the average amount of refund owed but not paid in respect of previous years.

**Mr. Brooke:** The figures requested are as follows:

*£ million*

| | *gross contributions less receipts other than refunds* | *refunds-abatements*[1] | *unpaid refund-abatement outstanding*[2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1980 | 804 | 799 | — |
| 1981 | 1,090 | 1,011 | 8 |
| 1982 | 1,624 | 807 | — |
| 1983 | 1,454 | 589 | — |
| 1984 | 1,184 | 605 | 61 |
| 1985 | 2,035 | [3]1,262 | 439 |
| 1986 | n/a | [4]1,125 | [5]— |

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[1] This column shows refunds and abatements against the year to which they relate, not the year in which they are paid. Figures for 1984 onwards are abatements.

[2] Refunds and abatements should be paid a year in arrears. Figures in this column are the amounts outstanding at the end of the year in which they should have been paid.

[3] This figure may need to be revised in due course.

[4] This is the 1,633 mecu abatement in the 1987 draft budget. It will need to be revised upwards in due course.

[5] At 31 December 1986 there was no unpaid refund or abatement outstanding, but any correction to the abatement in respect of 1985 would still enter the accounts.

### Small Businesses

**Mr. Walters** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what representations he has received from small businesses about relief from value added tax on bad debts; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when he intends to implement the proposals in the customs and excise consultation document on value added tax on small businesses, particularly the cash accounting option for suppliers with a turnover of up to £100,000.

**Mr. Brooke:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

### Cash limit

**Dr. Twinn** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there will be any changes to the cash limit on the Treasury's 1986-87 vote for economic and financial administration.

**Mr. Lawson:** The cash limit for the Economic and Financial Administration (Her Majesty's Treasury) Vote (Class XIX, Vote 12) will be reduced by £745,000 from £45,985,000 to £45,240,000. This reduction comprises:

—£245,000 as a result of the transfer of responsibility for the Review Board for Government Contracts to the Secretary of State for Defence with effect from 1 July 1986.

—£500,000 as an offsetting saving against an increase on the non-cash limited United Kingdom Coinage Vote (Class XIX, Vote 13) for which a Spring Supplementary Estimate will be sought to provide for extra payments to the Royal Mint as a result of higher than expected demand for 1 and 2p coins. A further £1,000,000 will be found to offset the Coinage Vote from the non-voted provision for parliamentary election expenses.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Royal Ulster Constabulary

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what proportion of the members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary are Catholics; and if he will make a statement on recruitment policies;

(2) how many senior positions in the Royal Ulster Constabulary are held by Catholics.

**Mr. Scott:** The religious denominations of members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary are not recorded. It is, however, believed that approximately one tenth of the force (including its full-time reserve) are Roman Catholic. The Royal Ulster Constabulary will continue to try to attract suitably qualified recruits from all parts of the community.

Promotions within the RUC are made on merit alone.

### Orders in Council

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the measures introduced by his Department since 1979 that have been enacted by Order in Council; and which have not been debated in the House of Commons.

**Mr. Tom King:** In the period 1 January 1979 to 31 December 1986, 25 such Orders in Council were made under the Northern Ireland Act 1974 without debate. All were subject to negative resolution under the provisions of a related Great Britain Act to which the Northern Ireland Order in Council corresponds. The purpose of including such provisions in Great Britain Bills is to enable Parliament to debate the provisions of the Bill in the knowledge that corresponding provisions will be applied in Northern Ireland by Order in Council.

A further five Orders in Council were made subject to negative resolution under other legislation, without debate.

A list of these Orders in Council is as follows:

Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1979
Bees (Northern Ireland) Order 1980
Social Security (No. 2) (Northern Ireland) Order 1980
Social Security (Contributions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1981
Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1981
Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1981
Crown Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order 1981
Road Traffic (Seat Belts) (Northern Ireland) Order 1982
Social Security (Contributions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1982
Forfeiture (Northern Ireland) Order 1982
Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1982
Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1982
Disabled Persons (Northern Ireland) Order 1982
Transfer of Functions Order (Legal Aid & Maintenance Orders) (Northern Ireland) Order 1982
Northern Ireland Assembly (Pay & Allowances) Order 1982
Road Traffic (Seat Belts) (Northern Ireland) Order 1983
Companies (Beneficial Interests) (Northern Ireland) Order 1983
Social Security Adjudications (Northern Ireland) Order 1983
Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 1983
Northern Ireland Assembly (Pay & Allowances) Order 1984
Friendly Societies (Northern Ireland) Order 1985
Milk (Cessation of Production) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985
Rent (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985
Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1985
Child Abduction (Northern Ireland) Order 1985
Sex Discrimination (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1985
Redundancy Rebates (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
Health & Personal Social Services (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
Northern Ireland Assembly (Allowances) (Variation) Order 1986

## THE ARTS

### "Perdition" (Play)

**Mr. Marlow** asked the Minister for the Arts, pursuant to his reply to the hon. Member for Northampton, North of 29 January, if he is satisfied that the decision of the board of the Royal Court Theatre to cancel "Perdition" was taken on artistic grounds.

**Mr. Luce:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 29 January. This is not a matter for me but for the board of the Royal Court Theatre, which is responsible for decisions about what is to be included in its programme.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Land Registry

**Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Attorney-General if he has any plans to give general public access to the Land Registry and to make information held on it public; and if he will make a statement.

**The Attorney-General:** The Government will make a decision on the proposals contained in the Law

Commission's report No. 148 on opening the Land Register when they have completed their consideration of the representations received.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### Seasonal Workers

81. **Mr. Hicks** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to change the conditions for unemployment benefit entitlement with reference to the position of seasonal workers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Major:** The Social Security Advisory Committee is at present reviewing the operation of the additional conditions applying to the receipt of unemployment benefit by seasonal workers, at the request of my right hon. Friend, and the position will be considered in the light of its eventual report and any recommendations that it may make.

### Mentally Handicapped Children

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services on what date his Department received the letter dated 18 April 1986 sent by the special interest group on mental handicap of the British Association of Social Workers, concerning the need to get mentally handicapped children out of long-stay hospitals; on what date his Department replied; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** The letter of 18 April to which the hon. Member refers was received in the Department on 25 April, and was in reply to a letter of 17 February 1986 from my noble Friend to regional health authority chairmen and others concerned with mentally handicapped children. I am sorry that a reply was not sent to the special interest group.

As I indicated in my reply to the right hon. Member for Stoke-on-Trent, South (Mr. Ashley) on 4 November 1986 at columns *402-403*, we have asked health authorities to ensure that by the end of 1988 more suitable alternatives are available so that no mentally handicapped child receiving long-term care is required to live in a large mental handicap hospital. All the replies received to my noble Friend's letter of 17 February have been taken into account in deciding what further action is necessary and my noble Friend will soon be meeting representatives of organisations concerned with provision for mentally handicapped children. A copy of the information paper for the meeting will be placed in the Library and sent to all those concerned. I would also draw the hon. Member's attention to "The Law on Child Care and Family Services" (CM. 62) presented to Parliament by my right hon. Friend earlier this month, which discusses the local authority responsibilities for caring for children living away from home, including those in National Health Service establishments.

### Wrightington Hospital

**Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the future of the children's ward at Wrightington hospital, Lancashire.

**Mr. Hind** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the future of the children's ward at Wrightington hospital.

**Mrs. Currie:** The children's ward at Wrightington hospital will continue to treat in-patients and out-patients, as required, while proposed new facilities for children with juvenile arthritis are developed at the Royal Preston hospital. Hon. Members for Lancashire constituencies, including my hon. Friends the Members for Lancashire, West (Mr. Hind) and for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins) have been sent copies of my letter of 27 January 1987 to Sir John Page, chairman of the north western regional health authority, on this matter. I am also placing a copy in the Library.

### Board and Lodging

**Mr. Weetch** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claimants were living in ordinary board and lodging in Ipswich on the last convenient date when information was available; and how many of these are having to pay more for their accommodation than the upper ceiling laid down by the current regulations.

**Mr. Major:** Information on the number of people in receipt of supplementary benefit and living in ordinary board and lodging accommodation is not available for specific areas of the country. Information, drawn from special returns by local offices, on the number of claimants whose charge fell outside the ordinary board and lodging limit in the board and lodging area which includes Ipswich during the period April to July 1985 is available in a Department of Health and Social Security document "Supplementary Benefit Board and Lodging Allowances, Results of a Special Statistical Exercise (29 April—29 July 1985)", a copy of which is in the Library.

**Mr. Weetch** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claimants living in ordinary board and lodging in Ipswich are 25 years of age or younger.

**Mr. Major:** I regret that the information requested is not collected by individual local offices and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

### Mr. Donald Cotterill

**Mr. Heddle** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will indicate when the decision of the adjudicating officer at the Department of Social Security mobility allowance unit will announce his decision in the case of Mr. Donald Cotterill of 3 Brownsfield road, Lichfield (Mobility Allowance No. 0316111).

**Mr. Major:** Mr. Cotterill was notified on 28 January that an award of mobility allowance has been made by the adjudication officer.

### Consultants (Fees)

**Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services further to his reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 19 November 1986, *Official Report*, columns *221-222*, whether he will break down the expenditure on consultants' fees between the National Health Service and social services.

**Mr. Major:** The expenditure by the Department in 1984-85 and 1985-86, and the estimated expenditure for 1986-87, on fees and expenses for outside consultants is as follows:

*£ million*

| *Year* | *Health matters* | *Social security matters* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | ·911 | 6·689 |
| 1985-86 | 1·7 | 11·946 |
| 1986-87 | 4·525 | 12·437 |

The figures are approximate. In some cases expenditure on health/social security has been apportioned where consultants have been employed on both. The figures for health matters include social services consultancy. The figures for expenditure by individual health authorities have not been given as they are not kept centrally by the department.

### Expenditure

**Sir David Price** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the total public expenditure on health and personal social services in 1978-79; what it is in the current year and what is the projection for 1988-89, measured in real terms; and, in each case, what percentage of total public expenditure and of gross domestic product these figures represent.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let my hon. friend have a reply as soon as possible.

### Mortality and Handicap (Statistics)

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the perinatal mortality and handicap figures for 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1986 for England and Wales, the north-west region, Greater Manchester, the city of Salford and the Eccles constituency; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** The available information is given in the table. The Office of Population Censuses and Surveys does not produce statistics on handicap. Because of boundary changes, information for the Eccles constituency for 1985 can be produced only at disproportionate cost. Figures for 1986 are not yet available.

*Perinatal mortality: numbers and rates per 1,000 total live and still births for selected areas. 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985.*

| | *Year* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1970* | | *1975* | | *1980* | | *1985* | |
| | *Number* | *Rate* | *Number* | *Rate* | *Number* | *Rate* | *Number* | *Rate* |
| England and Wales | 18,671 | 23·5 | 11,769 | 19·0 | 8,815 | 13·3 | 6,498 | 9·8 |
| *Area of usual residence* | | | | | | | | |
| North West Region | 3,100 | 27·0 | 1,821 | 22·0 | 1,287 | 14·7 | 890 | 10·0 |
| Greater Manchester | 1,176 | 29·6 | 772 | 22·0 | 562 | 15·4 | 362 | 9·8 |
| City of Salford | 149 | 30·6 | 89 | 27·0 | 44 | 13·7 | 31 | 9·1 |
| Eccles Parliamentary Constituency[1] | 31 | 27·4 | 4 | 21·0 | 5 | 17·2 | n/a | n/a |

n/a — not available.

[1] 1969 boundaries.

### Breast and Cervical Cancer

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what arrangements are made in the Eccles constituency, the city of Salford, the Greater Manchester and the north-west region for cervical cancer smear tests for women up to the age of 30 years, 30 to 40 years, 40 to 50 years, 50 to 60 years and over 60 years of age; if he will provide the figures for these tests and these age groups for 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and any later figures; what new proposals on these tests have been made by the North West health authority; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

**Mr. Kennedy** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will consider extending payments to general practitioners for cervical smears to include all women of the 25 to 35 years age group; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** Item of service payments for cervical cancer screening are reserved for women in the priority group to give general practitioners an incentive to screen women over 35 who are still most at risk from cervical cancer and who may be more reluctant to come forward for a smear test than younger women. Women over 35 still contribute 94 per cent. of the deaths from cervical cancer. Payment for the screening of women under 35 is provided for in the generality of fees and allowances paid to general medical practitioners.

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will allocate funding for the Health Education Council to extend programmes designed to increase public awareness of the case for regular cervical and breast screening attendances.

**Mrs. Currie:** The Health Education Council produces a number of useful leaflets aimed at increasing public awareness of the importance of prevention and early detection of cancer. The Department and the HEC are discussing possible further action, but no additional funding is available in this financial year. The new Health Education Authority will be asked to consider this matter when deciding its priorities for 1987-88.

### Disabled People (Expert Meeting)

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what representation his Department will be sending to the European region expert meeting on the implementation of the world programme of action concerning disabled persons at the mid-point of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons which will take place in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia from 10 to 13 March; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Major:** Information about the meeting has just been received and we are now considering Departmental representation.

### Severe Weather Payments

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* a list of the percentages of severe weather payment claims dealt with by each benefit office by 24 January.

**Mr. Major:** Information is not available in the form requested. Statistics on the number of exceptionally cold weather payments made and those refused are being maintained and will be published in due course.

### "Pregnancy Book"

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether his Department will be providing the Health Education Council with funds to supply audio-tapes of the "Pregnancy Book" in Asian languages to enable Asian women to benefit from this publication.

**Mrs. Currie:** The Department and the Health Education Council have been discussing the possibility of producing audio-tapes for this purpose, but no additional funding is available in this financial year. The new Health Education Authority will consider this project when deciding its priorities for 1987-88.

### Hip Replacement

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the waiting times for hip joint replacements in each district health authority.

**Mr. Newton:** I am sorry I cannot give the right hon. Member the information that he seeks. The numbers in the central data sample are too small for reliable estimates to be made below regional level.

### Hospital Waiting Lists

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what measures are being taken to reduce hospital waiting lists in the Bolton area.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

### Ativan

**Mr. Greg Knight** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what information he as concerning the addictive qualities of the drug Ativan; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what representations he has received concerning the banning of the drug Ativan;

(3) whether he has any plans to seek to ban or restrict the sale or use of the drug Ativan.

**Mrs. Currie:** Ativan is one of the brands of lorazepam, a benzodiazepine tranquilliser. Since 1964, the Committee on the Safety of Medicines has received 346 reports of adverse drug reactions, including three fatalities associated with the administration of lorazepam. Of the total reports, 24 relate to drug dependence and 29 to withdrawal syndrome. It is very important to note that a report does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship between a medicinal product and the reported reaction.

Representations have been received from a medically-qualified journalist calling for the drug to be banned. Lorazepam is an effective medicine for the treatment of anxiety but, like all benzodiazepines, it can cause dependence and withdrawl can be difficult. In common with all marketed medicinal products, the safety of lorazepam is monitored by the CSM, which is currently giving further consideration to the available information on the drug. When it has completed its deliberations we will consider in the light of its advice whether any regulatory action on the drug is necessary.

### Psychiatric and Mental Handicap Hospitals, Epsom

**Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what are the plans for the 3,500 patients and 4,000 staff at the five psychiatric and mental handicap hospitals near Epsom; to whom these plans have so far been made known; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

### Drug Addicts

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many beds in the National Health Service have been earmarked specifically for drug addicts in each year since 1979.

**Mrs. Currie:** In-patient beds are not set aside specifically for the treatment of drug addicts and most people admitted for the treatment for drug misuse are treated in general psychiatric wards. The number of beds available in England in special in-patient units for the treatment of drug misuse during the years 1979-85 is given in the table.

*Available beds in special in-patient units for drug misusers*

| *Year*[1] | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 93 |
| 1980 | 100 |
| 1981 | 84 |
| 1982 | 84 |
| 1983 | 86 |
| 1984 | 84 |
| 1985 | 87 |

[1] As at 31 December

### Leukaemia

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services why the report by the Office of Population Census and Surveys on the alleged link between leukaemia and nuclear power stations has still not been published; and when he now expects to publish it.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

## Cash Limits

**Mr. Maclean** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether any changes will be made to Department of Health and Social Security and Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys cash limits or running cost limits for 1986-87.

**Mr. Lyell:** Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the cash limit for class XV vote 5 will be increased by a net amount of £546,000 made up as follows:

*Increased expenditure by Department of Employment in connection with the administration of the unemployment benefit service. (Offsetting reductions announced by my right hon. and learned Friend the Paymaster General on 30 January 1987)*

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 30 January 1987 | 1,000,000 |
| less | |
| (1) a proportion recoverable from the NI Fund | 360,000 |
| (2) a transfer to OPCS | 94,000 |
| Net increase | 546,000 |

The cash limit on class XV vote 5 will, therefore, be increased by £546,000 from £1,173,868,000 announced on 6 November 1986 at c.*601-602*, to £1,174,414,000. Of this the transfer to OPCS represents a reduction in running costs. DHSS gross running cost limit will accordingly be reduced by £94,000 from £1,820,040,000 also announced on 6 November 1986 at c.*601-602*, to £1,819,946,000. The OPCS gross running cost limit for class XX vote 19 will be correspondingly increased by £94,000 from £30,636,000 to £30,730,000 reflecting increased expenditure by OPCS on services provided to DHSS. There is no overall increase in public expenditure or gross running costs as a result of these changes.

## National Health Service (Beds)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how the reduction in the average daily number of National Health Service beds between 1979 and now is distributed *(a)* by region and *(b)* by each district health authority.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 21 January 1987, c. *623*]: The information requested is given in the table. Between 1979 and 1985 the total number of in-patient cases rose by 17·7 per cent. from 5,400,120 to 6,353,812. Many of the bed reductions are in mental illness and mental handicap as a result of the push for community care.

*Average daily number of available beds in National Health Service hospitals in England*

| *Regional, District and Special Health Authority* | *1979* | *1985* | *Change in available beds 1979 to 1985* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Northern Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| Hartlepool | 592 | 607 | 15 |
| North Tees | 956 | 941 | −15 |
| South Tees | 2,282 | 1,902 | −380 |
| East Cumbria | [1] | 1,491 | [1] |
| South Cumbria | [1] | 874 | [1] |
| West Cumbria | 1,113 | 1,047 | −66 |
| Darlington | 1,310 | 1,225 | −85 |
| Durham | 1,192 | 1,103 | −89 |
| North West Durham | 717 | 611 | −106 |
| South West Durham | 1,921 | 1,690 | −231 |
| Northumberland | 3,996 | 3,664 | −332 |
| Gateshead | 1,368 | 1,365 | −3 |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 3,479 | 3,401 | −78 |
| North Tyneside | 719 | 725 | 6 |
| South Tyneside | 771 | 813 | 43 |
| Sunderland | 2,426 | 2,312 | −114 |
| RHA Total | 25,305 | 23,773 | −1,533 |
| *Yorkshire Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| Hull | 2,145 | 1,934 | −212 |
| East Yorkshire | 2,184 | 1,871 | −313 |
| Grimsby | 797 | 957 | 160 |
| Scunthorpe | 993 | 933 | −60 |
| Northallerton | 437 | 404 | −33 |
| York | 2,985 | 2,377 | −608 |
| Scarborough | 689 | 676 | −13 |
| Harrogate | 995 | 1,027 | 32 |
| Bradford | 2,721 | 2,510 | −212 |
| Airedale | 1,528 | 1,353 | −176 |
| Calderdale | 1,370 | 1,228 | −142 |
| Huddersfield | 2,625 | 2,059 | −566 |
| Dewsbury | 777 | 736 | −41 |
| Leeds Western | [1] | 3,156 | [1] |
| Leeds Eastern | [1] | 2,561 | [1] |
| Wakefield | 2,607 | 2,128 | −479 |
| Pontefract | 854 | 885 | 31 |
| RHA Total | 29,946 | 26,793 | −3,153 |

| *Regional, District and Special Health Authority* | *1979* | *1985* | *Change in available beds 1979 to 1985* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Trent Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| North Derbyshire | 1,722 | 1,749 | 28 |
| South Derbyshire | 4,208 | 3,535 | −674 |
| Leicestershire | 5,140 | 5,045 | −95 |
| North Lincolnshire | 2,815 | 2,100 | −715 |
| South Lincolnshire | 1,894 | 1,768 | −126 |
| Bassetlaw | 403 | 433 | 30 |
| Central Nottinghamshire | 1,997 | 1,794 | −203 |
| Nottingham | 4,198 | 3,931 | −267 |
| Barnsley | 962 | 1,134 | 172 |
| Doncaster | [1] | 1,879 | [1] |
| Rotherham | [1] | 1,251 | [1] |
| Sheffield | 5,233 | 4,771 | −463 |
| RHA Total | 31,712 | 29,391 | −2,321 |
| *East Anglian Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| Cambridge | [1] | 1,844 | [1] |
| Peterborough | 1,122 | 1,146 | 24 |
| West Suffolk | [1] | 1,247 | [1] |
| East Suffolk | [1] | 2,477 | [1] |
| Norwich | 3,928 | 3,512 | −415 |
| Great Yarmouth | 852 | 1,051 | 199 |
| West Norfolk & Wisbech | 830 | 847 | 17 |
| Huntingdon | [1] | 409 | [1] |
| RHA Total | 13,094 | 12,534 | −560 |
| *North West Thames Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| North Bedfordshire | 1,233 | 1,204 | −29 |
| South Bedfordshire | 1,653 | 1,553 | −100 |
| North Hertfordshire | 849 | 842 | −7 |
| East Hertfordshire | 829 | 714 | −115 |
| North West Hertfordshire | 3,288 | 3,175 | −113 |
| South West Hertfordshire | 2,385 | 2,061 | −324 |
| Barnet | 2,841 | 2,445 | −396 |
| Harrow | 908 | 905 | −4 |
| Hillingdon | 1,628 | 1,378 | −249 |
| Hounslow & Spelthorne | [1] | 1,382 | [1] |
| Ealing | 1,709 | 1,543 | −166 |
| Brent | 2,316 | 1,939 | −377 |
| Paddington | 1,365 | 1,211 | −153 |
| Riverside | 3,226 | 3,465 | 239 |
| RHA Total | 27,904 | 23,816 | −4,088 |
| *North East Thames Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| Basildon and Thurrock | 1,893 | 1,945 | 53 |
| Mid Essex | 1,282 | 1,429 | 147 |
| North East Essex | 3,381 | 2,541 | −840 |
| West Essex | 1,256 | 1,192 | −64 |
| Southend | 1,937 | 1,793 | −145 |
| Barking, Havering and Brentwood | 3,283 | 2,878 | −405 |
| Hampstead | [1] | 1,875 | [1] |
| Bloomsbury | [1] | 2,116 | [1] |
| Islington | [1] | 917 | [1] |
| City and Hackney | 1,990 | 1,754 | −236 |
| Newham | 941 | 880 | −61 |
| Tower Hamlets | 1,561 | 1,355 | −207 |
| Enfield | 1,234 | 1,069 | −165 |
| Haringey | 1,236 | 986 | −249 |
| Redbridge | 1,655 | 1,617 | −38 |
| Waltham Forest | 3,311 | 2,508 | −803 |
| RHA Total | 29,443 | 26,854 | −2,589 |
| *South East Thames Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| Brighton | 1,896 | 1,704 | −192 |
| Eastbourne | 1,714 | 1,390 | −324 |
| Hastings | 1,064 | 901 | −163 |
| South East Kent | 1,004 | 1,064 | 60 |
| Canterbury and Thanet | 2,926 | 2,376 | −550 |

| *Regional, District and Special Health Authority* | *1979* | *1985* | *Change in available beds 1979 to 1985* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dartford and Gravesham | 2,646 | 1,990 | −656 |
| Maidstone | 1,741 | 1,563 | −177 |
| Medway | 991 | 1,030 | 39 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 2,419 | 2,033 | −386 |
| Bexley | 1,653 | 1,435 | −218 |
| Greenwich | 1,777 | 1,517 | −260 |
| Bromley | 2,591 | 1,989 | −602 |
| West Lambeth | [1] | 1,993 | [1] |
| Camberwell | 1,432 | 1,264 | −169 |
| Lewisham and North Southwark | 2,336 | 2,048 | −288 |
| RHA Total | 28,408 | 24,297 | −4,111 |
| *South-West Thames Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| North West Surrey | 2,138 | 1,721 | −417 |
| West Surrey & North East Hants | 1,743 | 1,757 | 14 |
| South West Surrey | 857 | 902 | 45 |
| Mid Surrey | 2,901 | 2,275 | −626 |
| East Surrey | 2,776 | 2,171 | −605 |
| Chichester | 1,255 | 1,180 | −75 |
| Mid Downs | 1,576 | 1,617 | 41 |
| Worthing | 933 | 996 | 63 |
| Croydon | 3,192 | 2,637 | −555 |
| Kingston & Esher | [1] | 1,416 | [1] |
| Richmond, Twickenham & Roehampton | [1] | 868 | [1] |
| Wandsworth | 2,871 | 2,338 | −533 |
| Merton & Sutton | 2,687 | 2,332 | −355 |
| RHA Total | 26,242 | 22,210 | −4,032 |
| *Wessex Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| East Dorset | 2,126 | 2,258 | 132 |
| West Dorset | 1,704 | 1,551 | −153 |
| Portsmouth | 3,058 | 2,751 | −307 |
| South West Hants. & Southampton | 3,112 | 3,009 | −104 |
| Winchester | 921 | 866 | −55 |
| Basingstoke | 1,634 | 1,458 | −175 |
| Salisbury | 999 | 1,036 | 36 |
| Swindon | 1,478 | 1,311 | −167 |
| West Wiltshire & Bath | 3,044 | 2,681 | −363 |
| Isle of Wight | 946 | 734 | −212 |
| RHA Total | 19,021 | 17,654 | −1,367 |
| *Oxford Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| East Berkshire | 1,773 | 1,607 | −166 |
| West Berkshire | 2,987 | 2,425 | −563 |
| Aylesbury | [1] | 1,483 | [1] |
| Wycombe | 778 | 741 | −36 |
| Milton Keynes | [1] | 458 | [1] |
| Kettering | 849 | 936 | 86 |
| Northampton | 2,116 | 1,936 | −180 |
| Oxfordshire | 3,288 | 2,970 | −318 |
| RHA Total | 13,664 | 12,555 | −1,109 |
| *South Western Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| Bristol and Weston | 2,276 | 2,035 | −241 |
| Frenchay | 2,968 | 2,529 | −439 |
| Southmead | 2,175 | 1,688 | −488 |
| Cornwall and Isles of Scilly | 2,670 | 2,521 | −149 |
| Exeter | 3,848 | 2,957 | −891 |
| North Devon | [1] | 666 | [1] |
| Plymouth | [1] | 2,167 | [1] |
| Torbay | 1,021 | 1,161 | 140 |
| Cheltenham | [1] | 929 | [1] |
| Gloucester | [1] | 2,060 | [1] |
| Somerset | 3,478 | 3,219 | −259 |
| RHA Total | 24,456 | 21,932 | −2,524 |
| *West Midlands Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| Bromsgrove and Redditch | 1,227 | 917 | −310 |

| *Regional, District and Special Health Authority* | *1979* | *1985* | *Change in available beds 1979 to 1985* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Herefordshire | 1,174 | 976 | −198 |
| Kidderminster and District | 1,313 | 1,078 | −235 |
| Worcester and District | 1,684 | 1,461 | −223 |
| Shropshire | 2,603 | 2,448 | −154 |
| Mid Staffordshire | 1,372 | 1,301 | −71 |
| North Staffordshire | 3,492 | 3,336 | −156 |
| South East Staffordshire | 1,514 | 1,451 | −63 |
| Rugby | 327 | 326 | −1 |
| North Warwickshire | [1] | 1,136 | [1] |
| South Warwickshire | [1] | 1,755 | [1] |
| Central Birmingham | [1] | 1,776 | [1] |
| East Birmingham 966 | 961 | −6 | |
| North Birmingham | 1,879 | 1,493 | −386 |
| South Birmingham | [1] | 2,262 | [1] |
| West Birmingham | [1] | 2,038 | [1] |
| Coventry | 1,871 | 1,886 | 15 |
| Dudley | 1,492 | 1,525 | 33 |
| Sandwell | 747 | 882 | 135 |
| Solihull | [1] | 1,048 | [1] |
| Walsall | 1,762 | 1,568 | −194 |
| Wolverhampton | 1,543 | 1,485 | −58 |
| RHA Total | 36,263 | 33,108 | −3,155 |
| *Mersey Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| Chester | 2,031 | 1,714 | −316 |
| Crewe | 2,310 | 1,668 | −643 |
| Halton | 452 | 396 | −56 |
| Macclesfield | 1,572 | 1,593 | 21 |
| Warrington | 2,991 | 2,496 | −495 |
| Liverpool | 4,024 | 3,359 | −665 |
| St. Helens and Knowsley | 2,734 | 2,353 | −380 |
| Southport and Formby | 1,324 | 1,170 | −154 |
| South Sefton | 1,755 | 1,718 | −37 |
| Wirral | 2,789 | 1,996 | −794 |
| RHA Total | 21,981 | 18,464 | −3,517 |
| *North Western Regional Health Authority* | | | |
| Lancaster | 2,645 | 2,217 | −428 |
| Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde | 1,564 | 1,756 | 192 |
| Preston | [1] | 2,173 | [1] |
| Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley | 2,825 | 2,57[illegible] | −245 |
| Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale | 2,591 | 2,399 | −192 |
| West Lancashire | 886 | 812 | −74 |
| Chorley and South Ribble | [1] | 345 | [1] |
| Bolton | 1,361 | 1,246 | −115 |
| Bury | 716 | 810 | 94 |
| North Manchester | 2,041 | 1,752 | −289 |
| Central Manchester | 1,137 | 1,272 | 135 |
| South Manchester | 2,408 | 2,277 | −130 |
| Oldham | 1,045 | 1,026 | −19 |
| Rochdale | 953 | 824 | −129 |
| Salford | 3,098 | 2,688 | −410 |
| Stockport | 1,677 | 1,724 | 47 |
| Tameside and Glossop | 869 | 945 | 76 |
| Trafford | 836 | 775 | −61 |
| Wigan | 1,479 | 1,403 | −75 |
| RHA Total | 30,811 | 29,021 | −1,790 |

*Average daily number of available beds in National Health Service hospitals in England*

| *Regional, District and Special Health Authority* | *1979* | *1985* | *Change in available beds 1979-85* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Special Health Authorities* | | | |
| The Hospital For Sick Children | 517 | 410 | −108 |
| National Hospitals For Nervous Diseases | 357 | 349 | −8 |
| Moorfields Eye Hospital | 208 | 163 | −45 |
| Bethlem Royal & Maudsley Hospitals | 472 | 504 | 32 |
| National Heart & Chest Hospitals | 603 | 449 | −154 |

| *Regional, District and Special Health Authority* | *1979* | *1985* | *Change in available beds 1979-85* |
|---|---|---|---|
| The Royal Marsden Hospital | 361 | 344 | – 17 |
| Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's | [1] | 868 | [2] |
| SHA Total | 3,419 | 3,086 | – 333 |
| England Total | 361,670 | 325,488 | – 36,182 |

[1] Comparable figures not readily available because of NHS restructuring on 1 April 1982 and therefore district figures may not sum to regional totals.

[2] Hammersmith and Fulham D H A and Victoria D H A prior to 1985

## Meningitis

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the total number of diagnosed cases of meningitis which have occurred in each of the last three years; and how many of this number were found in the eastern regional health authority area for each of these years.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 2 February 1987]: Figures are not available in the precise form requested, but the notifications of acute meningitis recevied were as follows:

| | *England and Wales* | *East Anglian RHA* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984 | 1,230 | 38 |
| 1985 | [1]1,531 | [1]61 |
| 1986 | [1]2,161 | [1]50 |

[1] provisional figures.

The term acute meningitis includes meningococcal, pneumococcal, influenzal (haemophilus influenzae) and viral meningitis, as well as other specified and unspecified forms of the disease. The incidence of meningitis has changed quite sharply from year to year, both increases and decreases, in recent years, for no discernible reason.

## Mortality Statistics

**Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what were the broad conclusions to be drawn from the occupational mortality decennial supplement published in July 1986; whether figures for mortality by social class will be given in the 1991 supplement; and in what document information about infant mortality by social class is published.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 2 February 1987]: The main conclusions of "Occupational Mortality decennial supplement 1979-80, 1982-83" are given in chapters 6, 7 and 8 of "Part I commentary" of the material published on 30 July 1986. Copies of this volume, together with "Part II microfiche tables" which contains some 22,000 pages of results are in the Library.

Decisions on the scope and content of any 1991 decennial supplement have not been taken.

Information on infant mortality by social class for legitimate births only is published routinely in "Mortality Statistics perinatal and infant: social and biological factors. Series DH3" tables 5, 7 and 18, copies of which are also in the Library. A further publication in the decennial supplement series on childhood mortality, including infant mortality, is in preparation.

## Perivale Hospital

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer of 29 January, what is his estimate of the value of the Perivale hospital and its associated buildings, separate from the land attached to it; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 2 February 1987]: Based on information received from the district valuer reflecting the agreed sale to Ealing council the figure is as follows:

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| Sale value of site agreed with Ealing council | 6·19 |
| DV's value of land to be retained for NHS use | 1·25 |
| Value of whole site | 7·44 |
| *Less* Sale value of first parcel of vacant land to Ealing council | 3·50 |
| Value of site occupied by the existing hospital and associated buildings | 3·94 |

## EMPLOYMENT

### Job Clubs

11. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Paymaster General what has been the success rate of job club participants in finding jobs.

13. **Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Paymaster General how many claimants have been assisted into work by job clubs.

**Mr. Lee:** Since April 1986, 8,581 people (60 per cent.) have left job clubs to go into work. A further 1,871 people (13 per cent.) have found temporary work on the community programme, taken up training or joined the enterprise allowance scheme. The figures are for all job club members of whom 95 per cent. are estimated to be claiming benefits.

14. **Miss Maynard** asked the Paymaster General how many job clubs have been set up; how many are in operation; how many are run by Manpower Services Commission staff; and how many by voluntary organisations.

64. **Mr. Stan Thorne** asked the Paymaster General how many job clubs have been set up; how many are currently in operation; how many are run by Manpower Services Commission staff; and how many are run by voluntary organisations.

**Mr. Lee:** On 26 January 1987 342 job clubs had been set up and were operational. All are run by Manpower Services Commission staff.

57. **Mr. Clelland** asked the Paymaster General how many claimants have been referred to job clubs; and what is the average length of stay.

**Mr. Lee:** There is no record of the number of people referred. However since April 1986, 14,200 people have passed through job clubs. A recent survey found that the average length of stay was between four and five weeks.

These figures apply to all job club members of whom 95 per cent. are estimated to be claiming benefits.

### Labour Statistics

15. **Mr. Ron Brown** asked the Paymaster General how many young people under the age of 25 years are currently unemployed in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Lee:** On 9 October 1986, the latest date for which an analysis of unemployment by age is available, the number of unemployed claimants aged under 25 in the United Kingdom was 1,145,500.

16. **Mr. Harry Greenway** asked the Paymaster General what was the number of employable people at the last recorded date; what was the comparable figure 10 years ago; what is his projected figure for 1988; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** Information on the number of people who are employable is not available.

The number of people of working age, that is between the minimum school leaving age and the state retirement age, is estimated to have been 33·7 million in 1985. This compares with a figure of 31·8 million in 1975 and a projection of 34·2 million for 1988.

Information is also available on the number of people in the civilian labour force—in employment or seeking work. This is estimated to have been 26·6 million in 1985, compared with 25·3 million in 1975 and a projection of 27·2 million for 1988.

30. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Paymaster General what are the latest unemployment figures for the Basingstoke travel-to-work area.

**Mr. Lee:** On 11 December 1986 the number of unemployed claimants in the Basingstoke and Alton travel-to-work area was 3,836.

59. **Mr. Janner** asked the Paymaster General how many men aged between 60 and 65 years are now at work.

**Mr. Lee:** It is estimated from the labour force survey conducted in the spring of 1985 that, at that time, there were 718,000 men aged 60 and under 65 in paid employment, in Great Britain.

78. **Mr. James Lamond** asked the Paymaster General how many people have been unemployed for more than 12 months at the latest available date; and what percentage of the total unemployed this represents.

**Mr. Lee:** On 9 October 1986, the latest date for which an analysis of unemployment by duration is available, the number of claimants in the United Kingdom who had been unemployed for over 12 months was 1,340,985 which represents 41·4 per cent. of the total.

**Mr. Watts** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the latest trend of unemployment.

**Mr. Lee:** The current trend in the unemployment series is a fall of the order of 20,000 a month. The seasonally adjusted level of adult unemployment has fallen on average by 17,200 a month over the past six months to December, and by 25,400 a month over the past three months.

### Skillcentres

17. **Ms. Richardson** asked the Paymaster General, following the closure of the Deptford skillcentre's women into manual skills course, how many women into manual skills courses, which provide creche facilities, now exist in England and Wales.

**Mr. Trippier:** Courses which introduce women to manual skills may be mounted by local education authorities as part of their further education provision and by other training providers, but information about numbers and access to creche facilities is not collated centrally. The three courses currently run in MSC skillcentres in England and Wales do not have creche facilities. The course which was run at Deptford skillcentre and recently transferred to a local technical college continues to have access to local authority funded creche facilities.

### Adult Training

18. **Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the progress of the adult training strategy.

67. **Mr. Sheerman** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the adult training strategy.

**Mr. Trippier:** During 1986 the Manpower Services Commission has continued to progress the adult training strategy in three main ways. First, through promoting more positive attitudes to training and awareness of the means for taking action. Secondly, through projects to enhance the effectiveness of the training infrastructure and systems, and thirdly through programmes to make an immediate contribution to the supply of skills in current and future demand.

### Job Creation

19. **Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Paymaster General what are the latest figures for the percentage of the jobs created since 1983 which are part-time or temporary; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** Analysis of the 1983 and 1985 labour force surveys suggests that about 55 per cent. of the net increase in the number of persons in employment in Great Britain between spring 1983 and 1985 occurred among those in part-time or temporary employment.

28. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Paymaster General how many young people under the age of 25 years have been placed on job creation schemes in the London borough of Newham in the last 12 months.

**Mr. Lee:** The available information for the year ending December 1986 is as follows: community programme: 1,415 people were placed into the community programme in Newham by the Manpower Services Commission's employment and enterprise group jobcentres. Survey information suggests that just under 60 per cent. of those taking part in the programme in the London area were under 25.

Community industry: 176 young people took part in community industry in the Newham and Tower Hamlets area during the same period.

Young workers and new workers scheme: In the area covered by the Manpower Services Commission's vocational education and training group's London north east area office, which includes Newham, 983 young people were accepted for support under the young workers and new workers schemes.

34. **Mr. Hirst** asked the Paymaster General what is his most recent estimate of the net number of new jobs created since June 1983; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** Between June 1983 and September 1986 (the latest date for which figures are available) there was a net increase of 1,079,000 in the employed labour force in Great Britain.

### Tourism and Leisure

20. **Mr. Gale** asked the Paymaster General how many people are now employed in activities underpinning tourism and leisure.

**Mr. Trippier:** There were 1·3 million employees in September 1986 in the tourism-related industries (for example hotels, catering, sports and other recreational services) which serve the needs of tourism and leisure.

72. **Mr. Alexander** asked the Paymaster General whether he will estimate how much employment in tourism and leisure has grown since 1979.

**Mr. Trippier:** Information on the number of employees in those sectors which most directly serve tourists (hotels and catering, and leisure services) showed an increase of 147,000 to just over 1·3 million between September 1979 and September 1986.

### Restart Scheme

21. **Mr. Evennett** asked the Paymaster General whether he will make a statement on the operation of the restart scheme.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Yes. I am thoroughly satisfied with the operation of the national restart programme to help those unemployed for 12 months or over. I am impressed with the dedicated work of the Manpower Services Commission staff who have already interviewed 779,051 people who have been unemployed for over a year and have made a worthwhile offer that might lead to employment to around 90 per cent. of them. That is why my right hon. and noble Friend and I announced that the programme would be extended to provide interviews for those reaching six months' unemployment and, thereafter, at regular six-monthly intervals for at least the first three years of unemployment.

25. **Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Paymaster General how many referrals to adjudication officers there have been from restart counsellors since October.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** No one can lose their benefit entitlements solely as a result of the restart programme. Under long-standing legal rules, people can lose their entitlement to benefit if they fail to attend an interview, are no available for work or refuse an offer of suitable employment.

The information available is not in the exact from requested, but between 10 October and 11 December 1986 (the lastest date for which figures are available), restart teams referred to unemployment benefit offices 21,454 cases of claimants who failed to attend restart counselling interviews; 8,057 cases where a doubt about availability for work had been indentified and 153 cases where claimants had refused suitable employment.

During the same period independent adjudication officers actually disallowed benefit in the cases of 9,506 claimants who failed to attend ther restart interview; 644 claimants considered not available for work and 42 claimants who had refused suitable employment.

31. **Mr. Terry Davis** asked the Paymaster General under the restart programme, how many people have been called to interview, and how many have been interviewed and how many were placed into *(a)* jobs, *(b)* the community programme, *(c)* job clubs, *(d)* enterprise allowance scheme, *(e)* the job training scheme, *(f)* restart courses and *(g)* voluntary work.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** By 8 January 1,032,340 people had been called for interview and 779,051 people had been counselled under restart. 165,514 subsequently ceased to claim benefit as unemployed but we have no means of knowing how many of these found jobs or training places. If the hon. Members question is referring to the immediate outcome of the interviews then the figures were:

—5,478 were placed directly into jobs.

—19,916 were placed directly on the Community Programme.

—6,489 were placed in jobclubs of whom most would subsequently move into jobs.

—1,760 were placed directly on the Enterprise Allowance Scheme and so became self-employed.

—12,598 started training (of whom 188 were placed specifically on the new Job Training Scheme in the pilot areas).

66,968 started Restart courses and many of those would subsequently go on to employment and training.

—1,375 joined the Voluntary Projects Programme or began other Voluntary work.

— Many others were referred to other MSC programmes and services.

The above figures for "placings" reflect only those arising directly from referrals made at the time of the restart interview. They do not reflect people who later find jobs, or other solutions of their unemployment, wholly or partly as a result of advice given by counselling staff or Restart courses. The Manpower Services Commission does not follow the progress of individuals once they have been counselled under restart.

70. **Mr. Deakins** asked the Paymaster General how many claimants have left the register during the period in which restart has been running.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Between 10 July 1986 and 11 December 1986, the estimated number of claimants in Great Britain who ceased to claim benefit as unemployed was 2,172,740.

People are constantly leaving unemployment for a variety of reasons, including finding work or training with or without the assistance offered by the restart programme, which applies to long-term unemployed people only.

52. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the role of the restart programme in adult training.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The restart programme offers counselling interviews at which long term unemployed people are helped to identify possible ways of getting back to work including suitable training opportunities. By 8 January over 96,000 people had been referred to training courses.

The restart interview after six months of unemployment, which I announced to the House on 28 January, will be the normal route into the new job training scheme.

## Training Levy

22. **Mr. Stern** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to seek to introduce a compulsory training levy; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** No. Such a levy would increase the burdens on industry, cause job losses and offer no guarantee of more effective training.

## Management Training

23. **Mr. Tom Clarke** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on management training in British industry.

**Mr. Trippier:** Effective management training is an essential element in ensuring the competitiveness of British industry. Employers have the primary responsibility for training and developing their own managers. However, the Manpower Services Commission has a key role to play in helping to achieve improvements—particularly in small businesses. Two major studies on the future of management training will be published during 1987, and we will consider whether, in the light of their recommendations, we should take further action.

## Manufacturing Industry

24. **Mr. Dixon** asked the Paymaster General what is the net loss in manufacturing jobs in the northern region since June 1979.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Between June 1979 and June 1986, there was a net decrease of 140,000 employees in employment in manufacturing industries in the northern region.

However, some of the decrease in the figures will be the result of the re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services, and road haulage, previously done by manufactures' own employees and now done by sub-contractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the decline of manufacturing employment.

65. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Paymaster General what was the net loss or gain of manufacturing jobs in Britain and the north-west region, respectively, in 1986.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Between September 1985 and September 1986 (the latest date for which regional figures are available) there was a net decrease of 142,000 in the numbers of employees in employment in manufacturing in Great Britain. Over the same period there was a net decrease of 21,000 in the north-west region.

However, some of the decrease in the figures will be the result of the re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services, and road haulage, previously done by manufactures' own employees and now done by sub-contractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the decline of manufacturing employment.

66. **Mr. Leighton** asked the Paymaster General how many jobs in manufacturing have been lost in the United Kingdom since 1979; and what information he has as to how many have been lost in the rest of the European Economic community 10.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** My Department does not produce statistics about job gains and job losses but an indication of the net changes can be seen by comparing levels of employment at different dates. Between June 1979 and September 1986 there was a net decrease of 1,951 thousand in the number of employees in employment and self-employed in manufacturing industries in the United Kingdom. Some of the decrease in the figures will be the result of the re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services, and road haulage, previously done by manufactures' own employees and now done by sub-contractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the decline of manufacturing employment.

The latest information for the rest of the European Community 10 (excluding Luxembourg and Greece for which there are no comparable figures) shows that between 1979 and 1984 manufacturing employment fell about 2,250,000. However international comparisons should always be made cautiously because of differences in methodology.

75. **Mr. Eastham** asked the Paymaster General what was the net loss in manufacturing jobs in the north-west region since June 1979.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Between 1979 and June 1986, there was a net decrease of 337,000 employees in employment in manufacturing industries in the north-west region.

However, some of the decrease in the figures will be the result of the re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services, and road haulage, previously done by manufactures' own employees and now done by sub-contractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the decline of manufacturing employment.

## YTS

26. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Paymaster General what special provision is made by the Manpower Services Commission to enable trainees in remote areas of the United Kingdom to participate fully in YTS off-the-job training courses.

**Mr. Trippier:** YTS is intended to be mainly a locally based scheme. Where trainees necessarily incur travel or lodging costs. There is provision for managing agents to make the appropriate payments to trainees and claim reimbursement from the Manpower Services Commission.

39. **Mr. Nelli[illegible]** asked the Paymaster General when the level of [illegible]ance for participants of youth training schemes will next be increased.

**Mr. Trippier:** The YTS allowance for first year trainees will increase from £27.30 to £28.50 per week from 6 April 1987. There are no plans at present for further increases in the YTS allowance.

47. **Sir Peter Blaker** asked the Paymaster General whether he will estimate how many places in hotels, travel, and catering the Manpower Services Commissions youth training scheme provided in 1986.

**Mr. Trippier:** I regret that the information requested is not available as the Manpower Services Commission's management information system is not currently collecting YTS statistics by occupation.

YTS does however, make a significant contribution to training in tourism related industries, and at the end of 1985 was providing around 11,000 places in hotel and catering and the travel trade.

62. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Paymaster General what training has been given to Manpower Services Commission staff employed as programme managers and programme assessors at the area offices to enable them to carry out the monitoring role required by the two year YTS.

**Mr. Trippier:** Staff of the Manpower Services Commission receive a comprehensive range of training designed to equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills to operate effectively.

Staff involved in monitoring YTS undertake a six month training programme linked to individual training needs.

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Paymaster General how many people are presently engaged in the YTS in Britain.

**Mr. Trippier:** On 31 December 1986 there were around 340,000 young people in training on YTS schemes throughout Great Britain.

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the progress of the YTS in the Altrincham and Sale area with regard to the one-year and two-year schemes.

**Mr. Trippier:** I am very pleased with the progress on YTS. Nationally over 1 million young people have joined the youth training scheme since it was introduced in April 1983 and in Altrincham and Sale the position is equally encouraging. Nearly 1,200 joined the one-year youth training scheme in 1985-86 and already over 1,300 have joined YTS since April 1986.

Further, of those who left YTS schemes between April 1985 and March 1986 in Trafford local authority district, which contains Altrincham and Sale, 57 per cent. were in work and 69 per cent. were in either work or further education-training, three months after leaving.

In addition, over 3,000 organisations nationally have applied for approved training organisations status including all 16 organisations currently delivering YTS in the Altrincham and Sale area.

All this demonstrates not only the success of the two-year programme, building on the achievements of the one-year youth training scheme, but also the willingness of employers to play their part, and the benefits to young people of YTS.

**Mr. Favell** asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently working *(a)* in his Department, *(b)* in the Manpower Services Commission and *(c)* in his Department's other associated public bodies and agencies under the aegis of the YTS programme.

**Mr. Trippier:** There are none at present in the Department of Employment Group. However, the Department of Employment and the Manpower Services Commission propose to introduce a YTS scheme this Easter in which initially there will be places for 120 clerical trainees in four different parts of the country.

**Mr. Favell** asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently working for British Rail under the YTS programme.

**Mr. Trippier:** At 28 January 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 1,387 young people in training on YTS with British Rail.

**Mr. Favell** asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently working in the water industry under the YTS programme.

**Mr. Trippier:** I regret that the information requested is not available as the Manpower Services Commission's management information system is not currently collecting YTS statistics by industry classification.

**Mr. Favell** asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently working in *(a)* the coal industry and *(b)* the electrical supply industry under the YTS programme.

**Mr. Trippier:** I regret that information is not available in precisely the form requested because the Manpower Services Commissions management information system is no currently collecting YTS statistics by industry classification.

However, at 31 December 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 89 young people in training on YTS with British Coal.

At 14 January 1987, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 1,324 young people in training on YTS with Central Electricity Generating Board.

### Tourism

27. **Mr. Porter** asked the Paymaster General what action is proposed to encourage tourism from the far east to come to the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Trippier:** Earnings from far east visitors increased by 10·5 per cent. in the first half of 1986. Although there was a slight decrease of 0·9 per cent. in visitor numbers, compared to the same months in 1985. The British Tourist Authority offices in Tokyo, Singapore, and Hong Kong will continue to promote the United Kingdom as a tourist destination both for holiday makers and business visitors.

33. **Mr. Roger King** asked the Paymaster General if he will estimate the contribution likely to be made to employment in tourism by the tourism and the community programme.

55. **Mr. Gregory** asked the Paymaster General if he will outline the tourism projects with which the community programme will be primarily concerned.

**Mr. Trippier:** The latest estimate is that there are 724 community programme projects providing almost 16,000 jobs which are directly related to providing tourism. In addition, many other projects and jobs within the Community programme contribute indirectly. Our recently launched tourism and the community programme national initiative aims to provide 2,500 jobs within the programme on projects which provide tourist information and improve coastal resorts and other areas. Projects in partnership with the private sector will also be developed.

35. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Paymaster General if he is satisfied with the present proportion of European Community regional aid devoted to tourism projects in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Trippier:** The European regional development fund has been used to support a wide range of public expenditure in the United Kingdom much of which has been of both direct and indirect benefit to tourism. The Government are satisfied that the United Kingdom is making the fullest possible use of opportunities to assist tourism under the ERDF.

41. **Mr. Weetch** asked the Paymaster General how many jobs he estimates will be created by tourism in 1987; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** Future development levels depend on many factors, some of which are difficult to predict. In recent years, there has been a substantial growth in the number of employees in those industries which most directly serve tourists (up by 100,000 in the hotel, catering and leisure and recreational services sectors between September 1984 and September 1986).

If long-term trends in tourism continue, I would expect to see further growth in 1987 in employment in the sectors serving tourists.

48. **Mr. Gerald Bowden** asked the Paymaster General what action is proposed to encourage tourists from Europe to visit the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Trippier:** The number of visitors to the United Kingdom from western Europe rose by 3 per cent. in the first 10 months of last year, compared to the same months in 1985. The British Tourist Authority has 11 offices in major European cities, and will continue to promote the attractions of the United Kingdom to both holidaymakers and business visitors.

### Earnings

29. **Mr. Caborn** asked the Paymaster General what was the average percentage increase in earnings among the top and bottom 10 per cent. of workers in Britain in 1986; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** Between April 1985 and April 1986 the highest decile of the weekly earnings distribution for full-time adult employees in Great Britain increased by 8·3 per cent. for men and by 10·7 per cent. for women. Over the same period the lowest decile increased by 6·0 per cent. for men and by 6·1 per cent. for women.

### Job Training Scheme

32. **Mr. Jack Thompson** asked the Paymaster General what indications he has so far received from the pilot areas concerning the progress of the job training scheme.

46. **Mr. Madel** asked the Paymaster General when he expects to extend the new job training scheme; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I refer my hon. Friend and the hon. Member to my statement on 28 January 1987 at columns 337-54.

36. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Paymaster General what are the training allowances paid to job training scheme participants.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I refer the right hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (Ms. Short) on 26 January at columns 30-31.

40. **Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Paymaster General how many 18 to 25-year-olds and how many persons aged 25 years and over are enrolled on the job training scheme.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Of the 1,203 starts on the new job training scheme to 30 January, 53 per cent. (638) are under 25 and 47 per cent. (565) are over 25.

58. **Mr. O'Brien** asked the Paymaster General how many people are enrolled on the job training scheme in the 10 pilot areas; and what is the expected number of filled places at the end of March 1987.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** On 26 January, 1,008 people were taking part in the new job training scheme pilots. At present about 150 people are joining new JTS every week.

We have asked the Manpower Services Commission to expand the scheme nationally and to seek to provide 110,000 places by September 1987.

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General how many entrants and filled places there were to the new job training scheme in each of the nine pilot areas at 6 January and the most recently available date.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Figures are not available for 6 January. Those for week ending 9 January and week ending 23 January are as follows:

| | 9 January<br>Entrants | On Scheme | 23 January<br>Entrants | On Scheme |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dundee | 51 | 49 | 110 | 100 |
| Billingham | 57 | 39 | 70 | 51 |
| Huddersfield | 69 | 54 | 83 | 68 |
| Stoke | 104 | 99 | 129 | 116 |
| Port Talbot | 100 | 85 | 128 | 98 |
| Plymouth | 128 | 104 | 199 | 153 |
| Crawley | 72 | 61 | 76 | 65 |
| Ealing | 18 | 16 | 4032 | |
| In addition a further pilot started in Leicester on 12 January | | | 34 | 33 |

**Mr. Wainwright** asked the Paymaster General how many formerly unemployed persons have been placed with employers under the job training scheme pilot project in Huddersfield; and how many of these were still employed under the scheme at the most recent convenient date.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** All participants in the job training scheme pilots were previously unemployed for six months or more. On 30 January, the latest date for which information is available, practical training on employers' premises have been received by 63 participants on the Huddersfield pilot. Of these only one has left the scheme so far.

### Young People (Training)

37. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Paymaster General what is the proportion of young people receiving training *(a)* now and *(b)* at a comparable date in 1983.

**Mr. Trippier:** At the end of January 1986 the latest date for which such an analysis is available a total of 265,000 16 and 17-year-olds had entered YTS which is 15·3 per cent. of those young people in the population. The comparable figure entering YOP and YTS in spring 1983 was 122,523 which is 6·7 per cent. of those 16 and 17-year-olds in the population.

### West Midlands

38. **Miss Boothroyd** asked the Paymaster General what is the net loss in manufacturing jobs in the west midlands region since 1979.

79. **Mr. Park** asked the Paymaster General what has been the net loss in manufacturing jobs in the west midlands since June 1979.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Between June 1979 and June 1986, there was a net decrease of 282,000 employees in employment in manufacturing industries in the west midlands region.

However, some of the decrease in the figures will be the result of the re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services, and road haulage, previously done by manufacturers' own employees and now done by subcontractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the decline of manufacturing employment.

### "Hands across Britain"

42. **Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Paymaster General what assessment he has made of the effect the "Hands across Britain" campaign will have on the level of unemployment in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Lee:** A precise assessment of the effect on unemployment of the "Hands across Britain" campaign would not be possible. The campaign may help to draw employers' attention to the talents available among unemployed people. We believe that the policies followed by the Government are the best way to encourage growth and the generation of the new jobs.

### Household Bleach

43. **Mr. Terry Fields** asked the Paymaster General if the Government will now reconsider their decision not to include household bleach in the classification packaging and labelling of dangerous substances regulations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** The provisions of the Classification, Packaging and Labelling of Dangerous Substances Regulations 1984 apply to household bleaches in concentrations at which they are dangerous.

### Job Seekers (Mobility)

44. **Mr. Martin** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement concerning the record of Government schemes to help the unemployed move in order to find jobs.

**Mr. Lee:** During the year ended 31 March 1986 3,300 unemployed people were helped by the employment transfer scheme and a further 11,350 received free forward fares to enable them to take up new jobs. Both these schemes were abolished from April 1986 because they were found not to be cost effective either in reducing unemployment or in helping employers fill vacancies. From June 1986 the job search scheme which assisted about 4,000 people a year with the cost of attending job interviews in other areas was replaced by the travel to interview scheme which has fewer and simpler eligibility rules and therefore helps four or five times as many people.

### Skill Shortages

45. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on skill shortages in the engineering industry.

**Mr. Trippier:** I am disappointed that, despite a statutory training levy, problems in fully meeting the skill needs of the industry are still occurring. My right hon. and learned Friend announced last week a major new initiative to help in the task of re-skilling Britain.

### Small Businesses

49. **Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Paymaster General what action he proposes to take to assist small and medium-sized businesses in the course of the next year.

**Mr. Trippier:** Small businesses will continue to benefit from the steady expansion of the economy and the favourable climate that now exists for businesses of all sizes in this country. We shall maintain our efforts to reduce the administrative burden that is imposed on businesses. Amongst the specific assistance to small businesses for which my Department is responsible:

- The enterprise allowance scheme which is the main Government measure to encourage unemployed people to start their own business will be expanded for 1987-88 to allow 102,500 people to take advantage of its support in starting their own businesses.

- Up to £2 million will be provided to the Prince's Youth Business Trust in 1987-88 to assist young people starting businesses.
- The Department will continue to encourage the provision of training for small business men and women. The Manpower Services Commission's training for enterprise budget has increased from £11·6 million in 1985-86 to £18·8 million in 1986-87 and the number of training places from 19,700 in 1985-86 to 46,300 in 1986-87.
- The small firms service will make its information database available to other support agencies.
- The small firms development service, which provides guidance and counselling for established small and medium sized businesses with growth and development potential will be expanded.
- Links between the small firms service and local enterprise agencies will be strengthened.
- The local enterprise agency grant scheme will be continued with a further £2·5 million.
- Support for the Co-operative Development Agency will be maintained.

### Manufacturing (Yorkshire and Humberside)

50. **Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Paymaster General what is the net loss in manufacturing jobs in Yorkshire and Humberside since June 1979.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Between June 1979 and June 1986, there was a net decrease of 248,000 employees in employment in manufacturing and industries in the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

However, some of the decrease in the figures will be the result of the re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services, and road haulage, previously done by manufactures' own employees and now done by sub-contractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the decline of manufacturing employment.

### British Telecom (Dispute)

51. **Mr. Adley** asked the Paymaster General if he has any plans to meet the employers and union leaders involved in the British Telecom dispute; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I have no such plans. I regret that the National Communications Union has decided to take industrial action and I hope that negotiations between management and the union can be pursued urgently to bring the dispute to an end.

### Construction Industry

53. **Mr. Litherland** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on skill shortages in the construction industry.

**Mr. Trippier:** I am disappointed that, despite a statutory training levy, problems in fully meeting the skill needs of the industry are still occurring. My right hon. and learned Friend announced last week a major new initiative to help in the task of re-skilling Britain.

### Tied Accommodation

54. **Mr. Livsey** asked the Paymaster General if he will publish figures for the number of people working in the public sector who live in tied accommodation as a condition of their employment.

**Mr. Lee:** I regret that the information requested is not held centrally.

### Manufacturing Jobs

56. **Mr. Parry** asked the Paymaster General what is the net loss in manufacturing jobs on Merseyside since June 1979.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The precise information requested is not available. The Departments' statistics for the county monitor only net changes in employment between census dates.

The available figures are from the June 1978 and the September 1981 censuses of employment. In that period there was a net loss of 45,600 employees employed in manufacturing industries as defined according to the standard industrial classification 1968 in the county of Merseyside. The September 1984 census estimates for counties are not yet available. Between censuses, employment statistics are based on small scale sample enquiries which cannot produce reliable results for areas smaller than the standard economic regions.

### Employment Creation Programmes

60. **Dr. Godman** asked the Paymaster General what funds he proposes to allocate to each of the Government's employment creation programmes in 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Details of planned provision for my Department's enterprise and job creation, labour market efficiency and employment measures programmes are contained in chapter 3.7 of "The Governments Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90 Volume II" (Cm. 56-II) a copy of which is in the Library. On 28 January I announced a further expansion of certain programmes which will increase my Department's total provision beyond what shown in Cm. 56-II, without adding to total public expenditure. A detailed breakdown of the new total expenditure will be contained in Class VII of the Government's expenditure estimates, to be published on March 17.

### Inner City Task Forces

61. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the most recent progress of the inner city task forces.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The task forces set up in eight small inner city areas under the inner cities initiative are making substantial progress. This initiative aims to experiment with new projects and policies in inner city areas and achievements to date are many and varied.

Some 63 projects, involving around £2·5 million of earmarked task force funds have been approved for support, and the task forces are ensuring that existing Government resources from many other Government programmes are targeted more effectively on their areas.

A particular aim of the initiative is to encourage job creation and enterprise. A large number of projects address this aim. I am supporting small businesses, including those owned by ethnic minorities through inner city based enterprise agencies in Birmingham and Bristol, and intend to promote similar agencies in the other areas.

I have recently announced our intention to establish special Development Funds, each set up in partnership with a major clearing bank, to help small businesses in the eight areas to gain more ready access to the finance they need. The first two such funds have been launched in Bristol (with the National Westminster bank) and Leeds (with the Yorkshire bank). Funds in the remaining areas will, I anticipate, be set up soon.

I have given a grant of £150,000 to the Cleveland youth enterprise centre to support its work in inner city Middlesbrough.

I have contributed £77,000 to support the headstart programme, under which, in collaboration with the Industrial Society and the Manpower Services Commission, we will give access to business training to 3,000 inner city youngsters in most of the eight areas.

I also announced in October a new arrangement in co-operation with the Association of British Insurers, to help businesses in the eight areas overcome difficulties in arranging insurance.

I am also giving support to projects to improve the employability of inner city residents. This includes:

> a grant of £93,000 to PATH in Leeds to provide high quality vocational training in banks, building societies and insurance companies mainly for young people from ethnic minorities;
>
> a grant of £55,000 to Handsworth Technical College to convert and equip a workshop to provide a base for skill training in personal services such as hairdressing, beauty therapy, food preparation and retailing;
>
> a grant of £325,000 over two years to allow the Association of Marine and Related Charities (AMARC) to expand their training agency in Middlesbrough, creating over 250 new training places in a range of technical skills;
>
> £42,000 to South East Training, North Peckham towards setting up a 100 place training scheme which provides employed-based, customised training in a number of skills, reflecting job opportunities in the travel to work areas.

I have approved a grant of £47,000 to an opportunities industrialisation centre (UK) project in Handsworth, a United States-bred scheme which aims to reintegrate young people through a programme of training, outreach, placement and continuity of support involving over 300 clients every year.

In addition we are developing innovative targeted training schemes such as one for the new Copthorne hotel in Birmingham. Sixty young people from in and around Handsworth will be given training over a four-week period in hotel and catering skills at the City of Birmingham College of Food abd Domestic Art. The Copthorne hotel has agreed to interview all those completing the course with a view to offering them jobs.

A major theme in all the task force areas is the need to ensure that future urban development projects in inner cities provide work opportunities and skill training for local people. At the end of November I announced an important and experimental scheme in Handsworth, under which local people will be employed by a major contractor (Tarmac) to refurbish a street of run-down Victorian houses at a total cost of £1·5 million. Local sub-contractors will employ and train local people to do the bulk of the work. We intend to develop this approach with other building and refurbishment work in other Task Force areas.

This is an interdepartmental initiative, and task forces are receiving support and co-operation from other Departments and agencies. I am pleased that the Manpower Services Commission is working with us to ensure that its programmes are better targetted to the needs of the eight areas, and the people living in them.

Additional community programme places have been made available to the task forces and we are currently aiming to fill many of them through private-sector led schemes with the accent on the construction industry. In addition task forces are participating in a pilot to encourage suitable CP schemes to turn themselves into viable independent businesses.

The advances and achievements the initiative has made to date have only been possible with the co-operation of the public and private sector, the voluntary organisations and local communities. I am pleased to say that most task forces have received wholehearted support from all groups in their areas. I hope that in areas where co-operation has been less forthcoming. The local authorities and community groups concerned will now work with the task forces to join with us in reversing economic decline in the inner city and providing lasting benefits for the residents.

## Jobcentres

63. **Mr. Garrett** asked the Paymaster General how many staff are employed in jobcentres; and what are the planned totals for March 1987, 1988 and 1989.

**Mr. Lee:** Statistics on the allocation of staff are maintained by programme rather than location. In March 1987, there will be 9,835 people employed, mainly in jobcentres, on programmes which cover the principal jobcentre activities, including helping long-term unemployed people through jobclubs and the restart programme. The comparable planning figure for 1988 and 1989 is 10,318 in each year.

## Area Manpower Boards

68. **Mr. Freud** asked the Paymaster General how many members of the area manpower boards who took up their appointments last year were registered unemployed.

**Mr. Trippier:** I regret that the information is not available.

## Training Schemes

69. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Paymaster General how many people who would otherwise have been claimants for unemployment benefit have been engaged on Government training schemes in each successive year since 1979.

**Mr. Lee:** Since 1979 the numbers of young people in training on YTS are as follows:

*For The Financial Year*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 100,700 |
| 1980-81 | 160,900 |
| 1981-82 | 226,100 |
| 1982-83 | 257,942 |
| 1983-84 | 287,485 |
| 1984-85 | 286,830 |
| 1985-86 | 283,391 |

Some of these trainees may have had employee status and it cannot be assumed that they were all unemployed.

Since 1979 the numbers of people on Training Opportunities Schemes were as follows:

*For The Financial Year*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 90,700 |
| 1980-81 | 82,600 |
| 1981-82 | 71,200 |
| 1982-83 | 72,600 |
| 1983-84 | 80,100 |
| 1984-85 | 87,200 |

The vast majority of these people were unemployed but it cannot be assumed that if they were not an a TOPS course they would otherwise have claimed unemployment benefit. During the 1985-86 financial year there were 210,900 adult training starts, approximately 67,700 of this total were unemployed.

The forecast starts for adult training in 1986-87 were 327,900 with approximately 153,900 unemployed.

### Tourism (Israel)

71. **Mr. Butterfill** asked the Paymaster General whether he has any proposals to encourage the flow of tourism between Britain and Israel.

**Mr. Trippier:** I recently visited Israel and discussed with the Israeli Minister for tourism a number of initiatives to improve the flow of tourism between our two countries. We have agreed to hold an "Israeli week" in the United Kingdom later this year to promote Israel as a winter holiday destination and Israel will hold a British week in October-November to promote travel to the United Kingdom. The British Tourist Authority and the Israeli Tourism Ministry are to hold joint promotions in the USA during March-April to encourage United States tour operators organising trips to Israel to incorporate a visit to the United Kingdom and vice versa. I also made representations to the Israeli Government on a number of issues of concern to the British tourism industry and in particular fiscal measures which restrict outward travel from Israel.

An invitation has been extended to the Israeli Minister for Tourism to visit Britain later in the year when he will have the opportunity to visit tourist attractions in all regions of the country.

### East Midlands

74. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Paymaster General what was the net loss of manufacturing jobs in the east midlands since June 1979.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Between June 1979 and June 1986, there was a net decrease of 109,000 employees in employment in manufacturing industries in the east midlands region.

However, some of the decrease in the figures will be the result of the re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services, and road haulage, previously done by manufacturers' own employees and now done by sub-contractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the decline of manufacturing employment.

### Employment Creation (EC Funds)

76. **Mrs. Shields** asked the Paymaster General what cash has been received in the past 12 months from European Community funds to assist in creating new employment, and new opportunities; and how these moneys have been disbursed.

**Mr. Lee:** Allocations from the European social fund for projects taking place in 1987 have yet to be made by the European Commission. During the calendar year 1986 new allocations totalling some £34 million were approved under the European social fund for projects in the United Kingdom taking place in 1986 specifically related to employment creation. In addition, a further £246 million was approved for other, mainly training, projects in the United Kingdom which also helped to create new employment opportunities. European social fund funds are paid to the sponsors of the particular projects for which assistance is sought. Apart from social fund support, the United Kingdom also receives considerable assistance under the European regional development fund towards projects which help to increase overall employment opportunities.

### Industrial Relations Legislation

77. **Mr. Torney** asked the Paymaster General when he next proposes to meet trades union leaders to discuss industrial relations legislation.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I have no plans to do so at present.

### Labour Mobility

80. **Mr. Colvin** asked the Paymaster General if he is satisfied with the mobility of labour in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** The ability of unemployed (and employed) people to move to other labour markets is an important factor in reducing unemployment and eliminating skill shortages. It also helps to contribute to the flexibility of the labour market, which itself affects our ability to adapt and compete in an expanding and developing economy.

For these reasons the Government provide assistance aiming to help people to find out about jobs in other areas, to travel to job interviews in areas beyond daily travelling distance of their homes, and to move home to other areas. Some of this assistance is provided through the Manpower Services Commission and some through the Department of the Environment, with whom my officials keep in close touch. At the end of last year the Government announced two initiatives of particular relevance to people wanting to take up work in other parts of the country—a planned expansion of "shared ownership", using private finance, and a new scheme of rented housing for young job movers provided by Housing Associations.

### Financial Services

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Paymaster General if he will identify the employment trends in the financial services industries since 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** The information is as follows:

*Employees in Employment: Banking and Finance[1] in Great Britain*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| June 1979 | 434,000 |
| June 1980 | 454,000 |

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| June 1981 | 464,000 |
| June 1982 | 467,000 |
| June 1983 | 484,000 |
| June 1984 | 499,000 |
| June 1985 | 513,000 |
| June 1986 | 527,000 |

[1] Class 81 of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

### Manufacturing Industry

**Mr. Leighton** asked the Paymaster General how many jobs have been lost in manufacturing in London since 1979.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** There are no figures for job gains and job losses. My Department's statistics can give an indication of the net changes in employment by comparing levels of employment at different dates.

Separate figures for Greater London are not available for 1979. Between June 1978 and June 1986 there was a net decrease of 255,000 employees in employment in manufacturing in Greater London.

Some of the decrease in the figures for manufacturing industry will be the result of the re-classification of jobs such as industrial cleaning, catering, computer services and road haulage previously done by manufacturers' own employees and now done by sub-contractors. This developing feature of our economy has the effect of exaggerating the extent of the move from manufacturing to service sector employment.

### New Workers Scheme

**Mr. Wallace** asked the Paymaster General what expenditure has been incurred on the new workers scheme since its inception; and what was the level of expenditure for the Government young workers scheme in a comparable period in 1985-86.

**Mr. Lee:** The new workers scheme opened to employers for jobs which started on or after 1 April 1986. Cumulative expenditure to the end of December last year was (provisionally) £2·2 million. Expenditure on the young workers scheme for the period April to December 1985 was some £22·4 million. These figures are not comparable in that they reflect the retrospective and cumulative nature of support under each scheme, one of which had been operating almost four years and the other only 10 months.

**Mr. Wallace** asked the Paymaster General how many young people in each travel-to-work area in Scotland have taken advantage of the new workers scheme in each travel-to-work area in Scotland in the year 1985-86.

**Mr. Lang:** I have been asked to reply.

The new workers scheme was not announced until the Budget Statement of March 1986 and was therefore not available to young people during the financial year 1985-86. However, at the end of December 1986, there were a total of 2,317 young people in Scotland benefiting from the new workers scheme.

I regret that the information is not available on a travel-to-work area basis.

### Manpower Services Commission

**Dr. Godman** asked the Paymaster General what regulations govern the outside business interests of individuals employed in the Manpower Services Commission or who sit as representatives on area manpower boards; and whether any business interests have to be declared.

**Mr. Trippier:** The regulations governing the outside business interests of individuals employed by the Manpower Services Commission are contained in Department of Employment Group Staff Memorandum 1: Staff Rules and Conditions of Service, which is issued to all staff employed within the Department of Employment Group including the Manpower Services Commission. It is a requirement that outside interests which do or could conflict with official business must be disclosed. I have placed a copy of this Memorandum in the Library.

Members of area manpower boards who have an interest in a particular project or scheme under discussion are required to declare that interest and refrain from voting on the issue. This requirement is contained in a guide on the work of area manpower boards which is given to all Board members. The rules governing declaration of interest are currently under review.

### Radiation Exposure

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Paymaster General, further to his reply to the hon. Member for South Shields on 12 January, *Official Report*, column 53, concerning public levels of radiation exposure, whether maximum annual exposure of five millisieverts is the only recommendation or guidance given by Her Majesty's Nuclear Installations Inspectorate in relation to a new nuclear power station; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier** [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 February 1987]: No. There is a general requirement for exposures to be kept as low as reasonably practicable. Assessors considering the design estimates for a new nuclear power station are given guidance on the assessment reference levels for radiation exposure to members of the public in a booklet "Safety Assessment Principles for Nuclear Power Reactors" published by the Health and Safety Executive. For normal operations the assessment level for any person outside the site boundary is a maximum at 0·17 mSv per annum.

A copy of the booklet has been placed in the Library.

### Gas Supplies

**Dr. Glyn** asked the Paymaster General if he will introduce regulations to provide for a minimum depth at which gas mains pipes made of plastic may be laid under streets and pavements.

**Mr. Trippier** [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 February 1987]: The Health and Safety Executive is currently reviewing safety controls over the gas transmission and distribution system, including the standards to be applied.

### Young Workers Scheme

**Mr. Wallace** asked the Paymaster General in respect of how many young people employers were given assistance under the Government's young workers scheme in each travel-to-work area in Scotland in the year 1985-86.

**Mr. Lang:** I have been asked to reply.

The number of young people in Scotland to whom employers were providing assistance under the young workers scheme in 1985-86 was 7,101.

I regret the information is not available on a travel-to-work area basis.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Labour Mobility

84. **Mr. Stephen Ross** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what resources are available to assist employers in the home counties to recruit and relocate persons from areas of high unemployment elsewhere.

**Mr. John Patten:** The Government are discussing with employers ways of meeting the difficulties which may arise because of regional house price differences. A new "job movers" scheme will allow housing associations to provide flat sharing, at relatively low rents, using a mixture of public and private sector finance. Priority in such schemes will be given to young single people moving to an area to take up employment. People wishing to move to the south-east and become home owners will be helped by provisions in the recent Housing and Planning Act which are designed to help make shared ownership schemes more widely available.

### Rural Areas (Job Opportunities)

85. **Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what steps he proposes to increase job opportunities in rural areas.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The Government's general strategy is designed to provide economic conditions conducive to the creation of employment opportunities in both urban and rural areas. In relation to rural areas in England, the Secretary of State is advised and assisted by the Development Commission and its agency, the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas. The Government have raised the Development Commission's grant-in-aid by about a fifth in real terms since 1983 in recognition of the part the commission plays in stimulating investment and creating jobs. For 1987-88 a further £2 million has been secured for the commission to further its role of encouraging and supporting the diversification of the rural economy. The commission also seeks increasingly to involve and encourage the private sector through support for local enterprise agencies, close co-operation with financial institutions and pump priming investment.

### Local Authorities (Manpower)

86. **Mr. Gerald Howarth** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many people are currently employed by local authorities; and what was the comparable figure for 1978.

**Mr. Chope:** The information is as follows:

*Local Authority employees in England at September*

| | *Number* | *Full Time Equivalents* |
|---|---|---|
| 1986 | 2,398,732 | 1,894, 091 |
| 1978 | 2,440,653 | 1,947,432 |
| | *per cent.* | *per cent.* |
| Change 1978 to 1986 | −1·7 | −2·7 |

### East Sussex

**Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what has been the housing investment programme allocation for each district and borough council in East Sussex in each year since 1974, showing the annual percentage change in cash and real terms, using 1974 as the baseline;

(2) if he will show for each borough and district council in East Sussex expenditure in cash and real terms, respectively, for each year since 1974 on *(a)* new building, *(b)* modernisation, repairs and maintenance and *(c)* assistance to housing associations, trusts and co-operatives.

**Mr. Tracey:** Tables are being placed in the Library showing, for each authority in East Sussex, the housing investment programme allocations from 1978-79, the first year allocations were made, and the requested expenditure figures from 1974-75. Since 1981-82, authorities have been able to augment their HIP allocations by using the prescribed proportion of their capital receipts.

### Local Government Reform

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why there has been further delay in the transfer of assets of Thamesmead from the London Residuary Body to Thamesmead Town Ltd; when the transfer is now expected to take place; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** The terms and timing of this transfer are a matter for negotiation between the London Residuary Body and Thamesmead town. Negotiations have taken longer than expected and are still continuing in consultation with the Department. We wish to see the transfer take place as soon as possible and expect the parties shortly to agree a revised timetable for its completion.

### Defective Housing (Removal Costs)

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he is satisfied with existing arrangements to deal with temporary removal costs incurred by PRC owners and local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** It is for the local authority to decide, in any particular case, whether costs of temporary accommodation during repair might be eligible for assistance, in accordance with the provisions of the housing defects legislation. The Department has given guidance on this to the local authority associations and will continue to monitor the position.

### Pollution (North Sea)

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest assessment of the state of pollution in the North sea; and what information he has about assessment by other Governments.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** An assessment of the state of pollution in the North sea is currently being undertaken by an international group of experts in preparation for the forthcoming North sea conference. I anticipate their interim report will be made available on its completion in the spring of this year.

### Nitrogen Dioxide (London)

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list those London boroughs in which nitrogen dioxide levels in 1986 were such that the European Commission limit value will have been exceeded.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The available data for 1986 indicate that the provisions of directive 85/203/EEC on air quality standards for nitrogen dioxides were not exceeded in Greater London.

### Homelessness

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is the latest information he has for the first three quarters of 1986 on *(a)* the number of households accepted as homeless by local authorities in England whose homelessness resulted from mortgage arrears and *(b)* the percentage of all homeless households which these represented, in each of the first three quarters of 1986.

**Mr. John Patten:** The information requested is contained in "Homeless Households Reported by Local Authorities in England: Results for the third quarter 1986", which was published on 16 January and a copy is held in the House of Commons Library. Table 6 gives the analysis of reasons for homelessness.

### Design Services

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will list the current design programme of work of the design office of the Director General of Design Services, indicating any change since 24 July 1984 arising either from completion of the work or the postponement of the scheme on economy grounds.

**Mr. Chope:** The current programme of work for the design office of the Director General of Design Services comprises some 60 projects with a capital value of over £700 million. The table below gives a breakdown of the projects and also shows that since 24 July 1984, 39 projects have been completed and 16 projects have been postponed due to lack of funds. During the same period a further seven projects were deferred for similar reasons but have now been re-introduced into the current programme.

| | *Civil* | | *Defence* | | *Prisons Programme* | | *Totals* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Projects* *Number* | *Estimated value £ million* | *Projects* *Number* | *Estimated value £ million* | *Projects* *Number* | *Estimated value £ million* | *Projects* *Number* | *Estimated value £ million* |
| Current programme | 23 | 40·6 | 17 | 32·6 | 20 | 632·0 | 60 | 705·2 |
| Completed since 24 July 1984 | 30 | 23·8 | 6 | 9·6 | 3 | 40·3 | 39 | 73·7 |
| Postponed due to lack of funds | 11 | 17·7 | 5 | 5·1 | — | — | 16 | 22·8 |
| Postponed due to lack of funds now in current programme | 2 | 15·4 | 5 | 9·5 | — | — | 7 | 24·9 |

### Property Services Agency

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total number of dwellings completed by the Property Services Agency in 1984, 1985 and 1986 respectively; and what is the programme for 1987.

**Mr. Chope:** The PSA completed 215 dwellings in 1984, 45 dwellings in 1985, 477 dwellings in 1986 and expects to complete 1,051 dwellings in 1987.

### Sports Council

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has had on the proposed merger of the Play Board with the Sports Council; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** I have received some 60 representations from various organisations and individuals about proposals to merge the role and functions of Play Board with those of the Sports Council, the reasons for which were set out in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Rutland and Melton (Mr. Latham) on 26 November, at column 264.

### Heritage Coastline (Devon)

**Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for Environment if, in the light of his decision of October 1986 revoking planning approval for development on the heritage coastline adjacent to Kittery Court, Kingswear, Devon, granted by Mr. P. R. O. Young and the turning down of a request for a public inquiry on 13 January, he will replace Mr. Young as the inspector appointed to hear the new appeal on an application relating to the same premises, reference APP/V1125/A/85/028856.

**Mr. Tracey:** Yes, in the light of the representations received by the Department, another inspector will be appointed to redetermine this appeal.

### Urban Development Grant

**Mr. Sayeed** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which authorities are invited to submit applications for urban development grant; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** Urban development grant has been successful in bringing about private investment which will contribute to the economic and physical regeneration of inner urban areas. 226 approved projects represent £544 million of investment brought about by £105 million of public expenditure. Provision for UDG will continue to be made within the urban aid expenditure block.

Priority will continue to be given [illegible] those areas where there are severe problems of urban deprivation. Invitations to submit further applications for UDG are being sent to those local authorities in England which have been invited to draw up inner area programme for 1987-88. In addition to 49 authorities which have previously been invited to put forward projects for UDG, the following authorities have been invited for the first time:

Bristol
Derby
Halton
Kensington & Chelsea
Kirklees
Plymouth
Preston
Stockton

Applications may be submitted by other authorities, but will be considered in the light of the priority mentioned above.

## Water Pollution

**Sir Peter Blaker** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he proposes to include further waters within the scope of the European Economic Community bathing water directive; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Following consultations with the water industry and the European Commission, the Government have decided to include 362 more waters within the scope of article 1(2)*(a)* of directive 76/160/EEC. The list of these waters for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, is as follows. My hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh, South (Mr. Ancram), the Minister with responsibility for Local Government and the Environment in Scotland, is publishing the corresponding list for Scotland.

We have taken the opportunity to add to the list of waters included in the survey which I announced on 18 December 1985, at column 223. All these waters will in future be surveyed according to the directive's regime. The results of each year's montioring will be reported to the Commission in accordance with article 13 of the directive. I expect soon to publish the results of the 1986 survey.

More than half the waters surveyed already meet the standards set by the directive. Remedial works are in hand or planned for many of the remaining waters which do not at present conform. Our aim is for all these waters to meet the directive' standards, although inevitably this will take a number of years.

*Full list of bathing waters in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, included within the scope of Article 1(2)(a) of Directive 76/160/EEC*

*North West Water Authority—30 waters*

Cleveleys
Fleetwood
Blackpool Squires Gate to South Shore
Blackpool South Shore to Central Pier
Blackpool Central Pier to North Shore
Blackpool North Shore to Cleveleys
Morecombe (West End to Sandylands Pool)
Morecombe (West End Pool to Leisure Park)
Morecombe (Bare Pool to Town Hall Slipway)
Morecombe (Town Hall to Leisure Park)
Heysham
Moreton, Pasture Road
Meols, Dove Point
New Brighton
St. Annes
Walney Island, West Shore
Askam-in-Furness
Walney Island, Sandy Gap
Walney Island, Biggar Bank
Roan Head
St. Bees
Seascale
Haverigg
Silecroft
Silloth
Allonby
Bardsea
Ainsdale
Southport
Formby

*Northumbrian Water Authority—19 waters*

Whitley Bay
Tynemouth
Redcar
Saltburn
Whitburn, Roker
South Shields
South Beach, Seaton Sluice
Seaton Carew
Newbiggin
Druridge Bay
Crimdon
Warkworth
Bamburgh, Seahouses
Alnmouth
Beadnell
Spittall
Low Newton
Marsden
Seaham

*Yorkshire Water Authority—22 waters*

Filey
Whitby
Skipsea
Withernsea
Cayton Bay
Sandsend
Robin Hood's Bay
Hornsea
North Landing, Flamborough
Reighton Sands
Runswick Bay
Wilsthorpe
Fraisthorpe
Earle's Dyke
Turstall
Barmston
South Landing, Flamborough
Staithes
Scarborough, North Bay
Scarborough, South Bay
Bridlington, North Beach
Bridlington, South Beach

*Anglian Water Authority—27 waters*

Skegness
Ingoldmells
Chapel St. Leonards
Anderby Creek
Mogg's Eye
Mablethorpe, Sutton-on-Sea
Cleethorpes
Hunstanton
Heacham
Yarmouth Coast Guard Station
Yarmouth Pier
Yarmouth Hospital
Lowestoft North Beach
Lowestoft South Beach
Cromer
Sheringham
Felixstowe North Beach
Felixstowe South Beach
Wells
Mundesley
Clacton
Walton

Dovercourt
Frinton
Jaywick
Brightlingsea
Holland

*Southern Water Authority—65 waters*
Ventnor
Bembridge
St. Helens
Cowes
Compton Bay
Whitecliffe Bay
Totland Bay
Seagrove
Colwell Bay
Gurnard
Margate
Ramsgate
Broadstairs
Folkestone
Camber Sands
St. Mildreds Bay
Herne Bay
Hythe
Joss Bay
St. Margarets Bay
Sandgate
West Beach
Minnis Bay
Deal Castle
Sandwich Bay
Littlestone
St. Marys Bay
Dymchurch
Leysdown
Southsea, South Parade Pier
West Hayling
West of Eaststoke
Stokes Bay
Lee-on-Solent
Eastney
Highcliffe
Milford-on-Sea
Calshot
Lepe
Christchurch Bay (Barton-on-Sea)
Brighton
Eastbourne
Hastings
Hove
Bognor Regis
Pevensey Bay
Littlehampton
Worthing
Bexhill
Rottingdean and Saltdean
Middleton on Sea
Bracklesham
Norman's Bay
Selsey
West Wittering
South Lancing
Seaford
Winchelsea
Newhaven
Shoreham
Pagham
Margate (previously classified water)
Ryde, East Sands
Sandown, Esplanade
Sandown, Shanklin Chine

*Wessex Water Authority—38 waters*
Clevedon (beach near swimming pool)
Weston-super-Mare extension (between river Axe and previously classified bathing water)
Sand Bay

Brean (continuous beach Brean Down to River Brue)
Berrow (continuous beach Brean Down to River Brue)
Burnham-on-Sea (continuous beach Brean Down to River Brue)

Blue Anchor
Dunster
Minehead
Porlock Weir

Charmouth
Seatown
Eypemouth
West Bay (West)

Portland Harbour (Castle Grove)
Portland Harbour (Sandsfoot Castle)
Weymouth Extension
Church Ope Cove
Bowleaze Cove

Ringstead
Durdle Door (East)
Durdle Door (West)
Lulworth Cove
Kimmeridge
Studland
Shell Bay

Poole Harbour, Lake
Poole Harbour, Rockley Sands
Poole Harbour, Shore Road

Hengistbury Head (East)
Mudeford Sandbank (West)

Highcliffe
Christchurch
Bournemouth
Poole, Sandbanks
Swanage
Weymouth
Weston-super-Mare

*South West Water Authority—103 waters*
Lyme Regis
Seaton
Beer
Sidmouth
Budleigh Salterton
Sandy Bay
Exmouth
Dawlish Warren
Dawlish
Teignmouth
Shaldon
Ness Cove
Maidencombe
Watcombe
Babbacombe
Redgate
Hollicombe
Shoalstone
St. Mary's
Dartmouth Castle and Sugary Cove
Stoke Fleming, Blackpool Sands
Slapton Sands
Millbay
Salcombe, North Sands
Salcombe, South Sands
Hope Cove
Thurlestone
Bantham
Bigbury
Challaborough
Mothecombe
Wembury
Bovisand
Plymouth Hoe
Seaton
East Looe

Readymoney
Polkerris
Par and Spit
Crinnis, Carlyon Bay
Charlestown and Duporth
Porthpean
Pentewan
Polstreath
Port Mellon
Gorran Haven
Portluney
Pendower
Gyllyngvase
Swanpool
Maen Porth
Porthallow
Porthoustock
Coverack
Kennack Sands
Mullion Cove
Polurrian Cove
Poldhu Cove
Gunwalloe Cove
Porthleven
Praa Sands
Marazion and Mounts Bay
Porthcurno
Carbis Bay and Port Kidney
The Towans (Hayloe to Gwithian)
Portreath
Porthowan
Trevaunance Cove
Perranporth
Hoylwell Bay
Crantock
Watergate
Mawgan Porth
Treyarnon Bay
Trevone Bay
Harlyn Bay
Rock
Daymer Bay
Polzeath
Widemouth Sand
Bude
Hartland Quay
Westward Ho!
Instow
Saunton Sands
Croyde Bay
Woolacombe Sand
Ilfracombe
Combe Martin
Lynmouth
Porth Gwidden
Perran Sands
Torquay, Oddicombe
Torquay, Meadfoot
Torquay, Torre Abbey
Paignton, Paignton Beach
Paignton, Goodrington
Paignton, Broadsands
Penzance, Sennen
St. Ives, Porthmeor
St. Ives, Porthminster
Newquay, Fistral
Newquay, Towan

*Welsh Water Authority—46 waters*
Barry, Jacksons Bay
Barry, Whitmore Bay
Barry, Cold Knap
Southerdown
Trecco Bay
Sandy Bay
Rest Bay
Aberavon
Swansea Bay
Bracelet Bay
Caswell Bay
Limeslade Bay
Langland Bay
Oxwich Bay
Port Eyon Bay
Rhossili Bay
Pembrey
Pendine
Amroth
Saunderfoot
Tenby North
Tenby South
Broadhaven
Newgale
Whitesands Bay
Newquay
Aberystwyth North
Aberystwyth South
Borth
Tywyn
Fairbourne
Barmouth
Llandanwg
Harlech
Morfa Bychan
Criccieth
Pwllheli
Abersoch
Benlleck
Trearddur Bay
Llandudno North Shore
Llandudno South Shore
Colwyn Bay
Kinmel Bay
Rhyl
Prestatyn

*Northern Ireland—14 waters*
Benone, Co Londonderry
Castlerock, Co Londonderry
Portstewart, Co Londonderry
Portrush, Co Antrim
Helen's Bay, Co Down
Crawfordsburn, Co Down
Bangor (Ballyholme), Co Down
Gromsport, Co Down
Millisle, Co Down
Newcastle, Co Down
Cranfield, Co Down
Tyrella, Co Down
Ballycastle, Co Antrim
Brown's Bay, Co Antrim

*Thames Water Authority—2 waters*
Southend, Thorpe Bay
Southend, Westcliff

## Land Register

**Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) how much land currently on the register of vacant and derelict public land, belongs to the Ministry of Defence and how much has been sold in each of the last five years, and if he will make a statement;

(2) how much land is currently on the register of vacant and derelict public land belongs to the Department of Transport, and how much has been sold in each of the last five years, and if he will make a statement;

(3) how much land currently on the register of vacant and derelict public land belongs to *(a)* his Department *(b)* regional health authorities or *(c)* district health authorities; and how much has been sold in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement;

(4) how much land currently on the register of vacant and derelict public land, belongs to the Department of the Environment and how much has been sold in each of the last five years, and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten** [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 January 1987, c. *244*]: Following is the information:

| | *Acres registered 26 January 1987* | *Acres Sold* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | [1]*1981-82* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* |
| Department of Environment | 819 | 111 | 12 | 86 | 36 | 35 |
| Department of Health and Social Security | 513 | [2]20 | [2]21 | — | — | 10 |
| Regional Health Authorities | 3,610 | | | 13 | 94 | 207 |
| District Health Authorities | 760 | | | 8 | 125 | 29 |
| Ministry of Defence | 1,030 | 869 | 62 | 367 | 470 | 62 |
| Department of Transport | 275 | — | — | — | 13 | 26 |

*Notes*:

[1] Information about sales in the individual years 1981 and 1982 is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

[2] Sales by these organisations in the years 1981-1983 are not identified separately.

## SCOTLAND

### Manufacturing Jobs

82. **Mr. James Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the net loss in manufacturing jobs in Scotland since June 1979.

**Mr. Lang:** The number of employees in employment in manufacturing in Scotland is estimated to have fallen on a seasonally adjusted basis by 195,000 between June 1979 and September 1986. The seasonal adjustment factors used are provisional.

### Travel-to-Work Areas

83. **Mr. Bill Walker** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has any plans to change the status of the Blairgowrie, Pitlochry, Aberfeldy travel-to-work area.

**Mr. Lang:** There are no plans to change the status of the Blairgowrie, Pitlochry, Aberfeldy travel-to-work area.

The present assisted area structure was established only two years ago after a comprehensive review of regional policy and the assisted area map. In the interests of maintaining stability in regional incentives, the Government have concluded that it is too early for changes in the map to be considered

### Infant Deaths

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table. In this and subsequent tables when a number is less than 10 the corresponding rate is regarded as unreliable and has not been provided.

*Number of live Singleton births and all live births registered in Scotland in 1984 and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths and infant deaths by gestational age*

| | | *Singletons* | | | | *All births* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Gestation (Weeks)* | | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal deaths* | *Infant deaths* | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal deaths* | *Infant deaths* |
| <22 | Number | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 |
| | Rate | | (..) | — | (..) | | (..) | — | (..) |
| 22-24 | Number | 38 | 34 | 1 | 35 | 49 | 45 | 1 | 46 |
| | Rate | | 894·7 | (..) | 921·1 | | 918·4 | (..) | 938·8 |
| 25-27 | Number | 118 | 58 | 7 | 65 | 159 | 82 | 10 | 92 |
| | Rate | | 491·5 | (..) | 550·8 | | 515·7 | 62·9 | 578·6 |
| 28-31 | Number | 406 | 66 | 12 | 78 | 473 | 76 | 14 | 90 |
| | Rate | | 162·6 | 29·6 | 192·1 | | 160·7 | 29·6 | 190·3 |
| 32-36 | Number | 2,957 | 61 | 25 | 86 | 3,419 | 68 | 31 | 99 |
| | Rate | | 20·6 | 8·5 | 29·1 | | 19·9 | 9·1 | 29·0 |
| 37-41 | Number | 57,462 | 109 | 140 | 249 | 58,203 | 114 | 149 | 263 |
| | Rate | | 1·9 | 2·4 | 4·3 | | 2·0 | 2·6 | 4·5 |
| 42+ | Number | 2,308 | 5 | 7 | 12 | 2,308 | 5 | 7 | 12 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) | 5·2 | | (..) | (..) | 5·2 |
| Not known | Number | 482 | 14 | 28 | 42 | 494 | 17 | 28 | 45 |
| Total | Number | 63,772 | 348 | 220 | 568 | 65,106 | 408 | 240 | 648 |
| | Rate | | 5·5 | 3·4 | 8·9 | | 6·3 | 3·7 | 10·0 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number total Singleton births and total births registered in Scotland in 1984 and the number and rate per 1,000 of stillbirths, and perinatal deaths, with underlying cause other than congenital malformation by gestational age*

| Gestation | | Singletons<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | All births<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| < 28 | Number | 157 | — | 77 | 212 | 3 | 114 |
| | Rate | | — | 490·4 | | (. .) | 537·7 |
| 28-31 | Number | 482 | 69 | 107 | 559 | 78 | 124 |
| | Rate | | 143·2 | 222·0 | | 139·5 | 221·8 |
| 32-36 | Number | 3,076 | 108 | 135 | 3,545 | 113 | 145 |
| | Rate | | 35·1 | 43·9 | | 31·9 | 40·9 |
| 37-41 | Number | 57,600 | 133 | 162 | 58,345 | 137 | 169 |
| | Rate | | 2·3 | 2·8 | | 2·3 | 2·9 |
| 42 + | Number | 2,312 | 3 | 4 | 2,312 | 3 | 4 |
| | Rate | | 1·3 | 1·7 | | 1·3 | 1·7 |
| Not known | Number | 498 | 14 | 20 | 512 | 16 | 25 |
| Total | Number | 64,125 | 327 | 505 | 65,485 | 350 | 581 |
| | Rate | | 5·1 | 7·9 | | 5·3 | 8·9 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages; 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of total singleton births and total births registered in Scotland in 1984 and the number and rates per 1,000 of still births, and perinatal deaths, with an underlying cause of congenital malformation by gestational age*

| Gestation | | Singletons<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | All births<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <28 | Number | 157 | — | 4 | 212 | — | 5 |
| | Rate | | — | (. .) | | — | (. .) |
| 28-31 | Number | 482 | 7 | 23 | 559 | 8 | 25 |
| | Rate | | (. .) | 47·7 | | (. .) | 44·7 |
| 32-36 | Number | 3,076 | 11 | 39 | 3,545 | 13 | 43 |
| | Rate | | 3·6 | 12·7 | | 3·7 | 12·1 |
| 37-41 | Number | 57,600 | 5 | 51 | 58,345 | 5 | 52 |
| | Rate | | (. .) | 0·9 | | (. .) | 0·9 |
| 42+ | Number | 2,312 | 1 | 3 | 2,312 | 1 | 3 |
| | Rate | | (. .) | (. .) | | (. .) | (. .) |
| Not known | Number | 498 | 2 | 4 | 512 | 2 | 4 |
| Total | Number | 64,125 | 26 | 124 | 65,485 | 29 | 132 |
| | Rate | | 0·4 | 1·9 | | 0·4 | 2·0 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* singleton *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths tabulated accoring to the following gestational ages: 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42 plus weeks and with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of total singleton births and total births registered in Scotland in 1984 and the number and rates per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths by gestational age*

| Gestation (Weeks) | | Singletons<br>All births | Still births | Perinatial deaths | All births<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <28 | Number | 157 | — | 81 | 212 | 3 | 119 |
| | Rate | | — | 515·9 | | (. .) | 561·3 |
| 28-31 | Number | 482 | 76 | 130 | 559 | 86 | 149 |
| | Rate | | 157·7 | 269·7 | | 153·8 | 266·5 |
| 32-36 | Number | 3,076 | 119 | 174 | 3,545 | 126 | 188 |
| | Rate | | 38·7 | 56·6 | | 35·5 | 53·0 |
| 37-41 | Number | 57,600 | 138 | 213 | 58,345 | 142 | 221 |
| | Rate | | 2·4 | 3·7 | | 2·4 | 3·8 |

| Gestation (Weeks) | | Singletons<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | All births<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42+ | Number | 2,312 | 4 | 7 | 2,312 | 4 | 7 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) | | (..) | (..) |
| Not known | Number | 498 | 16 | 24 | 512 | 18 | 29 |
| Total | Number | 64,125 | 353 | 629 | 65,485 | 379 | 713 |
| | Rate | | 5·5 | 9·8 | | 5·8 | 10·9 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland; the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759); and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 grammes, 1,500 to 1,999 grammes, 2,000 to 2,499 grammes, 2,500 to 2,999 grammes, 3,000 to 3,499 grammes, 3,500 to 3,999 grammes, 4,000 grammes plus and unstated birthweight.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in table.

*Number of total singleton births and total births registered in Scotland in 1984 and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths, and infant deaths with underlying cause other than congenital malformation by birthweight*

| | | Singletons | | | | | | All births | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Birthweight | | All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths | All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths |
| <1,500 | Number | 569 | 70 | 184 | 131 | 15 | 146 | 725 | 84 | 239 | 173 | 19 | 192 |
| | Rate | | 123·0 | 323·4 | 265·7 | 30·4 | 296·1 | | 115·9 | 329·7 | 273·3 | 30·0 | 303·3 |
| 1,500-1,999 | Number | 755 | 49 | 60 | 15 | 10 | 25 | 916 | 53 | 66 | 17 | 14 | 31 |
| | Rate | | 64·9 | 79·5 | 21·4 | 14·2 | 35·6 | | 57·9 | 72·1 | 19·8 | 16·3 | 36·1 |
| 2,000-2,499 | Number | 2,391 | 51 | 64 | 14 | 8 | 22 | 2,805 | 52 | 68 | 17 | 13 | 30 |
| | Rate | | 21·3 | 26·8 | 6·0 | (.) | 9·4 | | 18·5 | 24·2 | 6·2 | 4·7 | 10·9 |
| 2,500-2,999 | Number | 11,071 | 48 | 57 | 17 | 29 | 46 | 11,505 | 48 | 59 | 19 | 33 | 52 |
| | Rate | | 4·3 | 5·1 | 1·5 | 2·6 | 4·2 | | 4·2 | 5·1 | 1·7 | 2·9 | 4·5 |
| 3,000-3,499 | Number | 24,439 | 43 | 54 | 18 | 52 | 70 | 24,596 | 44 | 55 | 18 | 53 | 71 |
| | Rate | | 1·8 | 2·2 | 0·7 | 2·1 | 2·9 | | 1·8 | 2·2 | 0·7 | 2·2 | 2·9 |
| 3,500-3,999 | Number | 18,638 | 19 | 25 | 7 | 27 | 34 | 18,665 | 19 | 25 | 7 | 27 | 34 |
| | Rate | | 1·0 | 1·3 | (.) | 1·5 | 1·8 | | 1·0 | 1·3 | (.) | 1·4 | 1·8 |
| 4,000+ | Number | 6,196 | 6 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 6,195 | 6 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 16 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 1·8 | (.) | (.) | 2·6 | | (.) | 1·8 | (.) | (.) | 2·6 |
| Not known | Number | 66 | 41 | 50 | 15 | 18 | 33 | 78 | 44 | 58 | 19 | 19 | 38 |
| Total | Number | 64,125 | 327 | 505 | 225 | 167 | 392 | 65,485 | 350 | 581 | 278 | 186 | 464 |
| | Rate | | 5·1 | 7·9 | 3·5 | 2·6 | 6·1 | | 5·3 | 8·9 | 4·3 | 2·9 | 7·2 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 grammes, 1,500 to 1,999 grammes, 2,000 to 2,499 grammes, 2,500 to 2,999 grammes, 3,000 to 3,499 grammes, 3,500 to 3,999 grammes, 4,000 grammes plus and unstated birthweight.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of total singleton births and total births registered in Scotland in 1984 and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths, and infant deaths with underlying cause of congenital malformation by birthweight*

| | | Singletons | | | | | | All births | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Birthweight (Grammes) | | All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths | All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths |
| <1,500 | Number | 569 | 6 | 19 | 14 | 3 | 17 | 725 | 8 | 24 | 17 | 4 | 21 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 33·4 | 28·4 | (.) | 34·5 | | (.) | 33·1 | 26·9 | (.) | 33·2 |
| 1,500-1,999 | Number | 755 | 2 | 30 | 27 | 2 | 29 | 916 | 4 | 31 | 28 | 2 | 30 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 39·7 | 38·5 | (.) | 41·3 | | (.) | 33·8 | 32·6 | (.) | 34·9 |

| Birthweight: Grammes | | Singletons<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths | All births<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2,000-2,499 | Number | 2,391 | 9 | 21 | 17 | 10 | 27 | 2,805 | 9 | 21 | 17 | 11 | 28 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 8·8 | 7·3 | 4·3 | 11·6 | | (.) | 7·5 | 6·2 | 4·0 | 10·2 |
| 2,500-2,999 | Number | 11,071 | 2 | 19 | 22 | 9 | 31 | 11,505 | 2 | 19 | 23 | 9 | 32 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 1·7 | 2·0 | (.) | 2·8 | | (.) | 1·7 | 2·0 | (.) | 2·8 |
| 3,000-3,499 | Number | 24,439 | 2 | 17 | 22 | 15 | 37 | 24,596 | 2 | 17 | 22 | 15 | 37 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 0·7 | 0·9 | 0·6 | 1·5 | | (.) | 0·7 | 0·9 | 0·6 | 1·5 |
| 3,500-3,999 | Number | 18,638 | — | 7 | 10 | 3 | 13 | 18,665 | — | 7 | 10 | 3 | 13 |
| | Rate | | — | (.) | 0·5 | (.) | 0·7 | | — | (.) | 0·5 | (.) | 0·7 |
| 4,000 + | Number | 6,196 | — | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 6,195 | — | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| | Rate | | — | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) | | — | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) |
| Not known | Number | 66 | 3 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 19 | 78 | 4 | 11 | 11 | 9 | 20 |
| Total | Number | 64,125 | 26 | 124 | 123 | 53 | 176 | 65,485 | 29 | 132 | 130 | 54 | 184 |
| | Rate | | 0·4 | 1·9 | 1·9 | 0·8 | 2·8 | | 0·4 | 2·0 | 2·0 | 0·8 | 2·8 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 grammes, 1,500 to 1,999 grammes, 2,000 to 2,499 grammes, 2,500 to 2,999 grammes, 3,000 to 3,499 grammes, 3,500 to 3,999 grammes, 4,000 grammes plus and unstated birthweight.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of total singleton births and total births registered in Scotland in 1984 and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths, and infant deaths by birthweight*

| Birthweight | | Singletons<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths | All births<br>All births | Still births | Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <1,500 | Number | 569 | 76 | 203 | 145 | 18 | 163 | 725 | 92 | 263 | 190 | 23 | 213 |
| | Rate | | 133.6 | 356·8 | 294·1 | 36·5 | 330·6 | | 126·9 | 362·8 | 300·2 | 36·3 | 336·5 |
| 1,500-1,999 | Number | 755 | 53 | 90 | 42 | 12 | 54 | 916 | 57 | 97 | 45 | 16 | 61 |
| | Rate | | 70·2 | 119·2 | 59·8 | 17·1 | 76·9 | | 62·2 | 105[illegible] | 52·4 | 18·6 | 71·0 |
| 2,000-2,499 | Number | 2,391 | 60 | 85 | 31 | 18 | 49 | 2,805 | 61 | 89 | 34 | 24 | 58 |
| | Rate | | 25·1 | 35·5 | 13·3 | 7·7 | 21·0 | | 21·7 | 31·7 | 12·4 | 8·7 | 21·1 |
| 2,500-2,999 | Number | 11,071 | 50 | 76 | 39 | 38 | 77 | 11,505 | 50 | 78 | 42 | 42 | 84 |
| | Rate | | 4·5 | 6·7 | 3·5 | 2·5 | 7·0 | | 4·3 | 6·8 | 3·7 | 3·7 | 7·3 |
| 3,000-3,499 | Number | 24,439 | 45 | 71 | 40 | 67 | 107 | 24,596 | 46 | 72 | 40 | 68 | 108 |
| | Rate | | 1·8 | 2·9 | 1·6 | 2·7 | 4·4 | | 1·9 | 2·9 | 1·6 | 2·8 | 4·4 |
| 3,500-3,999 | Number | 18,638 | 19 | 32 | 17 | 30 | 47 | 18,665 | 19 | 32 | 17 | 30 | 47 |
| | Rate | | 1·0 | 1·7 | 0·9 | 1·6 | 2·5 | | 1·0 | 1·7 | 0·9 | 1·6 | 2·5 |
| 4,000 + | Number | 6,196 | 6 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 19 | 6,195 | 6 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 19 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 2·1 | 1·6 | (.) | 3·1 | | (.) | 2·1 | 1·6 | (.) | 3·1 |
| Not known | Number | 66 | 44 | 59 | 24 | 28 | 52 | 78 | 48 | 69 | 30 | 28 | 58 |
| Total | Number | 64,125 | 353 | 629 | 348 | 220 | 568 | 65,485 | 379 | 713 | 408 | 240 | 648 |
| | Rate | | 5·5 | 9·8 | 5·5 | 3·4 | 8·9 | | 5·8 | 10·9 | 6·3 | 3·7 | 10·0 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland which were conducted by *(a)* caesarian section and *(b)* instrumental delivery the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories, under 1,500 grammes, 1,500 to 1,999 grammes, 2,000 to 2,499 grammes, 2,500 to 2,999 grammes, 3,000 to 3,499 grammes, 3,500 to 3,999 grammes, 4,000 plus grammes; and unstated birthweight.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of all births registered in Scotland in 1984 Delivered by (a) caesarian section or (b) by instrumental delivery, and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths and infant deaths by birthweight*

| Mode Birthweight | | All births | Total births | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Still births | Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths |
| *Caesarian Section* | | | | | | | |
| < 1,500 | Number | 286 | 8 | 59 | 59 | 11 | 70 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 206·3 | 212·2 | 39·6 | 251·8 |
| 1,500-1,999 | Number | 383 | 6 | 19 | 14 | 5 | 19 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 49·6 | 37·1 | (.) | 50·4 |
| 2,000-2,499 | Number | 660 | 3 | 12 | 12 | 7 | 19 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 18·2 | 18·3 | (.) | 28·9 |
| 2,500-2,999 | Number | 1,535 | 6 | 14 | 11 | 5 | 16 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 9·1 | 7·2 | (.) | 10·5 |
| 3,000-3,499 | Number | 2,671 | 10 | 12 | 6 | 10 | 16 |
| | Rate | | 3·7 | 4·5 | (.) | 3·8 | 6·0 |
| 3,500-3,999 | Number | 2,053 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) |
| 4,000 + | Number | 939 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) |
| Not known | Number | 9 | — | 2 | 2 | — | 2 |
| Total | Number | 8,536 | 37 | 129 | 111 | 43 | 154 |
| | Rate | | 4·3 | 15·1 | 13·1 | 5·1 | 18·1 |
| *Instrumental Delivery* | | | | | | | |
| < 1,500 | Number | 33 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 303·0 | (.) | (.) | (.) |
| 1,500-1,999 | Number | 82 | 1 | 6 | 5 | — | 5 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) | (.) | — | (.) |
| 2,000-2,499 | Number | 317 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) |
| 2,500-2,999 | Number | 1,291 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) |
| 3,000-3,499 | Number | 2,923 | 6 | 13 | 9 | 6 | 15 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 4·4 | (.) | (.) | 5·1 |
| 3,500-3,999 | Number | 2,308 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) |
| 4,000 + | Number | 863 | 2 | 2 | — | 2 | 2 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) | — | (.) | (.) |
| Not known | Number | 8 | — | 2 | 2 | — | 2 |
| Total | Number | 7,825 | 20 | 43 | 27 | 18 | 45 |
| | Rate | | 2·6 | 5·5 | 3·5 | 2·3 | 5·8 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents in Scotland and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the age of the mother in the following age ranges: under 16 years, 16 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years and 35 years respectively.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Numbers of total births and live births registered in Scotland in 1984, and number and rate of stillbirths, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths and infant deaths per 1,000 by maternal age*

| Age of mother | | All births | All live births | Still births | Total Births<br>Perinatal deaths | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| < 15 | Number | 19 | 19 | — | — | — | 1 | 1 |
| | Rate | | | — | — | — | (.) | (.) |
| 15-19 | Number | 6,380 | 6,314 | 66 | 102 | 41 | 27 | 68 |
| | Rate | | | 10·3 | 16·0 | 6·5 | 4·3 | 10·8 |
| 20-24 | Number | 20,880 | 20,776 | 104 | 209 | 123 | 70 | 193 |
| | Rate | | | 5·0 | 10·0 | 5·9 | 3·4 | 9·3 |
| 25-29 | Number | 22,871 | 22,754 | 118 | 224 | 135 | 61 | 196 |
| | Rate | | | 5·2 | 9·8 | 5·9 | 2·7 | 8·6 |
| 30-34 | Number | 11,244 | 11,181 | 62 | 126 | 76 | 44 | 120 |
| | Rate | | | 5·5 | 11·2 | 6·8 | 3·9 | 10·7 |
| 35+ | Number | 4,091 | 4,062 | 29 | 52 | 27 | 14 | 41 |
| | Rate | | | 7·1 | 12·7 | 6·6 | 3·4 | 10·1 |
| Not known[1] | Number | — | — | — | — | [1]6 | [1]23 | [1]29 |
| Total | Number | 65,485 | 65,106 | 379 | 713 | 408 | 240 | 648 |
| | Rate | | | 5·8 | 10·9 | 6·3 | 3·9 | 10·0 |

[1] Includes 29 deaths of babies born in 1984 outwith hospital or in England.

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents in Scotland and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to whether the mother had had *(a)* no, *(b)* one, *(c)* two, *(d)* three and *(e)* four or more pregnancies resulting in a registrable birth.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of Total Births and Live Births Registered in Scotland in 1984 and Number and Rate per 1,000 of Stillbirths, Perinatal deaths, Neonatal deaths, Post-Neonatal Deaths and Infant Deaths by Parity*

| Parity | | All Births | All Live Births | Still Births | Total Births<br>Perinatal Deaths | Neonatal Deaths | Post-neonatal Deaths | Infant Deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | Number | 28,322 | 28,140 | 181 | 332 | 168 | 82 | 250 |
| | Rate | | | 6·4 | 11·7 | 6·0 | 2·9 | 8·9 |
| 1 | Number | 22,750 | 22,637 | 112 | 217 | 135 | 77 | 212 |
| | Rate | | | 4·9 | 9·5 | 6·0 | 3·4 | 9·4 |
| 2 | Number | 9,844 | 9,792 | 52 | 105 | 68 | 40 | 108 |
| | Rate | | | 5·3 | 10·7 | 6·9 | 4·1 | 11·0 |
| 3 | Number | 3,080 | 3,064 | 16 | 23 | 10 | 9 | 19 |
| | Rate | | | 5·2 | 7·5 | 3·3 | (..) | 6·2 |
| 4+ | Number | 1,468 | 1,452 | 14 | 27 | 16 | 9 | 25 |
| | Rate | | | 9·5 | 18·4 | 11·0 | (..) | 17·2 |
| Not Known[1] | Number | 21 | 21 | 4 | 9 | [1]11 | [1]23 | [1]34 |
| Total | Number | 65,485 | 65,106 | 379 | 713 | 408 | 240 | 648 |
| | Rate | | | 5·8 | 10·9 | 6·3 | 3·7 | 10·0 |

[1] Includes 29 deaths of babies born in 1984 outwith hospital or born in England.

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of live birth and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant death with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: (i) under 22 weeks, (ii) 22 to 24 weeks, (iii) 25 to 27 weeks, (iv) 28 to 31 weeks, (v) 32 to 36 weeks, (vi) 37 to 41 weeks, (vii) 42 plus weeks and (viii) with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table. There is difficulty in identifying which twin died in the late neonatal and post-neonatal deaths and in excluding the data on triplet births and deaths. Accordingly in this and subsequent tables data are given for multiple births.

*Number of all multiple births and live multiple births registered in Scotland in 1984 and number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying cause other than congenital malformation by gestational age.*

| Gestation | | All multiples | Live births | Neonatal deaths | Post-neonatal deaths | Infant deaths |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| < 22 | Number | 1 | 0 | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | | — | — | — |

| *Gestation* | | *All multiples* | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal deaths* | *Infant deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22-24 | Number | 12 | 11 | 11 | — | 11 |
| | Rate | | | 1,000 | — | 1,000 |
| 25-27 | Number | 42 | 41 | 23 | 2 | 25 |
| | Rate | | | 561·0 | (..) | 609·8 |
| 28-31 | Number | 77 | 67 | 9 | 2 | 11 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | (..) | 164·2 |
| 32-36 | Number | 469 | 462 | 5 | 5 | 10 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | (..) | 21·6 |
| 37-41 | Number | 745 | 741 | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | (..) | 16·2 |
| 42+ | Number | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | | — | — | — |
| Not known | Number | 14 | 12 | 3 | — | — |
| Total | Number | 1,360 | 1,334 | 54 | 18 | 72 |
| | Rate | | | 40·5 | 13·5 | 54·0 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages (i) under 22 weeks, (ii) 22 to 24 weeks, (iii) 25 to 27 weeks, (iv) 28 to 31 weeks, (v) 32 to 36 weeks, (vi) 37 to 41 weeks, (vii) 42+ weeks and (viii) with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of all multiple births and live multiple births registered in Scotland in 1984, and number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying cause of congenital malformation by gestational age*

| *Gestation* | | *All Multiples* | *Live Births* | *Neonatal Deaths* | *Post-neonatal Deaths* | *Infant Deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <22 | Number | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | | — | — | — |
| 22-24 | Number | 12 | 11 | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | | — | — | — |
| 25-27 | Number | 42 | 41 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | (..) | (..) |
| 28-31 | Number | 77 | 67 | 1 | — | 1 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | — | (..) |
| 32-36 | Number | 469 | 462 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | (..) | (..) |
| 37-41 | Number | 745 | 741 | 1 | — | 1 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | — | (..) |
| 42+ | Number | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | | — | — | — |
| Not known | Number | 14 | 12 | — | — | — |
| Total | Number | 1,360 | 1,334 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | (.) | (.) |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for (i) first twins and (ii) second twins born in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages *(a)* under 22 weeks, *(b)* 22 to 24 weeks, *(c)* 25 to 27 weeks, *(d)* 28 to 31 weeks, *(e)* 32 to 36 weeks, *(f)* 37 to 41 weeks, *(g)* 42 plus weeks and *(h)* with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of all multiple births and live multiple births registered in Scotland in 1984, and number of rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths and infant deaths by gestational age*

| *Gestation* | | *All multiples* | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal deaths* | *Infant deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| < 22 | Number | 1 | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | | | | |
| 22-24 | Number | 12 | 11 | 11 | — | 11 |
| | Rate | | | 1,000 | — | 1,000 |
| 25-27 | Number | 42 | 41 | 24 | 3 | 27 |
| | Rate | | | 585·4 | (..) | 658·5 |
| 28-31 | Number | 77 | 67 | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| | Rate | | | 149·3 | (.) | 179·1 |
| 32-36 | Number | 469 | 462 | 7 | 6 | 13 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | (..) | 28·1 |
| 37-41 | Number | 745 | 741 | 4 | 9 | 13 |
| | Rate | | | (..) | (..) | 17·5 |
| 42 + | Number | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | | — | — | — |
| Not known | Number | 14 | 12 | 3 | — | 3 |
| Total | Number | 1,360 | 1,334 | 59 | 20 | 79 |
| | Rate | | | 44·2 | 15·0 | 59·2 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for (i) first twins and (ii) second twins born in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages *(a)* 28 to 31 weeks, *(b)* 32 to 36 weeks, *(c)* 37 to 41 weeks, *(d)* 42 plus weeks and *(e)* with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of registered multiple births in Scotland in 1984 and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with underlying cause other than congenital malformation by gestational age*

| *Gestation (Weeks)* | | *Total births* | *Still births* | *Perinatal deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <28 | Number | 55 | 3 | 37 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 672·7 |
| 28-31 | Number | 77 | 9 | 17 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) |
| 32-36 | Number | 469 | 5 | 10 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) |
| 37-41 | Number | 745 | 4 | 7 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) |
| 42 + | Number | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — |
| Not known | Number | 14 | 2 | 5 |
| Total | Number | 1,360 | 23 | 76 |
| | Rate | | 16·9 | 55·9 |

**Mr. Cartter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for (i) first twins and (ii) second twins born in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause tabulated according to the following gestational ages *(a)* 28 to 31 weeks, *(b)* 32 to 36 weeks, *(c)* 37 to 41 weeks, *(d)* 42 plus weeks and *(e)* with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of multiple births registered in Scotland in 1948 and number and rate per 1,000 of stillbirths and perinatal deaths with an underlying cause of congenital malformation by gestational age*

| *Gestation* | | *Total Births* | *Stillbirths* | *Perinatal Deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <28 | Number | 55 | — | 1 |
| | Rate | | — | (..) |
| 28-31 | Number | 77 | 1 | 2 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) |
| 32-36 | Number | 469 | 2 | 4 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) |
| 37-41 | Number | 745 | — | 1 |
| | Rate | | — | (..) |
| 42+ | Number | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — |
| Not known | Number | 14 | — | — |
| Total | Number | 1,360 | 3 | 8 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Scotland the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759); and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories, under 1,500 grammes, 1,500 to 1,999 grammes, 2,000 to 2,499 grammes, 2,500 to 2,999 grammes, 3,000 to 3,499 grammes, 3,500 to 3,999 grammes, 4,000 grammes and unstated birthweight.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of multiple births registered in Scotland in 1984 and the number and rate per 1,000 of stillbirths, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying cause other than congenital malformation by birthweight*

| *Birthweight* | | *All multiples* | *Still births* | *Perinatal deaths* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Postneonatal deaths* | *Infant deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <1,500 | Number | 154 | 14 | 55 | 42 | 4 | 46 |
| | Rate | | 90·9 | 357·1 | 300·0 | (.) | 328·6 |
| 1,500 to 1,999 | Number | 159 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) | (.) | (.) | (..) |
| 2,000 to 2,499 | Number | 409 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) | (..) | (.) | (..) |
| 2,500 to 2,999 | Number | 431 | — | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| | Rate | | — | (.) | (..) | (.) | (..) |
| 3,000 to 3,499 | Number | 163 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 1 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (.) | — | (.) | (..) |
| 3,500 to 3,999 | Number | 32 | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — | — | — | — |
| 4,000 plus | Number | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — | — | — | — |
| Not known | Number | 12 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Total | Number | 1,360 | 23 | 76 | 53 | 19 | 72 |
| | Rate | | 16·9 | 55·9 | 39·7 | 14·2 | 54·0 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Scotland the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories, under 1,500 grammes, 1,500 to 1,999 grammes, 2,000 to 2,499 grammes, 2,500 to 2,999 grammes, 3,000 to 3,499 grammes, 3,500 to 3,999 grammes, 4,000-plus grammes and unstated birthweight.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of all Multiple births registered in Scotland in 1984 with the number and rate per 1,000 of stillbirths, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths and infant deaths with an underlying cause of Congenital Malformation by birthweight*

| *Birthweight* | | *All multiples* | *Still births* | *Perinatal Deaths* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal deaths* | *Infant deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <1,500 | Number | 154 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) | (..) | (..) | (..) |
| 1,500-1,999 | Number | 159 | — | 1 | 1 | — | 1 |
| | Rate | | — | (..) | (..) | — | (..) |
| 2,000-2,499 | Number | 409 | — | — | — | 1 | 1 |
| | Rate | | — | — | — | (.) | (..) |
| 2,500-2,999 | Number | 431 | — | — | 1 | — | 1 |
| | Rate | | — | — | (..) | — | (..) |
| 3,000-3,499 | Number | 163 | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — | — | — | — |
| 3,500-3,999 | Number | 32 | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — | — | — | — |
| 4,000 + | Number | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | | | | | |
| Not known | Number | 12 | 1 | 2 | — | 1 | 1 |
| Total | Number | 1,360 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (.) | (.) | (.) | (.) |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* first twins and *(b)* second twins born in 1984 to residents in Scotland the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories, under 1,500 grammes, 1,500 to 1,999 grammes, 2,000 to 2,499 grammes, 2,500 to 2,999 grammes, 3,000 to 3,499 grammes, 3,500 to 3,999 grammes, 4,000 plus grammes and unstated birthweight.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Numbers of all multiple births registered in Scotland in 1984 with number and rates/1,000 of stillbirths, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, post-neonatal deaths and infant deaths by birthweight*

| *Birthweight* | | *All multiples* | *Stillbirths* | *Perinatal deaths* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post neonatal deaths* | *Infant deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <1,500 | Number | 154 | 16 | 60 | 45 | 5 | 50 |
| | Rate | | 103·9 | 389·6 | 326·1 | (..) | 362·3 |
| 1,500-1,999 | Number | 159 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) | (..) | (..) | (..) |
| 1,000-2,499 | Number | 409 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) | (..) | (..) | (..) |
| 2,500-2,999 | Number | 431 | — | 2 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| | Rate | | — | (..) | (..) | (..) | (..) |
| 3,000-3,499 | Number | 163 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 1 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) | — | (..) | (..) |
| 3,500-3,999 | Number | 32 | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — | — | — | — |
| 4,000+ | Number | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — | — | — | — |
| Not known | Number | 12 | 4 | 10 | 6 | — | 6 |
| Total | Number | 1,360 | 26 | 84 | 60 | 20 | 80 |
| | Rate | | 19·1 | 61·8 | 45·0 | 15·0 | 60·0 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for (i) singleton and (ii) all births in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: *(a)* under 22 weeks, *(b)* 22 to 24 weeks, *(c)* 25 to 27 weeks, *(d)* 28 to 31 weeks, *(e)* 32 to 36 weeks, *(f)* 37 to 41 weeks, *(g)* 42 weeks and *(h)* with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Numbers of live births in Singletons and all live births registered in Scotland in 1984 and numbers and rates/1,000 live births of neonatal, post-neonatal and infant deaths with underlying cause other than congenital malformation by gestational age*

| | | *Singletons* | | | | *All births* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Gestation (Weeks)* | | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal* | *Infant deaths* | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal* | *Infant deaths* |
| <22 | Number | 1 | 1 | — | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 1 |
| | Rate | | (..) | — | (..) | | (..) | — | (..) |
| 22-24 | Number | 38 | 34 | 1 | 35 | 49 | 45 | 1 | 46 |
| | Rate | | 894·7 | (..) | 921·1 | | 918·4 | (..) | 938·8 |
| 25-27 | Number | 118 | 54 | 6 | 60 | 159 | 77 | 8 | 85 |
| | Rate | | 457·6 | (..) | 508·5 | | 484·3 | (..) | 534·6 |
| 28-31 | Number | 406 | 49 | 12 | 61 | 473 | 58 | 14 | 72 |
| | Rate | | 120·7 | 29·6 | 150·2 | | 122·6 | 29·6 | 152·2 |
| 32-36 | Number | 2,957 | 28 | 17 | 45 | 3,419 | 33 | 22 | 55 |
| | Rate | | 9·5 | 5·7 | 15·2 | | 9·7 | 6·4 | 16·1 |
| 37-41 | Number | 57,462 | 48 | 108 | 156 | 58,203 | 51 | 117 | 168 |
| | Rate | | 0·8 | 1·9 | 2·7 | | 0·9 | 2·0 | 2·9 |
| 42+ | Number | 2,308 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 2,308 | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| | Rate | | (..) | (..) | (..) | | (..) | (..) | (..) |

| *Gestation (Weeks)* | | *Singletons* | | | | *All births* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal* | *Infant deaths* | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal* | *Infant deaths* |
| Not known | Number | 482 | 8 | 18 | 26 | 494 | 11 | 18 | 29 |
| Total | Number | 63,772 | 224 | 168 | 392 | 65,106 | 278 | 186 | 464 |
| | Rate | | 3·5 | 2·6 | 6·1 | | 4·3 | 2·9 | 7·1 |

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for (i) first twins and (ii) second twins born in 1984 to residents in Scotland the total number of births and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births and perinatal deaths tabulated according to the following gestational ages *(a)* 28 to 31 weeks, *(b)* 32 to 36 weeks, *(c)* 37 to 41 weeks, *(d)* 42 plus weeks and *(e)* with unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Number of Total Multiple births registered in Scotland in 1984, with numbers and rates/1,000 of stillbirths and perinatal deaths by gestational age*

| *Gestation* | | *Total Births* | *Stillbirths* | *Perinatal Deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <28 | Number | 55 | 3 | 38 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 644·1 |
| 28-31 | Number | 77 | 10 | 19 |
| | Rate | | 129·9 | 246·8 |
| 32-36 | Number | 469 | 7 | 14 |
| | Rate | | (.) | 29·9 |
| 37-41 | Number | 745 | 4 | 8 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) |
| 42+ | Number | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | | |
| Not Known | Number | 14 | 2 | 5 |
| All Gestations | Number | 1,360 | 26 | 84 |
| | Rate | | 19·1 | 61·8 |

**Mr. Lewis Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births to residents in Scotland the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 749 to 759) as to their underlying cause, tabulated according to the following gestational ages: (i) under 22 weeks, (ii) 22 to 24 weeks, (iii) 25 to 27 weeks, (iv) 28-31 weeks, (v) 32 to 36 weeks, (vi) 37 to 41 weeks, (vii) 42 weeks plus and with (viii) unstated gestational age.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The available information is set out in the table.

*Numbers of live births in singletons and all live births registered in Scotland in 1984 and numbers and rates/1,000 live births of neonatal deaths, post-neonatal and infant deaths with underlying cause of death due to congenital malformation by gestational age*

| *Gestation (Weeks)* | | *Singletons* | | | | *All births* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal* | *Infant deaths* | *Live births* | *Neonatal deaths* | *Post-neonatal* | *Infant deaths* |
| <22 | Number | 1 | — | — | — | 1 | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — | — | | — | — | — |
| 22-24 | Number | 38 | — | — | — | 49 | — | — | — |
| | Rate | | — | — | — | | — | — | — |
| 25-27 | Number | 118 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 159 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) | (.) | | (.) | (.) | (.) |
| 28-31 | Number | 406 | 17 | — | 17 | 473 | 18 | — | 18 |
| | Rate | | 41·9 | | 41·9 | | 38·1 | — | 38·1 |
| 32-36 | Number | 2,957 | 33 | 8 | 41 | 3,419 | 35 | 9 | 44 |
| | Rate | | 11·2 | (.) | 13·9 | | 10·2 | (.) | 12·9 |
| 37-41 | Number | 57,462 | 61 | 32 | 93 | 58,203 | 63 | 32 | 95 |
| | Rate | | 1·1 | 0·6 | 1·6 | | 1·1 | 0·5 | 1·6 |
| 42+ | Number | 2,308 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2,308 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| | Rate | | (.) | (.) | (.) | | (.) | (.) | (.) |
| Not known | Number | 482 | 6 | 10 | 16 | 494 | 6 | 10 | 16 |
| Total | Number | 63,772 | 124 | 52 | 176 | 65,106 | 130 | 54 | 184 |
| | Rate | | 1.9 | 0·8 | 2·8 | | 2·0 | 0·8 | 2·8 |

## Tobacco Addiction

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was spent in Scotland in the last calendar year for which figures are available on curing people addicted to tobacco smoking; and if he will give a breakdown of this figure.

**Mr. Rifkind:** This information is not available centrally.

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many deaths were recorded in Scotland from diseases normally associated with tobacco smoking in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Rifkind:** In a report published in 1983, the Royal College of Physicians estimated that at last 90 per cent. of deaths from lung cancer, bronchitis and obstructive lung disease are attributable to smoking, and that perhaps 20 per cent. of coronary heart disease deaths are related to smoking.

The table shows the total deaths in Scotland in 1985 from these causes.

| *ICD*[1] *Nos* | *Deaths in Scotland, 1985* | *Number* |
|---|---|---|
| 162 | Malignant neoplasm of trachea, bronchus and lung (lung cancer) | 4,307 |
| 490-492 | Bronchitis and emphysema (bronchitis) | 969 |
| 496 | Chronic airways obstruction, not elsewhere classified (obstructive lung disease) | 1,480 |
| 410-414 | Ischaemic heart disease (coronary heart disease) | 18,758 |

[1] International Classification of Diseases.

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many hospital beds were taken up by patients suffering from diseases normally associated with tobacco smoking in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The three major diseases generally accepted to be associated with tobacco smoking are ischaemic heart disease, lung cancer and chronic respiratory conditions. The average daily number of beds in Scottish general hospitals occupied by patients with these conditions was 823 for 1985, the latest year for which the information is available.

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was spent in Scotland on research into cures for tobacco addiction in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Although the Scottish Home and Health Department and the Scottish Health Education Group are at present funding several research projects directly related to smoking, they are not currently funding any research in Scotland specifically related to cures for tobacco addiction. Information about independent research conducted by universities and other bodies is not held centrally.

## Regional Aid

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the total annual value of regional aid paid to firms in Dundee in each year since 1980; and if he will also express these figures at constant prices.

**Mr. Lang:** Total payments of regional selective assistance (RSA) under section 7 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 to firms in Dundee city are set out in the table:

| *Year* | *Payments at current prices (£ million)* | *Payments at constant (1986) prices (£ million)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1980-81 | 1·4 | 2·0 |
| 1981-82 | 1·5 | 1·9 |
| 1982-83 | 1·2 | 1·4 |
| 1983-84 | 2·2 | 2·4 |
| 1984-85 | 2·4 | 2·6 |
| 1985-86 | 2·0 | 2·1 |

Comprehensive information on payments of regional development grant (RDG) on a local authority basis is not available. However, payments of RDG exceeding £25,000 to firms in the Dundee employment local office area are set out in the table:

| *Year* | *Payments at current prices (£ million)* | *Payments at constant (1986) prices (£ million)* |
|---|---|---|
| 1980-81 | 1·4 | 1·9 |
| 1981-82 | 1·8 | 2·3 |
| 1982-83 | 3·4 | 4·0 |
| 1983-84 | 4·3 | 4·9 |
| 1984-85 | 5·4 | 5·9 |
| 1985-86 | 3·6 | 3·7 |

## Health Boards

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the current membership of each health board; how he determines each of the categories from which membership is drawn; and, if for each health board, he will indicate the category into which each member falls.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Schedule 1 to the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 sets out the groups which the Secretary of State must consult before making appointments. In making his decisions my right hon. and learned Friend has regard to the guidelines in the paper "The National Health Service and the Community in Scotland" published in 1974. This suggests the categories of nominating bodies from which each board's membership might be drawn. The lists indicate the category of nominating body which relates to each member. I am arranging for a list of the current membership of each health board to be placed in the Library of the House and published in the *Official Report*.

### ARGYLL AND CLYDE HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. John D. Ryan, CBE Appointed to 31 March 1991.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| A. H. Brabender JP | Others |
| J. Campbell | Trade Union |
| L. Capaldi | Others |
| J. Cattanach | Others |
| I. D. F. Halligan | Others |
| Dr. S. G. McAlpine | Health Care Professions |
| J. M. McCorkindale OBE | Local Government |
| Miss P. McGowan | Health Care Professions |
| R. R. Reid | Local Government |
| E. T. F. Spence MBE | Others |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| Mrs. E. M. Cockburn OBE | Others |
| Dr. R. Erskine | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. M. A. Foggie | Others |
| J. H. Gillougley | Others |

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| Dr. Anne M. Kelly | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. J. C. Le Roux | Others |
| Dr. J. Moffat | University |
| Rev. J. Young | Others |
| Two Vacancies | |

### AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. William S. Fyfe, Appointed to 31 March 1989.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| Mrs. M. M. Bicker MBE | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. A. Dunbar | Local Government |
| P. Hunter | Trade Union |
| Mrs. N. M. Lambie | Others |
| F. J. McCaffery | Health Care Professions |
| W. S. MacConnell | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. M. Macdonald | Others |
| D. McMillan | Local Government |
| B. A. Murphy | Others |
| D. Shankland | Local Government |
| Dr. J. P. Wiltshire | Others |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| J. Cahill | University |
| Mrs. A. M. Campbell | Health Care Professions |
| T. Dickie JP | Trade Union |
| J. W. G. Donaldson | Others |
| Mrs. M. W. Gallie | Others |
| Dr. J. J. Morrow | Health Care Professions |
| I. B. Valentine | Others |
| Mrs. A. B. Wilson | Others |
| Dr. W. M. Wilson | Health Care Professions |

### BORDERS HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. John Gibb, OBE Appointed to 31 March 1989.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| A. P. Dorward | Others |
| Mrs. M. Millican | Others |
| Mrs. F. M. Nisbet | Health Care Professions |
| A. G. Rennie | Health Care Professions |
| W. Scott CBE | Others |
| Mrs. G. M. L. Shaw Stewart | Others |
| A. S. Watt | Local Government |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| Dr. W. B. Aitken | Health Care Professions |
| P. S. Elliot | Trade Union |
| R. W. Jack | Local Government |
| A. C. Purves MBE | Others |
| Lady F. E. Sanderson | Others |
| Dr. S. A. Stephen | Health Care Professions |
| R. A. Stewart MBE | Trade Union |

### DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. James A. McIntyre, Appointed to 31 March 1989.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| Mrs. M. H. Bonn | Others |
| R. R. Goudie | Trade Union |
| Mrs. A. U. G. Harper | Others |
| H. S. McFadzean | Others |
| W. Seright | Health Care Professions |
| W. Service | Local Government |
| Mrs. J. D. Tulloch | Others |
| Dr. J. B. Wilson | Health Care Professions |

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| W. D. Beck | Trade Union |
| I. S. F. Brown | Others |
| Mrs. M. D. Dick-Smith | Local Government |
| Miss A. C. Kelly | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. A. R. Murdoch | Local Government |
| M. J. Pumphrey | Others |
| Miss I. A. Stewart | Health Care Professions |
| Dr. T. S. R. Train | Health Care Professions |
| G. Willacy | Local Government |
| W. I. Wilson | Others |

### FIFE HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. John C. Balfour, OBE, Appointed to 31 March 1987.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| Mrs. J. H. P. Buchanan | Others |
| Mrs. A. H. Ferguson | Others |
| D. L. Fulton | Trade Union |
| Dr. M. L. Graeme | Others |
| Mrs. C. Haddow | Trade Union |
| K. R. Hayward | Local Government |
| J. H. Henderson | Health Care Professions |
| J. H. B. Ivers | Health Care Professions |
| I. A. McCrone | Others |
| D. Stoddart | Trade Union |
| C. Whitlock | Others |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| J. I. M. Burns | Local Government |
| J. S. Edmiston | Others |
| H. C. Forwell | Others |
| Dr. J. B. Gallacher | Health Care Professions |
| Dr. A. A. H. Lawson | Health Care Professions |
| G. H. D. Mackie OBE | Others |
| J. Marshall | Others |
| Miss M. M. Nelson | Health Care Professions |
| G. Reid | Others |

### FORTH VALLEY HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. Lewis J. M. Hynd, OBE Appointed to 31 March 1989.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| J. F. C. Armstrong | Others |
| Mrs. M. R. Ferguson | Health Care Professions |
| Dr. J. Furnell | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. M. C. Lambie JP | Others |
| J. G. G. Lees | Others |
| W. D. M. Leithhead | Others |
| Miss M. K. Ritchie | Others |
| Mrs. R. M. Scott | Local Government |
| Dr. W. J. Thomson | University |
| Mrs. J. S. Young | Trade Union |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| J. Cross | Health Care Professions |
| A. B. Cruikshank | Others |
| T. Downs | Local Government |
| Dr. L. Dunbar | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. J. Ibister | Others |
| Professor P. McEwen | Others |
| Mrs. W. J. A. Macfarlane | Trade Union |
| A. D. McNeill | Health Care Professions |

### GRAMPIAN HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. Charles W. Ellis, Appointed to 31 March 1989.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| Professor A. G. M. Campbell | University |
| H. D. Cochran | Others |
| D. Davidson | Health Care Professions |
| N. Donald | Local Government |
| Mrs. J. R. Lamond | Local Government |
| Dr. Margaret McGregor | Local Government |
| J. Murison | Health Care Professions |
| G. S. Peterkin | Trade Union |
| Dr. E. A. Smith CBE | Others |
| Professor E. A. Tait | Others |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| P. S. Cook | Others |
| Captain C. A. Farquharson | Others |
| Dr. J. G. Henderson | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. C. Houldsworth | Others |
| Professor M. C. Meston | University |
| J. Ramage | Trade Union |
| Miss E. A. Sheldon MBE | Others |
| Mrs. V. A. Stevenson | Health Care Professions |
| Dr. A. J. Taylor | Health Care Professions |
| Professor R. D. Weir OBE | University |

## GREATER GLASGOW HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. Donald F. Macquaker, CBE Appointed to 31 March 1987.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| Miss E. Donachie | Health Care Professions |
| J. F. Dunnachie | Local Government |
| A. D. Garland | Others |
| Professor J. R. Harper CBE | Others |
| P. W. Holst | Others |
| J. Jackson | Trade Union |
| Mrs. I. D. Kerr | Others |
| Professor I. M. Ledingham | University |
| Mrs. M. McGarry | Local Government |
| J. A. Peel | Health Care Professions |
| Miss D. B. Rigg | Health Care Professions |
| D. S. Sinnott MBE | Others |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| Lady S. Goold | Others |
| Mrs. A. Jarvis | Local Government |
| Professor A. C. Kennedy | University |
| Rev. J. T. Lang | Others |
| Dr. J. MacKay OBE | Health Care Professions |
| B. A. Maan | Local Government |
| H. Sherriff | Trade Union |
| Dr. T. J. Thomson CBE | Health Care Professions |
| L. Turpie | Others |
| C. Williams | Others |

## HIGHLAND HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. James McWilliam, Appointed to 31 March 1991.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| W. G. Johnston | Local Government |
| Mrs. M. A. McDougall | Others |
| A. A. MacKenzie | Others |
| Mrs. L. Mackenzie | Local Government |
| T. D. Martin | Local Government |
| W. Monaghan | Trade Union |
| Mrs. I. Munro BEM | Others |
| Mrs. R. M. Tulloch | Others |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| Mrs. H. E. Betts-Brown | Health Care Professions |
| R. J. B. Bryson MBE | Health Care Professions |
| Dr. R. S. C. Fergusson | Health Care Professions |
| Miss M. T. Hadden | Health Care Professions |
| Rt. Hon. Lord G. J. Macdonald of Sleat | Local Government |
| Dr. A. D. McIntosh | Health Care Professions |
| B. A. Merchant | Others |
| Dr. W. D. Murray | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. S. M. C. South | Others |
| Mr. A. I. MacDonald | Trade Union |

## LANARKSHIRE HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mrs. Bunty M. Gunn, OBE Appointed to 31 March 1989.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| Miss H. Brown MBE | Health Care Professions |
| Dr. D. Datta | Health Care Professions |
| R. J. Logan MBE | Others |
| D. McClymont | Health Care Professions |
| W. O'Brien | Local Government |
| T. S. L. Reid | Others |
| J. P. Robison | Local Government |
| W. Traynor | Trade Union |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| Dr. G. A. Bell | Others |
| Mrs. N. Cochrane | Local Government |
| Mrs. A. S. Hinshalwood | Others |
| Mrs. J. H. Holmes | Others |
| A. E. McIlwain CBE | Others |
| Mrs. D. C. McGirr | Others |
| G. McIntosh | Others |
| Dr. A. Mathewson | Health Care Professions |
| J. B. Russell | Trade Union |
| J. Thomson | Others |
| A. Braidwood | Others |
| T. M. Bennett | Health Care Professions |
| Two Vacancies | |

## LOTHIAN HEALTH BOARD

*Chairman:* Mr. R. Bruce Weatherstone, Appointed to 31 March 1990.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| Mrs. G. Barton | Local Government |
| A. B. Dunlop | Others |
| Dr. R. J. Kellett | Health Care Professions |
| J. M. MacNeill CBE | Others |
| E. A. Matthews | Others |
| G. S. Millar | Health Care Professions |
| D. Molloy | Local Government |
| E. J. Rawlings | Health Care Professions |
| A. H. Russell | Local Government |
| A. G. Smart | Others |
| Professor J. Williamson | University |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| Mrs. P. Bell | Others |
| I. Capperauld | Others |
| A. T. Clark MBE MVO | Local Government |
| Mrs. W. E. Donaldson | Local Government |
| Sir James D. Fraser | University |
| W. B. Herald | Trade Union |
| Dr. A. R. Milne | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. M. H. Waterston OBE | Others |
| J. F. Wilson | Others |
| One Vacancy | |

### Orkney Health Board

*Chairman*: Mr. John D. M. Robertson, OBE, Appointed to 31 March 1991.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| A. H. Bevan | Others |
| J. Flett | Others |
| J. M. F. Groat | Others |
| W. Groundwater | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. E. M. Street | Health Care Professions |
| J. Towrie | Local Government |
| R. T. Tullock | Others |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| B. M. Clark | Health Care Professions |
| F. J. Groundwater | Trade Union |
| Mrs. J. Marwick | Local Government |
| J. W. R. Moar MBE | Others |
| Mrs. M. Porteous | Health Care Professions |
| Dr. J. S. Walker | Health Care Professions |
| One vacancy | |

### Shetland Health Board

*Chairman:* Mrs. Florence B. Grains, Appointed to 31 March 1991.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| R. R. Bentley | Trade Union |
| A. G. Flaws | Others |
| A. H. George | Others |
| J. A. T. Leslie | Health Care Professions |
| Mrs. J. K. Sandison | Others |
| J. M. Sinclair | Health Care Professions |
| W. A. Smith BEM | Local Government |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| Dr. M. D. Hunter | Health Care Professions |
| R. Leask | Trade Union |
| D. M. Sinclair | Health Care Professions |
| R. A. J. Smith | Others |
| Captain G. Walterson | Local Government |
| Mrs. M. Williamson | Others |
| A. G. Coutts | Health Care Professions |
| Two Vacancies | |

### Tayside Health Board

*Chairman:* Mr. Donald B. Grant TD, Appointed to 31 March 1991.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| Dr. P. G. Aungle | Health Care Professions |
| Professor J. S. Beck | University |
| Mrs. R. Bolton | Others |
| J. S. Fair | Others |
| Mrs. L. V. Grewar | Others |
| B. W. M. Johnston | Others |
| M. B. Kerr | Trade Union |
| Mrs. S. D. R. Kydd | Local Government |
| J. C. Macfarlane OBE | Others |
| J. T. Robb | Trade Union |
| W. Stewart | Trade Union |
| Mrs. A. Woore | Health Care Professions |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| E. W. Cameron OBE | Local Government |
| J. Campbell-Smith | Others |
| J. W. Duncan MBE | Health Care Profession |
| Dr. A. G. R. Law | Health Care Profession |
| E. C. Lowson MBE | Others |
| Miss S. D. Moncur | Health Care Profession |
| Professor D. G. McDevitt | University |
| I. W. Stevenson | Local Government |

### Western Isles Health Board

*Chairman:* Mrs. Marie A. Macmillan, Appointed to 31 March 1991.

| *Membership* | *Category of Nominating Body* |
|---|---|
| *Appointed to 31 March 1987* | |
| M. Campbell | Trade Union |
| J. H. Downie | Others |
| Dr. N. R. Gillies | Health Care Professions |
| D. N. Kesting | Others |
| Mrs. C. MacEachen | Health Care Professions |
| D. W. MacLeod | Others |
| A. Matheson | Health Care Professions |
| *Appointed to 31 March 1989* | |
| Capt. J. MacIntyre | Local Government |
| D. A. Maclean | Health Care Professions |
| K. Maclennan | Others |
| M. Macleod | Others |
| J. M. Morrison | Others |
| I. D. Sutherland | Others |
| A. D. Millar | Others |

## Drugs

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was spent in Scotland in the last calendar year for which figures are available on curing people addicted to drug-taking; and if he will give a breakdown of that figure.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The cost of treatment provided for drug misusers by the primary care services and general, psychiatric and other hospital services is not separately identified. Grants from central funds totalling £875,390 in the financial year 1986-87 have been made available to statutory and voluntary bodies in Scotland to support 25 projects concerned with the treatment and rehabilitation of drug misusers.

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was spent in Scotland on research programmes on drug-taking in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Rifkind:** Information covering all research projects in this field is not available centrally. However, the Scottish Home and Health Department has awarded grants totalling over £230,000 to seven current research projects related to drug misuse of which approximately £42,000 will be spent in the current financial year.

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many deaths were recorded as due to drug taking in Scotland in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The most relevant figures are as follows:

| *ICD[1] Code* | | *1985 deaths* |
|---|---|---|
| 304 | Drug dependence | 10 |
| 305.2—305.9 | Non-dependent abuse of drugs | 1 |
| E850—E858 | Accidental poisoning by drugs, medicaments and biologicals | 17 |

| *ICD*[1] *Code* | | *1985 deaths* |
|---|---|---|
| E950 | Suicide by solid and liquid substances | 157 |
| E962 | Assault by poisoning | — |
| E980 | Poisoning by solid or liquid substances, undetermined whether accidentally or purposely inflicted | 74 |
| | Total | 259 |

[1] International Classification of Diseases.

## Hunterston

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment his Department makes of the ability of the relevant services successfully to extend the emergency plans for Hunterston beyond the immediate area for which a detailed plan exists under severe weather conditions.

**Mr. Lang:** It is for the relevant services themselves to ensure their capability for responding to any civil contingency, whether in good or bad weather conditions. As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced on 18 December in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Stafford (Mr. Cash), *Official Report,* c. *612-13,* existing plans provide a valid basis for the response to any nuclear accident in the United Kingdom.

## Surplus Food (Distribution)

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much European Economic Community intervention fund food is to be distributed in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Greenock and Port Glasgow; and which voluntary and statutory agencies will supervise the distribution of such food in each of the above.

**Mr. John MacKay:** I refer the hon. Member to the replies given by my right hon. and learned Friend on 30 January to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Garscadden (Mr. Dewar).

## Radiation

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley on 13 January, *Official Report,* column *161,* concerning critical groups of members of the public exposed to radiation in the vicinity of British Nuclear Fuels Limited, Chapelcross, whether the Scottish Development Department statistical bulletin contains details of exposure from direct emissions of radiation from the plant as are measurable at the perimeter fence; what is the critical group of members of the public exposed to the highest doses from such direct emissions; whether any member of that group is also exposed to radiation by other pathways; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** Scottish Development Department statistical bulletin No. 4/1984 is mainly concerned with monitoring in respect of radioactive waste discharges, but it also confirms that exposure of the public in the vicinity of Chapelcross, taking account also of direct radiation from the reactors themselves, has remained within internationally recommended limits.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish a list of the estimated maximum exposures of any member of the public in the vicinity of British Nuclear Fuels Limited, Chapelcross, showing: *(a)* the dose equivalent in each year of operation, expressed in millisieverts and *(b)* the average dose equivalent of the 10-year period ending in each recent year, expressed in millisieverts; what changes in such maximum exposures are expected to take place following the revised certificates of authorisations for Chapelcross issued in April 1986; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** No. Doses are calculated in relation to critical groups and not to individuals. Assessments of critical group doses resulting from waste disposals are published regularly. The information for 1984 and 1985, which will be published shortly, confirms that doses arising from discharges from Chapelcross remain very small and well within internationally recommended limits. No significant change is anticipated following the revision of the certificates of authorisation in April 1986.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley on 13 January, *Official Report,* column *161,* concerning the new certificates of authorisation for radioactive discharges from British Nuclear Fuels Limited, Chapelcross, what maximum annual exposure expressed in millisieverts has been calculated for any member of the public in the case that annual discharges occured at 100 per cent. of the maximum authorised levels; what exposure pathways contribute to such a calculated dose; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** The authorised limits are set in accordance with the relevant standards with sufficient margin in hand to ensure that critical group doses will not exceed the recommended limits even if discharges continue at the maximum permitted levels. Exposure pathways are described in statistical bulletin No. 4/1984.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley on 13 January, *Official Report,* column *161,* concerning the table on page 2 of the Scottish Development Department's statistical bulletin No. 4 1984, if he will publish a table showing a summary of exposure pathways in the vicinity of Chapelcross in each year from 1981 to 1983, expressing the effective dose equivalents in millisieverts rather than percentages; whether such calculated exposures in each year take account of the 1982 habits survey and the latest physiological uptake factors now available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** The bulletin to be published with monitoring results for 1984 and 1985 will include assessments of critical group doses in the terms requested and will take account of all available relevant information. Bulletin No. 4/1984 contains the information necessary to convert dose assessments for previous years.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley on 13 January, *Official Report,* column *161,* concerning an updated table similar to that on page 2 of the Scottish Development Department's statistical bulletin No. 4 1984, in what month he expects a new bulletin to be published containing information for years up to and including 1985.

**Mr. Ancram:** I hope that the new bulletin will be published next month.

### Loch Ryan

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he intends to amend the regulation concerning Loch Ryan under the terms of the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1984.

**Mr. John MacKay:** My right hon. and learned Friend has no plans at present to do so.

### Bathing Beaches

**Mr. Corrie** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he has received the results of the monitoring, in the 1986 bathing season, of the quality of bathing water of the 20 Scottish beaches listed in the 14 February 1986 *Official Report,* columns *561-2;* and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** The results of the monitoring, in line with the regime set out in the EC bathing waters directive, have been submitted by the river purification boards and are being considered by the Scottish Development Department. The preliminary assessment is encouraging, but some adjustment to monitoring frequencies will be necessary for the 1987 bathing season. My right hon. and learned Friend expects to publish the results following the two-year monitoring programme which ends in September 1987.

My right hon. and learned Friend has decided to identify 23 waters off Scotland as bathing waters in terms of the EC directive. These waters will be monitored each year to the regime set out in the directive, and the results will be conveyed through the Scottish Development Department to the European Commission. Those waters which fail to meet the directive's standards will require to be improved as necessary.

The list of waters includes the 20 covered by the current two-year programme and three others: Montrose, Dunbar and Turnberry. The full list, which will be subject to review from time to time, is as follows:

Nairn
Cullen
Fraserburgh
Aberdeen
Montrose
Arbroath
Carnoustie
St. Andrews
Kinghorn
Aberdour
Gullane
North Berwick
Yellowcraigs
Dunbar
Pease Bay
Sandyhills
Girvan
Turnberry
Ayr
Prestwick
Troon (south)
Irvine-Gailes
Saltcoats/Ardrossan

## CIVIL SERVICE

### YTS

**Mr. Favell** asked the Minister for the Civil Service how many people are currently working in the Civil Service under the YTS programme.

**Mr. Luce:** A survey of YTS approved places in the Civil Service was carried out in May 1986. This showed that there were 1,123 places available, of which 1,027 had actually been taken up.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Wednesday 4 February 1987*

## TRANSPORT

### Light Dues

**Sir David Price** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what will be the level of light dues in 1987-88; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moore:** In recent years the annual expenditure of the general lighthouse authorities has increasingly exceeded income from light dues, but it has been possible to cover the difference by drawing on the considerable cash reserves which has accumulated in the general lighthouse fund. These cash reserves are now reducing rapidly and it will be necessary for light dues to be increased in 1987-88 in order to bring revenue into line with current operating costs. In addition, there is a new requirement to make provision for the costs of operating the United Kingdom transmitters of the Decca navigator system. Taking all those factors into account, I have concluded that light dues should be increased by just under 14 per cent. in 1987-88.

This increase follows a long period in which light dues have been held well below the rate of inflation, so that even after the increase has been brought into force light dues will still be 18 per cent. lower in real terms than they were in 1981-82. Almost half the revenue from the increase in dues is required to meet the costs of operating the United Kingdom Decca navigator transmitters.

The necessary order will be laid before Parliament shortly. I am conscious of the burden which light dues impose on ships calling at United Kingdom ports, and I have a number of measures in hand which I hope will reduce the need for increases in future years. First, given the considerable use which the fishing industry makes of the Decca navigator system, as an aid to fishing as well as an aid to navigation, I am considering proposals to extend light dues liability to the larger fishing vessels. Secondly, I am inviting the authorities to prepare running costs budgets for 1988-89 on the basis of nil cash growth after making allowances for the cost reductions to be achieved from automation projects. Thirdly, we have commissioned a joint study by consultants into ways in which the authorities' tender fleets requirements can be met. I hope the study will lead to further costs savings.

I much regret the need for this increase, and I recognise that will be unwelcome to shipowners and to the ports' industry.

### Manchester (Rail Links)

**Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when the Windsor link to the Manchester railway system will be completed; and what is the current estimated cost of the work.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** I understand that work on the Windsor link scheme which I approved in April 1985 is expected to be completed by May 1988. The estimated cost of the project is £12·5 million.

### Vehicle Emissions

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Transport how many prosecutions were carried out in 1986 against the operators of diesel-fuelled vehicles as the result of road-side testing for excess smoke emissions.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** In 1985, the latest year for which figures are available, there were 675 prosecutions for smoke offences in England and Wales. In addition, the Department's vehicle examiners at roadside checks prohibited a number of vehicles from further use until they had passed a full test at a heavy goods vehicle testing station.

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are currently used for assessing the level of emissions from diesel-fuelled vehicles; on what tests these criteria are based; and whether the health effects of particular hydrocarbons were considered in the setting of the criteria.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Requirements are usually expressed for gaseous emissions or particulates in terms of the rate of mass emitted, and for smoke in terms of opacity, during a standard test applied to new engines. The current limits for smoke are set out in European Community directive 72/306. Limits for gaseous emissions from large diesels and particular emissions from diesel-engined cars have been proposed by the European Commission. In making its proposals in regard to particulates the Commission refers to the interests of providing better public health protection.

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce an objective road-side test for assessing the acceptability of emissions from diesel-fuelled vehicles.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Excessive smoke emissions under free acceleration can be judged visually by an experienced examiner. Measurement of gaseous emissions or particulates by weight, or smoke by opacity, cannot be done without sophisticated equipment to enable the engine to be tested under load and its emissions analysed. This would not be practicable at the road-side.

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy to promote the fitting of pollution-reducing technology on all new cars in Britain.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** All new cars have to comply with regulations controlling vehicle exhaust emissions. The Government are continuing to review the need for more stringent controls which could require manufacturers to use more costly pollution control technologies.

**Mr. Livsey** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for seeking to reduce air pollution from car exhaust fumes.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Tighter vehicle emission standards are currently under discussion in the European Community. Subject to final agreement being reached, the

Government intend to achieve reductions in pollution from vehicle exhaust emissions consistent with the use of cost-effective technology.

### Traffic Flow (Residential Areas)

**Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to help local councils introduce road traffic schemes to reduce traffic flow in residential areas.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We offer general guidance from time to time and seek to ensure that up-to-date technical material is available for local authorities to use in discharging their responsibilities.

We believe it is right where possible to put through traffic on through routes and give an emphasis for residents in residential areas.

### Railways (Electrification)

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what rail lines he expects to be electrified in the next five years.

**Mr. David Mitchell** [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 February 1987 c. *523*]: The answer given was incomplete and should have read as follows. The following railway electrification schemes are due to be completed within the next five years:

| | *Year* |
|---|---|
| Ayr-Largs | May 1987 |
| Bishops Stortford-Cambridge | May 1987 |
| Blackfriars-Farringdon | May 1987 |
| Ipswich-Norwich | May 1987 |
| Sanderstead-East Grinstead | September 1987 |
| Canonbury Link | December 1987 |
| Bournemouth-Weymouth | January 1988 |
| North London Line | October 1988 |
| East Coast Main Line | Spring 1991 |

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Deaf People (Teachers)

**Mr. Wigley** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the latest figure for the total number of people employed as teachers of the deaf; if he will analyse what proportion of these admitted into training courses for teaching the deaf come from *(a)* certified teachers with experience in teaching, *(b)* qualified teachers direct from college or university, *(c)* non-certified graduates, *(d)* undergraduates and *(e)* other; what effect he estimates the implementation of the White Paper, "Better Schools", would have on the numbers of teachers of the deaf being trained; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Dunn** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987, c. *11*]: Information is not collected in the form requested by the hon. Member. The available information is as follows. On 31 March 1985, 783 full-time teachers were employed at maintained and direct grant special schools who were qualified under the Education (Teachers) Regulations 1982 to be teachers of classes for deaf or partially hearing pupils. The number of those who were actually teaching such classes is not available. Four hundred and seventeen of these are known to have obtained specialist qualifications through in-service teacher training, 85 through initial teacher training, and 232 through other routes (primarily through the National College of Teachers of the Deaf).

On the same date 500 full-time teachers who were recognised as qualified teachers for the deaf or partially hearing pupils were teaching for at least part of their time in special classes for the partially hearing or partially sighted in other maintained schools. Three hundred and forty four of these are known to have obtained specialist qualifications through in-service training, 51 through initial training and 83 through other routes. In September 1986, 17 students were admitted to postgraduate initial teacher training and 22 to undergraduate initial teacher training courses leading to specialist qualification in teaching classes of deaf pupils.

The policy outlined in the White Paper, "Better Schools" will be implemented with the aim of maintaining the supply of teachers qualified to be employed as the teacher of a class for deaf or partially hearing pupils.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Virgin Islands and Montserrat

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response he has received from the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat to his request that judicial corporal punishment should cease.

**Mr. Eggar:** We have instructed governors concerned to attempt to obtain the local administration's agreement to remove judicial corporal punishment from the statute book. But we understand that there is a strong opposition to such a move.

We have obtained assurances that judicial birching will be used in the territories only in exceptional circumstances.

### Convention on Human Rights

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to extend the first protocol of the Convention on Human Rights to the dependent territories.

**Mr. Eggar:** Those territories which have not yet adopted the first protocol have been invited to do so at the earliest opportunity.

### EEC (Spanish Accession)

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will set out the proposals and concessions agreed with the United States of America following their complaint under the general agreement on tariffs and trade rules on the Spanish accession to the European Economic Community; and what will be the estimated reduction in European Economic Community revenue in consequence over the anticipated period of the settlement.

**Mr. Alan Clark** [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 February 1987, c. *571*]: For the period 1 January 1987 to 31 December 1990, the Community will open annual reduced-levy quotas for imports into Spain of 2 million tonnes of maize and 300,000 tonnes of sorghum and reduce tariffs on various products with a total trade volume of 400 million ecu. The Community will also drop the requirement that 15 per cent. of the Portuguese grain market be reserved for

Community suppliers, and reinstate, subject to the transitional arrangements for Spain and Portugal, the tariffs bound in GATT by the previous Community of Ten. These measures recognise that the United States was entitled to compensation under GATT following the terms of Spanish and Portuguese accession. In return, the United States agreed not to increase to 200 per cent. tariffs on certain Community exports, including British-bottled gin, and to relax its non-trade restrictive quantitative restrictions on certain other Community exports, including bottled beer and wine. The implications for Community revenue are unclear, since reductions in import charges may be offset by increased trade. A copy of the agreement has been placed in the Library of the House.

### EC (Palestinian Imports)

**Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action has been taken to monitor the results of recent European Economic Community policies to encourage the flow of Palestinian products into the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Alan Clark** [*pursuant to his reply,* 3 February 1987, c. *571*]: Her Majesty's Customs and Excise has introduced a system for recording imports originating in the occupied territories which benefit from the tariff arrangements introduced by Council regulation (EEC) 3363/86 of 27 October 1986. This will enable us to monitor developments closely. There have as yet been no such imports.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Mortgages

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current estimated level of use of top-up mortgages by individuals as an illicit means of raising cheap loans; and what is the estimated cost to the Treasury.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** It is not illicit for individuals to top-up their mortgages in order to borrow more cheaply than otherwise possible. If the hon. Member has in mind the extent of abuse of tax relief on loans ostensibly but not actually used for home improvement purposes, I would refer him to paragraph 32 of the Treasury minute in response to the Public Accounts Committee's 52nd report 1985-86 (published as Cmnd. 9846).

### European Community (Budget)

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will bring up to date the figures given in his written answer dated 13 May 1985, *Official Report,* column 28, to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby concerning the United Kingdom contribution to the EEC budget, together with his forecast for 1987.

**Mr. Peter Brooke:** Since my hon. Friend the Economic Secretary's reply of 13 May 1985, at column 28, the Commission has again revised the figures for the 1 per cent. yield from the VAT base for the years 1982 to 1984. The new information for these years and the updated information requested is set out in the table. Information concerning 1987 has been derived from the Commission's revenue estimates contained in the 1987 draft budget.

*(mecu)*

| | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* | *1987* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *VAT* | | | | | | |
| United Kingdom | 2,968 | 3,002 | 3,028 | 3,760 | 4,635 | 5,211 |
| EEC Total | 12,973 | 13,720 | 14,412 | 15,771 | 25,154 | 26,011 |
| *Agricultural Levies* | | | | | | |
| United Kingdom | 476 | 320 | 241 | 228 | 285 | 269 |
| EEC Total | 1,522 | 1,347 | 1,260 | 1,122 | 1,174 | 2,078 |
| *Sugar Levies* | | | | | | |
| United Kingdom | 72 | 73 | 102 | 94 | 72 | 87 |
| EEC Total | 705 | 944 | 1,170 | 1,054 | 1,047 | 1,219 |
| *Customs Duties* | | | | | | |
| United Kingdom | 1,785 | 1,831 | 2,160 | 2,183 | 1,862 | 2,295 |
| EEC Total | 6,815 | 6,989 | 7,961 | 8,310 | 8,171 | 9,762 |

*Notes:*

1. Source: European Commission budget revenue estmates.
2. The VAT figures show the VAT yield if VAT were levied at a rate of 1 per cent. in the United Kingdom and in all member states for the years 1982-85, and at 1·4 per cent. in 1986 and 1987. They ignore the effects of the United Kingdom VAT abatement. The 1986 figures are taken from the 1986 Budget. The 1987 figures are taken from the 1987 draft budget.
3. Portugal joined the Community on 1 January 1986. It does not pay VAT, but financial contributions linked to its GNP share. The VAT figures for 1986 and 1987 take account of these financial contributions.

**Mr. Gould** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table revising and bringing up to date the table provided in his answer to the hon. Member for Dagenham (Mr. Gould) dated 7 July 1983, *Official Report,* column 173, showing receipts from and payments to the EEC budget, together with an estimate for 1986 and a forecast for 1987.

**Mr. Brooke:** The information requested is set out in the table. An estimate of the United Kingdom's net contribution in 1987-88 is contained in pages 68 to 71 of the public expenditure White Paper (Cm. 56-II). An estimate for the United Kingdom's contribution to the Community budget in 1987 will be provided in the

"Statement on the 1987 Community Budget" which will be published shortly after a budget for 1987 has been adopted.

*£ million*

| | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | [1]*1986* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gross Payments | 2,976 | 3,204 | 3,940 | 4,261 |
| Receipts other than negotiated refunds abatements | 1,522 | 2,020 | 1,905 | 2,378 |
| Refunds abatements | 807 | 528 | 227 | 1,557 |
| Net contribution | 647 | 656 | 1,808 | 326 |

[1] estimated.

*Source*: Departmental records.

*Notes*

1. For all years sterling figures reflect payments made during the year, not payments in respect of particular budgets. The 1986 net contribution is the estimate contained in the "Statement on the 1986 Community Budget" (Cmnd 9907) published in October 1986.

2. Since 198[illegible] negotiated refunds have been replaced by an abatement of the United Kingdom's VAT contributions. The 1985 budget contained a flat rate VAT abatement for the United Kingdom of 1,000 mecu (£605 million), payable in respect of the United Kingdom's contribution in 1984. £166 million of this was received by the end of December 1985. The balance, £439 million, was received in the first few days of January 1986. The delay in payment reduced the 1986 net contribution figure and increased that for 1985. During 1985 the United Kingdom also received some £61 million in final payment for the refunds negotiated in respect of the United Kingdom's excessive net contribution to the 1983 Community budget.

**Mr. Gould** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he will publish in the *Official Report* a table updating the information give in table 1 in the sixth report from the Select Committee on European Legislation, Session 1983-84, HC 78-vi, concerning the principle components in United Kingdom payments and receipts from the European Economic Community.

**Mr. Brooke:** The information requested concerning the outturn for the calendar years 1983 to 1985, together with an estimate for 1986, is given in the table.

*Principal Components in United Kingdom payments to and receipts from the EEC 1983 to 1986*

| | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | [1]*1986* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *VAT rates (per cent.)* | | | | |
| Community VAT ceiling | 1·0 | 1·0 | 1·0 | 1·4 |
| UK VAT rate | 0·9980 | 1·0 | 1·0 | 0.67663 |
| FRG VAT rate | | | | 1·33697 |
| Other states VAT rate | | | | 1·39996 |
| *Payments (£ million)* | | | | |
| VAT own resources including VAT adjustments and before abatements | 1,669 | 1,665 | 2,091 | 2,698 |
| Sugar and Isoglucose levies | 44 | 61 | 55 | 51 |
| Agricultural levies | 188 | 202 | 134 | 153 |
| Customs duties | 1,075 | 1,276 | 1,291 | 1,359 |
| Intergovernmental agreement 1984 | — | — | [2]119 | — |
| Intergovernmental agreement 1985 | — | — | [2]250 | — |
| Total Gross contribution | 2,976 | 3,204 | 3,940 | 4,261 |
| *Receipts* | | | | |
| EAGGF[4] | 1,071 | 1,317 | 1,187 | 1,431 |
| Regional Development Fund | 140 | 183 | 274 | 335 |
| Social Fund | 128 | 282 | 256 | 387 |
| Other receipts | 183 | 238 | 188 | 225 |
| Net payments before UK negotiated refunds | 1,454 | 1,184 | 2,035 | 1,883 |
| Negotiated refunds/VAT abatements[3] | 807 | 528 | 227 | 1,557 |
| Net payments after negotiated refunds/VAT abatements | 647 | 656 | 1,808 | 326 |

*Source*: departmental records.

[1] Forecast for 1986 as in the "Statement on the 1986 Community Budget", Cmnd. 9907.

[2] Payments by the United Kingdom under the two intergovernmental agreements were both made in the 1985 calendar year.

[3] Since 1985 negotiated refunds have been replaced by abatement of the United Kingdom's VAT contributions. The 1985 budget contained a flat rate abatement for the United Kingdom of 1,000 mecu (£605 million), payable in respect of the United Kingdom's contribution in 1984. £166 million of this was received by the end of December 1985. The balance, £439 million was received in the first few days of January 1986. The delay in payment reduced the 1986 figure and increased that for 1985. During 1985 the United Kingdom also received some £61 million as final payment for the refunds negotiated in respect of the United Kingdom's excessive net contribution to the 1983 Community budget.

[4] EAGGF = European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund.

## Small Businesses

**Mr. Walters** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from small businesses about relief from value added tax on bad debts; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Brooke** [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 February 1987, c. *579*]: Virtually all the representations received in response to the Customs and Excise consultation document "VAT: Small Business Review" have welcomed the automatic bad debt relief which would accrue under the proposed cash accounting option. All points made in the representations will be taken into account in the further consideration I am now giving to the consultative document proposals.

**Mr. Walters** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he intends to implement the proposals in the Customs and Excise consultation document on value added tax on small businesses, particularly the cash accounting option for suppliers with a turnover of up to £100,000.

**Mr. Brooke** [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 February 1987, c. *579*]: The Government are considering the many representations received and hopes to be able to announce their decisions on the consultation document proposals at the time of my right hon. Friend's Budget Statement on 17 March.

## Fishing Vessels (Capital Allowances)

**Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will seek to amend the provisions of the Finance Act 1984 with a view to restoring to fishing vessel owners the right to claim 100 per cent. first-year capital allowances on their vessels; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will meet representatives of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation to discuss the impact of the provisions of the Finance Act 1984 in so far as it relates to first-year capital allowances on fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement;

(3) if he will review the impact on investment in the Scottish fishing industry of the withdrawal of first-year capital allowances on fishing vessels as a result of the provisions of the Finance Act 1984; and if he will make a statement;

(4) what representations he has received from the Scottish fishing industry in relation to capital allowances for fishing vessels, under the Finance Act 1984; what action he proposes to take; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his replies*, 2 February 1987, c. *538*]: The Scottish Fishermen's Federation has recently urged the restoration of 100 per cent. first-year allowances for the cost of acquiring fishing vessels and have asked for a meeting. Their representations are being considered. I can confirm that the overall effects of the business tax reforms introduced in 1984 are kept under review.

### Television Sets

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many television sets there are at his official residence; and who is responsible for paying for the licence fee.

**Mr. Brooke** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987, c. *86*]: Three television sets are currently in use at 11 Downing street. No licence fees are payable for television sets which are on Crown property used for Government purposes.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions

**Mr. Ralph Howell** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much will be deducted in income tax and national insurance contributions taken together from *(a)* a single person and *(b)* a married couple who earn £100, £150, £200, £250 and £300 per week respectively; and what percentage of gross income do the combined payments represent in each case.

**Mr. Norman Lamont** [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 February 1987, c. *537*]: The information is given in the following table. It is assumed that the only allowances and reliefs available are the appropriate personal allowances and that in the case of married couples there are no wife's earnings.

*Tax and National Insurance Contributions 1986-87*

| *Earnings* | *Tax and National Insurance contributions*[1] | *Percentage of earnings taken in tax and national insurance contributions* |
|---|---:|---:|
| *£ per week* | *£ per week* | *Per cent.* |
| Single Person | | |
| 100 | 24·98 | 25·0 |
| 150 | 43·98 | 29·3 |
| 200 | 62·98 | 31·5 |
| 250 | 81·98 | 32·8 |
| 300 | 99·63 | 33·2 |
| Married Couple | | |
| 100 | 17·62 | 17·6 |
| 150 | 36·62 | 24·4 |
| 200 | 55·62 | 27·8 |
| 250 | 74·62 | 29·8 |
| 300 | 92·27 | 30·8 |

[1] At the contracted-in rate.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Pharmaceutical Industry

**Mr. Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what information he has as to what proportion of the gross output of the pharmaceutical industry comes from Scotland;

(2) how many people are employed in the pharmaceutical industry in Scotland.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The proportion of gross output in the pharmaceutical products industry[1] accounted for by manufacturing units in Scotland in 1985 was 7·1 per cent. of the total for the United Kingdom as a whole. The employment of these units totalled 5,500.

[1] Group 257: Standard Industrial Classification (Revised 1980).

*Source:* Annual Census of Production.

**Mr. Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what information he has as to what proportion of the research and development fund spent in the pharmaceutical industry comes from Scotland.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** I regret that statistics of R and D expenditure on a regional or country basis are not available.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### State Security

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General (1) if he will list the dates in 1986 of all his communications with Sir Frank Cooper, former permanent under-secretary at the Ministry of Defence;

(2) if he will list the dates in 1986 of all his communications with Sir Ronald Mason, the former chief scientific adviser at the Ministry of Defence.

**The Attorney-General:** I have no recollection of any communications with Sir Frank Cooper or Sir Ronald Mason in 1986.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General (1) on what date he first knew of Sir Ronald Mason's interview with Mr. Duncan Campbell during which reference was made to the Zircon project;

(2) on what date he first knew of Sir Frank Cooper's interview with Mr. Duncan Campbell during which reference was made to the Zircon project.

**The Attorney-General:** I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's answer to him of 26 January 1987.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General (1) whether he discussed the Zircon project with Mr. Duncan Campbell when he met him in 1986; and if he will make a statement;

(2) on what dates in 1986 he met Mr. Duncan Campbell.

**The Attorney-General:** It is not my practice to answer detailed questions about my engagements, but I met Mr. Duncan Campbell in July and on one other occasion some months earlier. On neither occasion was the Zircon project discussed.

## WALES

### Hospital Beds

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the average number of beds available in National Health Service hospitals in Wales nationally and for each health authority for 1979 and 1985 and the percentage change in each case for 1979 to 1985 for *(a)* acute, *(b)* geriatric, *(c)* mental illness, *(d)* mental handicap, *(e)* maternity and *(f)* all specialities.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The information is given in the following table:

*Average daily number of available beds*

| | *Acute*[1] | | | *Geriatric* | | | *Mental illness*[2] | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1979* | *1985* | *per cent. change* | *1979* | *1985* | *per cent. change* | *1979* | *1985* | *per cent. change* |
| Clwyd | 1,179·4 | 904·6 | −23·3 | 616·7 | 575·1 | −6·7 | 744·7 | 657·3 | −11·7 |
| Dyfed[5] | 883·4 | 822·7 | −6·9 | 556·5 | 518·0 | −6·9 | 765·2 | 577·3 | −24·6 |
| Gwent | 1,281·9 | 1,234·8 | −3·7 | 557·2 | 643·2 | +15·4 | 1,164·0 | 931·0 | −20·0 |
| Gwynedd | 563·5 | 554·3 | −1·6 | 402·9 | 429·5 | +6·6 | — | 46·5 | — |
| Mid Glamorgan | 1,670·2 | 1,578·1 | −5·5 | 796·0 | 864·8 | +8·6 | 1,377·7 | 1,197·0 | −13·1 |
| Powys | 116·0 | 55·3 | −52·3 | 247·6 | 238·0 | −3·9 | 422·0 | 335·0 | −20·6 |
| South Glamorgan | 1,678·0 | 1,586·1 | −5·5 | 448·6 | 460·6 | +2·7 | 678·1 | 677·9 | — |
| West Glamorgan | 1,351·8 | 1,320·1 | −2·3 | 464·8 | 465·0 | — | 390·2 | 406·6 | +4·2 |
| WALES | 8,724·2 | 8,056·0 | −7·7 | 4,090·3 | 4,194·2 | +2·5 | 5,541·9 | 4,828·6 | −12·9 |

| | *Mental handicap* | | | *Maternity*[3] | | | *All Specialties*[4] | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1979* | *1985* | *per cent. change* | *1979* | *1985* | *per cent. change* | *1979* | *1985* | *per cent. change* |
| Clwyd | 92·0 | 92·0 | — | 179·6 | 144·7 | −19·4 | 3,052·5 | 2,811·6 | −7·9 |
| Dyfed[5] | 116·0 | 103·0 | −11·2 | 119·3 | 87·9 | −26·3 | 2,564·6 | 2,237·4 | −12·8 |
| Gwent | 468·5 | 421·7 | −10·0 | 175·0 | 157·2 | −10·2 | 3,882·6 | 3,619·4 | −6·8 |
| Gwynedd | 375·0 | 333·3 | −11·1 | 97·3 | 75·9 | −22·0 | 1,569·5 | 1,610·5 | +2·6 |
| Mid Glamorgan | 586·0 | 488·3 | −16·7 | 248·8 | 239·6 | −3·7 | 4,943·4 | 4,644·2 | −6·1 |
| Powys | 263·3 | 209·5 | −20·4 | 40·5 | 37·0 | −8·6 | 1,265·5 | 1,057·3 | −16·5 |
| South Glamorgan | 433·1 | 411·1 | −5·1 | 159·0 | 153·7 | −3·3 | 3,583·6 | 3,546·4 | −1·0 |
| West Glamorgan | 151·0 | 142·5 | −5·6 | 150·1 | 155·0 | +3·3 | 2,594·3 | 2,603·2 | +0·3 |
| WALES | 2,484·9 | 2,201·4 | −11·4 | 1,169·6 | 1,051·0 | −10·1 | 23,456·1 | 22,130·1 | −5·7 |

[1] Includes medical, surgical and pre-convalescent.

[2] Includes mental illness, mental illness children, adolescent psychiatry, psycho-geriatric and elderly mentally infirm.

[3] Includes obstetrics and GP maternity.

[4] In addition to the specialties included in the other five columns, "all specialties" includes GP medical and GP dental beds, staff wards, special care baby units and other special units.

[5] Pembrokeshire figures are included in the 1985 figures.

### NHS Land and Buildings

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give his best estimate of the current value of National Health Service land and buildings in Wales.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The chief valuer of the Inland Revenue has estimated that the value of the National Health Service estate in Wales for current use, at 1984 prices, is about £720 million.

### Health and Social Services (Expenditure)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the per capita spending on health and personal social services in cash terms and at 1986-87 prices each year since 1979 to the latest available date for *(a)* all ages, *(b)* births, *(c)* 0 to four years, *(d)* five to 15 years, *(e)* 16 to 65 years, *(f)* 65 to 74 years and *(g)* 75 years and over giving the amount spent on (i) personal social services, (ii) family practitioner services, (iii) hospital and community health services and (iv) total in Wales.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The necessary information to answer the breakdown per capita is not held centrally. The information available is as follows:

*Net expenditure on health and personal social services*

*£ million*

| | *Cash* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* |
| Personal social services | 77·6 | 93·9 | 99·7 | 108·3 | 119·2 | 124·6 | 128·1 | 139·2 |
| Family practitioner services | 104·9 | 131·3 | 149·4 | 172·7 | 185·6 | 203·4 | 216·7 | 233·2 |
| Hospital and community health services | 350·2 | 454·9 | 518·5 | 561·3 | 591·7 | 634·5 | 675·9 | 722·9 |
| Total health and personal social services | 543·3 | 692·7 | 782·2 | 858·9 | 916·1 | 986·2 | 1,048·4 | 1,129·7 |

*£ million*

| | *Adjusted to 1986-87 prices by GDP deflator* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* |
| Personal social services | 129·3 | 131·9 | 127·5 | 129·1 | 136·3 | 136·3 | 131·9 | 139·2 |
| Family practitioner services | 174·8 | 184·4 | 191·1 | 205·9 | 211·9 | 222·6 | 223·2 | 233·2 |
| Hospital and community health services | 583·5 | 638·9 | 663·1 | 669·3 | 675·4 | 694·3 | 696·2 | 722·9 |
| Total health and personal social services | 905·2 | 972·9 | 1,000·3 | 1,024·2 | 1,045·7 | 1,079·1 | 1,079·9 | 1,129·7 |

*Per capita spending on Health and Personal Social Services*

| | | | | *Cash* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* |
| Personal Social Services | 27·61 | 33·35 | 35·44 | 38·59 | 42·45 | 44·39 | 45·56 |
| Family Practitioner Services | 37·33 | 46·63 | 53·10 | 61·53 | 66·11 | 72·46 | 77·07 |
| Hospital and Community Health Services | 124·62 | 161·56 | 184·29 | 199·99 | 210·73 | 226·03 | 240·38 |
| Total Health and Personal Social Services | 193·34 | 246·00 | 278·02 | 306·03 | 326·27 | 351·31 | 372·86 |

| | | | *Adjusted to 1986-87 prices by GDP deflator* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* |
| Personal Social Services | 46·01 | 46·85 | 45·32 | 46·00 | 48·47 | 48·55 | 46·91 |
| Family Practitioner Services | 62·20 | 65·49 | 67·92 | 73·36 | 75·47 | 79·30 | 79·38 |
| Hospital and Community Health Services | 207·64 | 226·91 | 235·69 | 238·47 | 240·54 | 247·33 | 247·60 |
| Total Health and Personal Social Services | 322·12 | 345·54 | 355·54 | 364·93 | 372·43 | 384·40 | 384·06 |

## NHS (Efficiency Savings)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the total cash releasing cost improvements achieved by each health authority in each year from 1979 to the latest available date.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Health authorities in Wales have been required to prepare a cost improvement programme from 1987-88 onwards. Prior to this no formal cost improvement programmes were in place in Wales. However, health authorities since 1984-85 have been required to make a minimum efficiency saving of 0·5 per cent. on the authorities' revenue allocation and to redeploy this from the acute to the continuing care sector for the benefit of mentally ill, mentally handicapped and elderly people. The savings reported by health authorities are as follows:

*Efficiency Savings*

*£'000*

| *District Health Authority* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87 Projected* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Clwyd | 348·0 | 654·4 | 663·8 |
| East Dyfed | 224·0 | 312·2 | 398·8 |
| Gwent | 439·4 | 292·5 | 622·5 |
| Gwynedd | 217·0 | 244·0 | 309·0 |
| Mid Glamorgan | 500·0 | 547·0 | 500·0 |
| Pembrokeshire | 72·5 | 350·0 | 694·2 |
| Powys | 103·0 | 108·0 | 116·0 |
| South Glamorgan | 570·1 | 639·0 | 474·0 |
| West Glamorgan | 343·5 | 397·3 | 381·0 |
| TOTAL | 2,817·5 | 3,544·4 | 4,159·3 |

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will give the total cash released through the competitive tendering process by each health authority, giving category of service and total, for each year 1979 to the latest available date.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The information is not available in the form requested. Health authorities were asked to test the cost-effectiveness of their domestic, catering and laundry services by competitive tendering in September 1983. Such information as is held centrally in relation to that was given in the reply to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras on 24 November 1986, at column 25. Since then a further domestic services contract, with estimated savings of £36,000 pa has been let by the Powys health authority.

## Departmental Research

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is his annual expenditure on research for his Department; what percentage of this is of his Department's total expenditure for each year since 1980; how much his Department has spent on research concerning industry in the years since 1980 in Wales; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards** [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 January 1987, c. *296*]: Expenditure on research and development by the Welsh Office since 1981-82 (the earliest years for which figures are available) and these figures shown as a percentage of the Department's total annual expenditure, are as follows:

*£ million*

| | *1981-82* | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Welsh Office expenditure on research and development | 1·6 | 1·5 | 1·3 | 1·6 | 2·6 | [1]3·6 |
| Percentage of total Welsh Office expenditure | 0·072 | 0·062 | 0·050 | 0·061 | 0·093 | 0·119 |

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[1] Estimated outturn.

On industry matters the Department of Trade and Industry runs research schemes which cover Wales as well as England. Expenditure by the Department of Trade and Industry in Wales on support for innovation in 1985-86 was over £1·9 million. It is expected that a similar amount will be spent in 1986-87. Information for the years preceding 1985-86 could be separately identified only at disproportionate cost.

### Welsh Language

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales when his Department expects to publish *(a)* the revised version of the booklet "Languages at Work" including information on the vocational value of Welsh language qualifications; and *(b)* Defnyddio'ch Cymraeg; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The "Languages at Work" booklet is published jointly by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office. The present edition was produced in 1983-84 and the revised version is due to be published later this year. The booklet is distributed throughout England and Wales. It is not intended that the revised booklet should include information about the use of Welsh in work situations. However, the Department is preparing a separate publication giving information about the Welsh-medium further and higher education courses which are available and about the types of employment where a knowledge of the Welsh language is considered to be either essential or an advantage. Preparation of the booklet "Defnyddio'ch Cymraeg" is well advanced and it is hoped to publish it within the next few months.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### International Fund for Ireland

**Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the board for the International Fund for Ireland has been formed; who is the chairman; and what money have so far been allocated.

**Mr. Scott:** Members of the board of the International Fund for Ireland were formally appointed on 12 December 1986, the day the fund came into being. The chairman of the board is Mr. Charles Brett, a past chairman of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and there are six other members of the board from both parts of Ireland. No moneys have yet been allocated to projects by the board of the international fund. A contribution from the United States of $50 million will be available to the international fund shortly, and further contributions from the United States, Canada and New Zealand have been promised. It will be for the board to decide on the allocation of these resources when they are available.

### Women Prison Officers

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many full-time women prison officers are employed in prisons in Northern Ireland;

(2) how many auxiliary women prison officers are employed in prisons in Northern Ireland.

**Mr. Scott:** One hundred and thirty-three women prison offices are employed in the Northern Ireland prison service. Of these, three are employed as prison officer clerks at male establishments and the remainder are employed at Her Majesty's prison, Maghaberry (female). The breakdown is:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Governor IV | 1 |
| Chief Officer II | 1 |
| Principal Officer | 5 |
| Senior Officer | 8 |
| Basic Grade Officer | 81 |
| Clerk II | 1 |
| Clerk III | 8 |
| Catering Officer | 1 |
| Hospital Officer | 4 |
| Officer Instructor | 1 |
| Physical Education Instructor | 1 |
| Dog handler | 1 |
| TOTAL | 113 |

There are no auxiliary prison officers (male or female) employed in Northern Ireland.

### Severe Weather Payments

**Mr. Hume** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement indicating the total number, by social security office, of severe weather payments for the relevant two weeks of January 1987 which are not to be paid directly to claimants but to be treated as deductions in respect of fuel arrears from a previous period.

**Mr. Needham:** None. It is intended that these payments should go towards fuel costs incurred during the relevant weeks.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Fresh Start

**Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement as to what feasibility schemes have been considered by his Department prior to the introduction of Fresh Start; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Fresh Start proposals followed consideration of the report by a joint team of prison service personnel and PA Management Consultants on shift and complementing arrangements for prison officers. Since then, considerable development work has been undertaken by experienced operational staff—including refinement exercises at eight further establishments—which has confirmed the feasibility of the proposals. Preparatory work due to begin in establishments next month will further help their development.

### Prisoners (Hepatitis)

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the incidence of hepatitis among prisoners and if it varies by *(a)* age of prisoner and *(b)* type of establishment.

**Mr. Mellor:** The number of cases of hepatitis reported between 1 April 1985 and 31 March 1986 in prison establishments in England and Wales was as follows. The ages of the prisoners concerned are not recorded centrally.

| | *Acute Hepatitis A* | *Acute Hepatitis B* | *Chronic Hepatitis B (i.e. known carrier)* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Males* | | | | |
| Remand Centres | 0 | 11 | 21 | 32 |
| Local Prisons | 15 | 111 | 180 | 306 |
| Closed Training Prisons | 9 | 17 | 53 | 79 |
| Open Training Prisons | 0 | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| Closed Youth Custody Centres | 4 | 11 | 17 | 32 |
| Open Youth Custody Centres | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Senior Detention Centres | 1 | 5 | 2 | 8 |
| Junior Detention Centres | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 30 | 157 | 281 | 468 |
| *Females* | | | | |
| Remand Centres | 1 | 3 | 7 | 11 |
| Local Prisons | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| Closed Training Prisons | 0 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Open Training Prisons | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Closed Youth Custody Centres | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Open Youth Custody Centres | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 4 | 8 | 14 | 26 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 34 | 165 | 295 | 494 |

### Prison Officers and Governors

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many black prison officers there are; and how many black governors.

**Mr. Mellor:** The ethnic origin of civil servants is monitored by voluntary self-classification. The response from prison officers has been insufficient to provide accurate information.

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time women prison officers are employed in prisons in England and Wales.

**Mr. Mellor:** On 1 January 1987 there were 1,060 women employed full time in the prison officer class in prisons in England and Wales.

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many auxiliary women prison officers are employed in prisons in England and Wales.

**Mr. Mellor:** On 1 January 1987 there were 77 women employed as prison auxiliaries in prisons in England and Wales.

### Prisoners (Release)

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were released on Christmas Eve; and how many had no home to go to.

**Mr. Mellor:** It is estimated that about 900 sentenced and non-criminal prisoners were released from prison department establishments in England and Wales on 24 December 1986. Details of home circumstances are not recorded centrally.

### Prisoners (Home Leave)

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the cost of home leave for prisoners in 1985.

**Mr. Mellor:** Figures collected centrally do not distinguish between expenditure on home leave and expenditure on temporary release. In 1985-86, £232,094 was spent on home leave and temporary release. This figure includes travel, subsistence and accommodation allowances for young offenders but excludes expenditure on temporary release to hospital.

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what payments are made from public funds to prisoners on home leave.

**Mr. Mellor:** Adult prisoners on home leave receive all travelling expenses, subsistence for the journey and the cost of accommodation and food during the home leave period up to a maximum of £21 or £41 depending on the length of the leave. The person offering hospitality to the prisoner may also be eligible for financial help.

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the maximum amount of money which a prisoner may take on home leave.

**Mr. Mellor:** £20 for terminal home leave and £10 for short home leave and pre-parole leave.

### Deportation

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons currently serving custodial sentences are under threat of deportation; how many are classified in category D; and how many of these are in open prisons.

**Mr. Mellor:** I regret that this information is not available in the form requested, but during 1986 the courts recommended 494 persons for deportation together with a custodial sentence. A further 135 persons were notified of an intention to deport them under section 3(5)*(b)* of the Immigration Act 1971, which deals with deportation in the public interest. The majority of these would have been serving a custodial sentence at the time.

### Civil Defence

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is satisfied with the implementation of the Government's civil defence requirements by local authorities; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** A number of local authorities are making encouraging progress, but there is still a great deal to be done before there is a satisfactory and balanced state of preparedness. Home Office circular ES1 1986 set out a planned programme for implementation of the 1983 regulations and a timetable for systematic monitoring (a copy is in the Library).

### Child Abuse

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration he has given to the problems related to allegations of child sex abuse in the case of mentally handicapped children and the difficulties in bringing these allegations before the courts; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** My right hon. Friend's reply on 18 December 1986 to questions from my hon. Friends the Members for Penrith and The Border (Mr. Maclean) and for Slough (Mr. Watts), *Official Report*, c. *645-46*, outlined action to improve the likelihood of prosecution and conviction in cases of sexual abuse of children. We fully appreciate that when the child is mentally handicapped, there are extra difficulties. We are not, however, persuaded that any changes to the law could be made specifically in respect of mentally handicapped children which would be consistent with justice for the accused.

### Mr. Trevor Ferguson (Incident)

**Mr. Leighton** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the commissioner as to what action has been taken about the incident when Trevor Ferguson lost an eye in the early hours of the morning of 4 January in Exming road, London E.16.; and whether the police are treating this as a racist attack.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the commissioner that police inquiries in this case are continuing and that it is being treated as a racial incident.

### Mr. Paul Cleeland

**Mr. Wood** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to be able to respond to representations made to him on behalf of Paul Cleeland, a prisoner at Parkhurst, on 29 July 1986 by the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Wells) and the hon. Member for Stevenage.

**Mr. Mellor:** We hope to be able to do so shortly.

### Alcohol-related Offences

**Mr. David Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent research into the actual risk of detection for excess alcohol offences is available to his Department; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** There has been no recent research of which results are yet available. However, a study now being carried out by the Department includes an assessment of the relationship between police enforcement practices and the incidence of drink-driving offences.

### Police (Pensions)

**Dr. Blackburn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the date of the next meeting of committee E of the police negotiating board.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** This is a matter for the board's independent secretariat. I understand, however, that the next meeting is scheduled for 27 May.

**Dr. Blackburn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the change in the number of police preserved rate widows since 25 February 1986.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

**Dr. Blackburn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the cases in which he has failed to implement agreed negotiated decisions of committee E of the police negotiating board.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** This has happened once: in the case of the recent recommended increase in the pensions payable to the widows of police officers who retired before 1 April 1956.

**Dr. Blackburn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met committee E of the olice negotiating board.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No such meeting has taken place.

**Dr. Blackburn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will consider granting a place on committee E of the police negotiating board to the National Association of Retired Police Officers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No. The Edmund-Davies committee considered carefully, and rejected, the case for the national association to be represented on the negotiating body. We agree with the committee's conclusion.

### Electronic Data Systems

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what investigation is being carried out by the immigration service into advice from staff of Electronic Data Systems, a copy of which has been sent to him by the hon. Member for Linlithgow about their behaviour when undergoing immigration control;

(2) when he expects to reach a decision as to whether to take legal action against Electronic Data Systems in relation to alleged breaches of immigration rules.

**Mr. Waddington** [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1987, Vol. 108, c. *250*]: Following allegations in September last year that breaches of the immigration laws had been committed by employees of Electronic Data Systems, careful inquiries have been carried out by the immigration service. Some irregularities were identified, but in none of the cases was prosecution considered practicable by the police.

### Visa Regulations

**Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what have been the expenditure effects to date for his Department of the introduction of the new visa regulations.

**Mr. Waddington** [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 January 1987, c. *70-71*]: Such small additional expenditure as has been incurred has been offset by savings and contained within existing cost limits. But for the extension of visa arrangements, the Department would have incurred unavoidable increased staffing and other running costs. These are difficult to estimate but could have been of the order of £2·5 million in a full year. In the unlikely event that sufficient accommodation could have been made available for use by the immigration service, substantial further staffing and other expenditure would have been needed to provide the level of service that is now available at the ports as a result of the extension of the visa system.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Benefit Claimant Advisers

**Mr. Leighton** asked the Paymaster General how many claimant advisers the Department employs; whether they have been recruited from outside his Department; and what are their terms of reference.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Claimant advisers are being introduced into unemployment benefit offices to replace unemployment review officers who have been operating in the Department of Health and Social Security. Their job description is to provide advice and guidance to claimants to help them move out of unemployment; to ensure that they are available for and actively seeking work; advising on the availability condition and alternative benefits for which availability is not a requirement; to encourage and support claimants in the process of looking for work, and advise them of the services available through the MSC; to prepare cases for submission to the adjudicating authorities where availability is in doubt.

On 31 January 1987 there were 466 claimant advisers in post. This will rise to a full complement of 640 by 31 March 1987. Most of the posts are being filled by the transfer or promotion of staff within the Department of Employment, but a small number are also filled by the transfer of staff from other Government Departments or by recruits under the Civil Service direct entrant scheme.

### Nuclear Installations Inspectorate

**Mr. Proctor** asked the Paymaster General, in the light of the recommendations by Sir Frank Layfield in the report on the Sizewell public inquiry concerning further work to be undertaken by Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate, what discussions he has arranged with the Director General of the Health and Safety Executive on the resource implications of such further work; when he expects to be informed of such resource implications; if he will publish a report of the potential resource implications; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Energy has a quasi-judicial role in respect of the Central Electricity Generating Board's application to construct Sizewell B. It would not be proper to comment on the inspector's report, including the recommendations, before he has taken his decision.

### Labour Statistics

**Sir David Price** asked the Paymaster General if he will publish a table showing *(a)* the number of people in full-time employment and *(b)* the total work force for each of the last 10 years.

**Mr. Lee:** The quarterly estimates of the numbers of male employees in employment do not separately identify those in full-time employment for dates prior to September 1984. For the earlier periods, estimates of the numbers of full-time male employees in employment are available only from censuses of employment. Estimates of the numbers of self-employed people do not separately identify those who are employed full time. The available information for the years specified is given in the table.

*Employed labour force in Great Britain*

| | *Total employed labour force* | *of which:* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | *Her Majesty's Forces* | *Self-employed* | *Employees in employment* | *of which:* | |
| | | | | | *Full-time males* | *Full-time females* |
| June 1976[1] | 24,271,000 | 336,000 | 1,888,000 | 22,048,000 | 12,398,000 | 5,366,000 |
| June 1977[1] | 24,295,000 | 327,000 | 1,843,000 | 22,126,000 | 12,395,000 | 5,433,000 |
| June 1978[1] | 24,434,000 | 318,000 | 1,843,000 | 22,273,000 | 12,396,000 | 5,485,000 |
| June 1979 | 24,794,000 | 314,000 | 1,842,000 | 22,638,000 | n/a | 5,585,000 |
| June 1980 | 24,731,000 | 323,000 | 1,950,000 | 22,458,000 | n/a | 5,499,000 |
| June 1981 | 23,777,000 | 334,000 | 2,058,000 | 21,386,000 | n/a | 5,290,000 |
| September 1981[1] | 23,714,000 | 335,000 | 2,071,000 | 21,309,000 | 11,506,000 | 5,303,000 |
| June 1982 | 23,348,000 | 324,000 | 2,109,000 | 20,916,000 | n/a | 5,202,000 |
| June 1983 | 23,054,000 | 322,000 | 2,160,000 | 20,572,000 | n/a | 5,125,000 |
| June 1984 | 23,502,000 | 326,000 | 2,435,000 | 20,741,000 | n/a | 5,234,000 |
| September 1984[1] | 23,636,000 | 328,000 | 2,462,000 | 20,846,000 | 10,928,000 | 5,289,000 |
| June 1985 | 23,859,000 | 326,000 | 2,543,000 | 20,990,000 | 10,855,000 | 5,352,000 |
| June 1986 | 24,060,000 | 322,000 | 2,665,000 | 21,073,000 | 10,758,000 | 5,430,000 |

[1] Census of employment figure.

n/a = Not available.

The labour force survey provides information on a different basis which includes estimates of total numbers of residents of private households in full time employment. The available estimates are given in the following table.

*Persons in employment: Whether working full-time*
*Labour Force Survey Estimates: Spring 1979 to 1985*
*Great Britain*

*Thousands*

| | *All persons in employment* | *of which: Full-time*[1] |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 24,214 | 19,611 |
| 1981 | 23,606 | 18,783 |
| 1983 | 22,944 | 18,291 |
| 1984 | 23,387 | 18,392 |
| 1985 | 23,739 | 18,672 |

[1] Usually working more than 30 hours per week (including overtime).

**Mr. Knox** asked the Paymaster General what proportion of jobs lost since 1979 have been lost in the northern regions, and Scotland.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** There are no figures for the number of jobs lost in the country as a whole or in each region. The inaccurate claim that 94 per cent. of jobs lost have been lost in the north is totally misleading. That particular figure uses changes in the net numbers of employees in employment which is the result of both jobs lost and jobs gained. If the same procedure were applied to changes in the net numbers of jobs (i.e. including the self-employed) between 1979 and 1986, that would produce the absurd conclusion that "148 per cent. of jobs lost were lost in the north." The 94 per cent. figure was also arrived at by including Wales, the west midlands and the east midlands in the north rather than the south, which is a definition which might be challeged by the residents of Northampton and Cheltenham.

Quite apart from the odd nature of the statistic recently quoted by the hon. Member for Dunfermline, East (Mr. Brown), the fact is that falls in the number of employees in employment as a result of the recession and improvements in productivity were by no means confined to the north. Even adopting the odd geographical division of the country above, the "south" which had 35 per cent. of manufacturing employees in 1979 experienced 28 per cent. of the net fall in manufacturing employment between 1979 and 1986. And, between 1983 and 1986, 40 per cent. of the net fall in manufacturing employees occurred in the "south". Conversely, gains in employment were by no means confined to the "south". The dramatic increase in self-employment since 1979 has benefited the "north" substantially; 368,000 more people became self-employed in the North, accounting for nearly half the total increase in self-employment.

There is a need to encourage more enterprise in the "north" and to make it a more attractive place for investment in modern industry and commerce. This is being tackled by a whole range of Government policies and by enterprising private initiatives. Exaggerating the extent of job losses in the "north" does nothing to help our endeavours to encourage job creation there.

### Community Programme

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Paymaster General, pursuant to the answer of 23 January 1987 regarding community programme plans in 1987-88, if he will list the areas considered to be most in need; how he anticipates the allocation in these areas will compare with those in 1986-87, and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee** [*pursuant to his reply*, 29 January 1987, c. *349*]: In distributing community programme places between regions and areas those considered to be most in need are those which are experiencing the highest relative incidence of long-term unemployment. The allocation between regions and areas for 1987-88 is still being finalised by the Manpower Services Commission.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Paymaster General how the total provision of the community programme places in 1987-88 compared with that of 1986-87; what is the percentage change and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee** [*pursuant to his reply*, 29 January 1987, c. *349*]: In December 1986 there were 247,600 filled places nationally and we expect the programmme to level out in the next few months, at around 250,000 filled places. For 1987-88, the Manpower Services Commission is planning to operate the programme at an average level over the year of about 245,000 filled places. We shall continue to provide opportunities for 300,000 participants in this coming year.

### Disabled People

**Mr. Watts** asked the Paymaster General how many schemes have been approved under the Manpower Services Commission scheme for pilot employment initiatives for disabled people; how many jobs are estimated to be provided; and what funds remain to be allocated in the current financial year.

**Mr. Lee:** Contracts for six projects have been placed, and four other projects have been approved in principle, under the scheme.

Four of the 10 projects have specified the number of placings that they aim to achieve. They expect to place at least 235 people into jobs in the first three years. The 10 projects will employ directly 19 people.

The cost of the 10 projects to the Manpower Services Commission is estimated to be £55,000 in the 1986-87 financial year. Funds available to the scheme in the same financial year amount to £512,000.

### Chemical Spillage (Souhampton)

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Paymaster General if he will make available the findings of the Health and Safety Executive into the chemical spillage in Southampton which was reported on 15 January; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** The Health and Safety Executive investigation into this incident is not yet complete. It is not intended that a formal report will be published. I will write to the hon. Member about the matter and I will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

### Underpayment (Prosecutions)

**Mr. Janner** asked the Paymaster General how many prosecutions for underpayment have taken place since his introduction of the Wages Act 1986.

**Mr. Trippier:** Since 25 July 1986, one employer has been prosecuted. Two other cases are due to be heard shortly.

**Mr. Janner:** asked the Paymaster General how many prosecutions have been brought against companies for underpayment for each of the last 10 years; and how many prosecutions have been successful.

**Mr. Trippier:** The information requested is given in the following table.

| | *(a) Number of prosecutions for underpayment* | *(b) Number successful* |
|---|---|---|
| 1977 | 7 | 7 |
| 1978 | 16 | 16 |
| 1979 | 12 | 12 |
| 1980 | 8 | 8 |
| 1981 | 10 | 8 |
| 1982 | 6 | 6 |
| 1983 | 2 | 2 |
| 1984 | 2 | 2 |
| 1985 | 2 | 2 |
| 1986 | 2 | 2 |

## ENERGY

### Power Stations

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) when one or more inspectors of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate last observed an exercise of emergency procedures at Sizewell nuclear power station; if he will publish the exercise scenario used on that occasion; if he will describe each accident or fault said to have occurred for exercise purposes; whether any fire or explosion was said to have occurred for exercise purposes; and if he will make a statement;

(2) when one or more inspectors of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate last observed an exercise of emergency procedures at Bradwell nuclear power station; if he will publish the exercise scenario used on that occasion; if he will describe each accident or fault said to have occurred for exercise purposes; whether any fire or explosion was said to have occurred for exercise purposes; and if he will make a statement;

(3) when one or more inspectors of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate last observed an exercise of emergency procedures at Dungeness A nuclear power station; if he will publish the exercise scenario used on that occasion; if he will describe each accident or fault said to have occurred for exercise purposes; whether any fire or explosion was said to have occurred for exercise purposes; and if he will make a statement;

(4) when one or more inspectors of Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate last observed an exercise of emergency procedures at Dungeness B nuclear power station; if he will publish the exercise scenario used on that occasion; if he will describe each accident or fault said to have occurred for exercise purposes; whether any fire or explosion was said to have occurred for exercise purposes; and if he will make a statement;

(5) what part Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate plays in determining the reference accident for the off-site emergency plan of a nuclear power station; what are the material factors taken into account by the nuclear installations inspectorate in relation to approval of the reference accident in considering approval of an off-site emergency plan; and if he will make a statement;

(6) what is the reference accident for the off-site emergency plan of *(a)* Sizewell A nuclear power station, *(b)* Bradwell nuclear power station, *(c)* Dungeness A nuclear power station and *(d)* Dungeness B nuclear power station; when each reference accident was last revised or restated; whether in each case fire or explosion is said to occur in the reference accident; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate has observed exercises of emergency procedures as follows:

| *Site* | *Date of observed exercise* | *Postulated incident* |
|---|---|---|
| Sizewell | 27 August 1986 | failure of standpipe closure |
| Bradwell | 18 June 1986 | failure of standpipe |
| Dungeness A | 4 June 1986 | burst bottom duct |
| Dungeness B | 20 May 1986 | $CO_2$ by-pass duct safety valve failure |

It is not the practice to publish detailed scenarios. These scenarios are submitted to the nuclear installations inspectorate for acceptance, and are discussed in general terms with chief officers of emergency services when seeking their participation. The scenarios incorporate a wide variety of accident conditions including, to the extent relevant to the type of reactor, depressurisation, fire and the release of radioactive fission products. A report on each emergency exercise is made to the local liaison committee.

The Health and Safety Executive's published booklet "Emergency plans for civil nuclear installations" describes how the accidents used for emergency planning purposes are determined. Those for all gas-cooled reactors involve loss of coolant; for Magnox reactors they also involve a fuel channel fire. The fault studies defining releases in accidents are subject to periodic revision. They were last revised in May 1986 for Sizewell, in January 1983 for Bradwell and in March 1986 for Dungeness A. Revision is currently in hand for Dungeness B.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what has been the total financial sum and manpower effort invested to date by the electricity supply industry in engineering, economic and site evaluations and planning for the programme of retrofitting flue-gas desulphurisation equipment to three power stations.

**Mr. Goodlad:** This is a matter for the Central Electricity Generating Board and I am arranging for the chairman to write to the hon. Member.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) whether he is satisfied that there has been sufficient co-operation between countries involved in European collaboration on commercial demonstration fast reactor safety;

(2) what progress has been made in the European collaboration on commercial demonstration fast reactor safety; and whether he is satisfied with the progress made.

**Mr. Goodlad:** Programmes on fast reactor safety are an integral part of the fast reactor collaboration, and are co-ordinated by a working group on safety. The United Kingdom is fully involved in this work.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what the load reactor of the prototype fast reactor at Dounreay has been over the last two years; and what problems have resulted in any reactor shutdowns.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I am advised by the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority that the load factor of the prototype fast reactor in 1985 was 41 per cent. and in 1986 44 per cent.

The causes of significant unplanned loss of output were: in 1985, replacement of the main generator transformer, removal of development fuel and blockage of the condenser's seawater intake; and in 1986, condenser leak repair and replacement of superheater tubing.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what delays have been experienced in the Scarabee-N programme of the European collaboration on commercial demonstration fast reactor safety; and what have been the consequences for the United Kingdom's involvement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I understand from the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority that there has been a lower rate of testing under the Scarabee-N programme than originally envisaged, but that this has not affected the authority's involvement.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy (1) whether, as part of collaboration with the United States of America on fast reactor safety, he is satisfied with progress being made under the PFR-TREAT and safety design principle agreements; and whether he expects such agreements to continue;

(2) what progress has been made in collaboration with the United States on fast reactor safety since January 1986; and whether he is satisfied with progress made.

**Mr. Goodlad:** Contacts continue between the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority and the United States Department of Energy on various aspects of fast reactor research, including safety research. Various tests have been successfully completed under the PFR-TREAT programme. An agreement on safety design principles expired in November 1986 and has not been renewed. The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority considers that adequate opportunities exist for further exchanges of information in this area.

**Mr. Foulkes** asked the Secretary of State for Energy what decision has been made as part of the European collaboration on commercial demonstration fast reactor safety on the CABRI 2 programme; and what financial, technical and manpower contribution is planned from each of the collaborating countries, including the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Goodlad:** I am advised by the UKAEA that decisions on levels of participation in the CABRI 2 programme have not yet been taken.

### Geothermal Energy

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will make a statement on research programmes on geothermal energy.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The Government have supported research programmes on geothermal energy since 1977. At present, research is concentrated on hot dry rock technology. Work on hot dry rocks has been carried out in granite rocks at a site in Cornwall. Holes were drilled to 300m and then to 2000m and a large reservoir of hot fractured rock was established by explosive and hydraulic fracturing. A further phase of work involving a third experimental hole was approved in 1983. Expenditure to date has been over £20 million.

Last year the programme was extended for a further two years at a cost of some £7 million. Industrial participation in the project has started and commercialisation studies are under way.

The long-term aim of the programme is to have a commercial prototype operating at 6km depth with suitable industrial partners by about the mid 1990s. This will depend on full achievement of technical targets at the present depth of 2km and demonstration that the technology has sound prospects for commercial viability. A full-scale review of the programme will be made in the course of this year.

### Electricity Consumption

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will list the figures for the last complete year for which he has records of electricity consumption for England and Wales.

**Mr. Goodlad:** In 1985, the last complete year for which information is available, electricity consumption in England and Wales amounted to 211·38 terrawatt hours. A detailed breakdown of this total, which excludes industrial producers' consumption from own generation of conventional thermal electricity, is published in the *Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics 1986*, table 52.

### Sizewell B Power Station

**Mr. Allen Adams** asked the Secretary of State for Energy when he now expects contracts for Sizewell B power station to be placed with Babcock Power Ltd.

**Mr. Goodlad:** Such contracts are a matter for the CEGB. However, I understand that it has been the board's policy for some time not to release the manufacturing phases of contracts until after my right hon. Friend has decided whether or not to give consent to the station. As my right hon. Friend informed the hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory) on 22 January, he wishes to hear the views of the House before he takes his decision. My right hon. Friend the Lord Privy Seal informed the House on 29 January that he is arranging a debate in the week beginning 23 February. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State will take his decision as soon as possible thereafter.

**Mr. Irving** asked the Secretary of State for Energy, in the light of recommendation 6(a) of the report on the Sizewell public inquiry by Sir Frank Layfield, concerning the review by the Health and Safety Executive of the extent of the area covered by emergency plans, if he will make it his policy to consider the potential cost implications of extending such areas before making a decision on the consent application for Sizewell B; if he will publish information of potential cost implications before the report is debated in the House; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Goodlad:** My right hon. Friend has a quasi-judicial role in respect of the Central Electricity Generating Board's application to construct Sizewell B. It would not be proper for me to comment on the inspector's report, including the recommendations, before my right hon. Friend has taken his decision.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### AIDS

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report (a)* how much the Government have budgeted to spend on their AIDS advertising campaign during the current financial year and *(b)* the items on which the Government have spent money on any other aspect of AIDS, together with the sums allocated.

**Mr. Newton:** Of the £20 million over 12 months which is being made available for publicity and information about AIDS, it is expected that some £6 million to £7 million will fall into the financial year 1986-87. This is in addition to about £1 million which was spent before the major campaign was launched. Details of the aspects of AIDS on which other expenditure in England is planned or has been allocated were given in my right hon. Friend's replies to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 1 December 1986, at column *525-26*, and to my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) on 18 December 1986, at column *703*.

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals he has to increase the number of medical and nursing staff to meet the increasing burden of AIDS patients on the hospital service.

**Mr. Newton:** All health authorities are expected to take account of present and future needs for services for AIDS patients in their plans. At present the great majority of such patients is being treated in three of the Thames health regions. These regions are receiving an additional allocation of £2·5 million this year towards the costs of treating AIDS patients. We are considering what additional resources should be allocated to assist them in dealing with this work in 1987-88. It will be for the health authorities to determine the way in whch they are spent.

### Birth Statistics

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents *(a)* in England and *(b)* in England and Wales and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the age of the mother in the following age ranges: under 16, 16 to 19, 20 to 24, 25 to 29, 30 to 34 and 35-plus years;

(2) if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the age of the mother in the following age ranges: under 16 years, 16 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years, and 35 years plus;

(3) if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents in Wales and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the age of the mother in the following age ranges: under 16 years, 16 to 19 years, 20 to 24 years, 25 to 29 years, 30 to 34 years and 35-plus years.

**Mrs. Currie:** Tables giving the information for the age-groups under 16 years and 16 to 19 years have been placed in the Library. Statistics for the remaining age groups requested are given in table 7b of "Mortality Statistics perinatal and infant: social and biological factors 1984", a copy of which is in the Library. These statistics are derived from records which link the details of the infant's death with the details collected at birth registration.

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759); and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(2) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 plus-g and unstated birthweight;

(3) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents (i) in England and (ii) in England and Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000 g plus and unstated birthweight;

(4) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postnatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations ICD 740-759; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories, under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 4,000-plus g and unstated birthweight;

(5) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority (i) the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with congential malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories, under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000-plus g, and unstated birthweight;

(6) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000-plus g, and unstated birthweight;

(7) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759); and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000-plus g, and unstated birthweight;

(8) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) as their underlying cause; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000-plus g, and unstated birthweight;

(9) if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales (i) the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to the following birthweight categories: under 1,500 g, 1,500 to 1,999 g, 2,000 to 2,499 g, 2,500 to 2,999 g, 3,000 to 3,499 g, 3,500 to 3,999 g, 4,000-plus g and unstated birthweight.

**Mrs. Currie:** Tables giving this information have been placed in the Library. The statistics are derived from records which link the details of the infant's death with the details collected at birth registration.

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list for *(a)* singleton and *(b)* all births in 1984 to residents in Wales the total number of live births and the number and rate per 1,000 of neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths with underlying causes other than congenital malformations (ICD 740-759) tabulated according to the following gestational ages: under 22 weeks, 22 to 24 weeks, 25 to 27 weeks, 28 to 31 weeks, 32 to 36 weeks, 37 to 41 weeks, 42-plus weeks and unstated gestational age.

**Mrs. Currie:** I regret that the information is not available in the form requested. Period of gestation is not collected at the registration of live births.

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number and rate per 1,000 live birth of post neo-natal deaths by months of occurrence *(a)* from sudden infant death syndrome, *(b)* from respiratory diseases, *(c)* congenital abnormality, *(d)* others and *(e)* total for England and Wales (i) nationally, (ii) by district health authority and (iii) by regional health authority for each month from 1981 to the most recent available date.

**Mrs. Currie:** I very much regret that the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

### Mucodyne

**Mr. Alfred Morris** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has now completed his consideration of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on National Health Service Drugs in relation to Mucodyne; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** I refer the right hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Birmingham, Perry Barr (Mr. Rooker) on 21 January, at column *635*.

### Maternity Pay

**Mr. Sims** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he will announce the arrangements by which employers will be reimbursed for payments of statutory maternity pay and compensated for their share of the national insurance contributions paid on them, and the rates of such compensation for both statutory maternity pay and statutory sick pay from 6 April 1987.

**Mr. Major:** The arrangements for reimbursing employers for their payments of statutory maternity pay and compensating them for the associated secondary (employers') national insurance contributions will be the same as those now operating for statutory sick pay. For the year beginning 6 April 1987 the compensation for secondary national insurance contributions will be at a rate of 7 per cent. of the statutory maternity pay paid to employees. This rate will also apply to payments of statutory sick pay. It has been calculated from estimates of aggregate payments of statutory sick pay and statutory maternity pay in 1987-88 and the total secondary national insurance contributions payable on them.

I have today laid the necessary regulations.

### Allowances

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many are in receipt of *(a)* mobility allowance and *(b)* attendance allowance; how many mobility allowance and attendance allowance recipients receive supplementary benefit or are dependants of someone receiving supplementary benefit; and what is his estimate as to the proportion of such people who either receive a higher-rate heating addition for themselves or have one paid to the head of the household on their account for the latest available year.

**Mr. Major:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Health Authorities (Expenditure)

**Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) whether he will state, for each regional health authority, the allowance made for demographic factors and technical and service developments in determining *(a)* the total current expenditure and *(b)* the total capital expenditure for each year from 1979 to date;

(2) whether he will state, for each regional health authority, the difference between the amount requested and the amount actually spent on capital expenditure, broken down by new building and repair to existing capital stock, for each year from 1979 to date.

**Mr. Newton:** I shall let the hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

**Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will state, for each regional health authority, the difference between the amount requested and the amount actually spent on capital expenditure on local authority personal social services, broken down by new building and repair to existing capital stock, for each year from 1979 to date.

**Mr. Newton:** Available information for England, including separate figures for new construction and works, is set out for the period 1979-80 to 1984-85, the latest year for which we have comprehensive data. An analysis of the figures on a regional health authority basis could be supplied only at disproportionate cost, but the tables provide data by individual local authority for 1984-85.

*Local authority personal social services capital*
*(England figures in £ million cash)*

| | *Bids* | *Gross spend*[3] | *New construction*[2,4] *and works* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1979-80 | n/a[1] | 63·430 | 62·980 |
| 1980-81 | n/a[1] | 81·060 | 80·412 |
| 1981-82 | 99·995 | 78·045 | 78·035 |
| 1982-83 | 106·052 | 78·171 | 75·419 |
| 1983-84 | 115·700 | 90·144 | 79·491 |
| 1984-85 | 137·666 | 100·145 | 85·176 |

[1] The present capital expenditure control system commenced with effect from 1981-82, and data about bids under the loan sanction system which operated for earlier years are not available on a comparable basis.

[2] "New building" and "repair to existing capital stock" figures are not separately identified on local authority capital expenditure return forms.

[3] Health authority contributions to jointly financed schemes have been deducted in arriving at the gross spend figures in order to put them on a comparable basis with the bids figures.

[4] Separate figures for health authority contributions towards new construction and works expenditure are not available, so the new construction and works figures shown above include health authority contributions to jointly financed schemes.

*Local authority personal social services capital expenditure 1984-85*

| | *Bids* | *Gross expenditure* | *New constructions and works* |
|---|---|---|---|
| METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS | | | |
| *Greater Manchester* | | | |
| Bolton | 450 | 281 | 258 |
| Bury | 1,006 | 476 | 563 |
| Manchester | 1,312 | 2,730 | 1,138 |
| Oldham | 512 | 447 | 365 |
| Rochdale | 500 | 494 | 355 |
| Salford | 1,554 | 782 | 423 |
| Stockport | 539 | 113 | 119 |
| Tameside | 723 | 349 | 326 |
| Trafford | 499 | 228 | 187 |
| Wigan | 633 | 672 | 550 |
| *Merseyside* | | | |
| Knowsley | 786 | 566 | 549 |
| Liverpool | 2,321 | 1,278 | 1,432 |
| St. Helens | 975 | 93 | 1 |
| Sefton | 607 | 165 | 112 |
| Wirral | 1,158 | 1,482 | 1,467 |
| *South Yorkshire* | | | |
| Barnsley | 569 | 426 | 395 |
| Doncaster | 803 | 192 | 175 |
| Rotherham | 796 | 835 | 669 |
| Sheffield | 1,754 | 2,090 | 1,959 |
| *Tyne & Wear* | | | |
| Gateshead | 605 | 124 | 118 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne | 1,072 | 1,128 | 535 |
| North Tyneside | 753 | 432 | 361 |
| South Tyneside | 706 | 354 | 409 |
| Sunderland | 1,027 | 652 | 506 |
| *West Midlands* | | | |
| Birmingham | 2,388 | 3,999 | 3,351 |
| Coventry | 1,240 | 1,043 | 849 |
| Dudley | 694 | 597 | 378 |
| Sandwell | 1,194 | 980 | 782 |
| Solihull | 436 | 310 | 247 |
| Walsall | 915 | 306 | 165 |
| Wolverhampton | 830 | 945 | 625 |
| *West Yorkshire* | | | |
| Bradford | 1,618 | 1,841 | 1,342 |
| Calderdale | 442 | 163 | 56 |
| Kirklees | 1,463 | 1,518 | 1,553 |
| Leeds | 3,362 | 1,904 | 2,387 |
| Wakefield | 723 | 352 | 308 |
| Total Metropolitan Districts | 36,965 | 29,347 | 25,015 |
| Total England | 137,666 | 100,145 | 85,176 |
| INNER LONDON | | | |
| Camden | 610 | 303 | 295 |
| Greenwich | 1,386 | 660 | 328 |
| Hackney | 1,399 | 359 | 387 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 2,024 | 825 | 753 |
| Islington | 1,414 | 786 | 630 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 506 | 260 | 261 |
| Lambeth | 1,817 | 1,673 | 48 |
| Lewisham | 1,378 | 935 | 531 |
| Southwark | 995 | 921 | 485 |
| Tower Hamlets | 1,699 | 246 | 238 |
| Wandsworth | 1,045 | 1,030 | 140 |
| Westminster | 441 | 105 | 94 |
| City of London | 10 | 14 | — |
| TOTAL INNER LONDON | 14,724 | 8,117 | 4,190 |
| OUTER LONDON | | | |
| Barking and Dagenham | 690 | 1,167 | 1,133 |
| Barnet | 740 | 766 | 586 |
| Bexley | 481 | 12 | 64 |
| Brent | 1,949 | 936 | 803 |
| Bromley | 606 | 359 | 307 |
| Croydon | 1,291 | 192 | 83 |
| Ealing | 547 | 197 | 173 |
| Enfield | 308 | 120 | 28 |
| Haringey | 520 | 618 | 588 |
| Harrow | 1,236 | 906 | 901 |
| Havering | 589 | 720 | 1,073 |
| Hillingdon | 1,805 | 1,273 | 628 |
| Hounslow | 530 | 368 | 141 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 59 | 60 | 28 |
| Merton | 76 | 144 | 106 |
| Newham | 2,392 | 1,318 | 1,108 |
| Redbridge | 717 | 513 | 594 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 381 | 206 | 193 |
| Sutton | 492 | 400 | 300 |
| Waltham Forest | 866 | 39 | 421 |
| TOTAL OUTER LONDON | 16,275 | 10,314 | 9,258 |
| TOTAL LONDON | 30,999 | 18,431 | 13,448 |
| Avon | 1,791 | 438 | 539 |
| Bedfordshire | 972 | 596 | 761 |
| Berkshire | 1,894 | 1,227 | 813 |
| Buckinghamshire | 4,773 | 3,235 | 2,680 |
| Cambridgeshire | 1,558 | 1,423 | 707 |
| Cheshire | 1,663 | 1,921 | 1,693 |
| Cleveland | 2,401 | 1,715 | 1,360 |
| Cornwall | 768 | 489 | 450 |
| Cumbria | 2,515 | 947 | 807 |
| Derbyshire | 2,549 | 3,041 | 1,976 |
| Devon | 673 | 867 | 632 |
| Dorset | 1,937 | 874 | 1,246 |
| Durham | 1,893 | 917 | 1,280 |
| East Sussex | 1,503 | 864 | 857 |
| Essex | 2,365 | 1,620 | 2,211 |
| Gloucestershire | 970 | 789 | 745 |
| Hampshire | 3,458 | 3,761 | 3,620 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 972 | 645 | 834 |
| Hertfordshire | 2,262 | 1,624 | 2,076 |
| Humberside | 2,032 | 2,656 | 1,617 |
| Isle of Wight | 964 | 815 | 730 |
| Kent | 4,199 | 2,892 | 2,653 |
| Lancashire | 3,035 | 1,713 | 2,059 |
| Leicestershire | 2,026 | 1,287 | 1,050 |
| Lincolnshire | 1,131 | 982 | 1,250 |
| Norfolk | 874 | 979 | 804 |
| Northamptonshire | 2,300 | 1,488 | 1,040 |
| Northumberland | 911 | 614 | 568 |
| North Yorkshire | 1,964 | 1,764 | 1,293 |
| Nottinghamshire | 2,518 | 2,226 | 2,143 |
| Oxfordshire | 254 | 580 | 380 |
| Shropshire | 921 | 1,445 | 1,385 |
| Somerset | 1,135 | 1,007 | 1,017 |
| Staffordshire | 2,973 | 1,854 | 1,039 |
| Suffolk | 1,070 | 262 | 260 |
| Surrey | 1,395 | 650 | 317 |
| Warvickshire | 1,729 | 912 | 942 |
| West Sussex | 512 | 306 | 283 |

| | *Bids* | *Gross expenditure* | *New constructions and works* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Wiltshire | 782 | 942 | 596 |
| Isles of Scilly | — | — | — |
| Total counties and Isles of Scilly | 69,702 | 52,367 | 46,713 |

## Children (Disabilities)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what information he has about the prevalence of *(a)* cerebral palsy and *(b)* other disabilities for children born in each of the last five years.

**Mrs. Currie:** Information is not held by the Department on the incidence of cerebral palsy, but a study is currently being conducted on the standardisation of the recording and reporting of this condition. As regards other disabilities, I refer the hon. Member to the various OPCS publications available in the Library, including the "Monitoring on Congenital Malformation, Register (General Class)" up to 31 March 1984 AF/84/19, "Register of Blind and Partially Sighted" up to 31 March 1982 AF/82/7, "Register of Deaf and Hard of Hearing" up to 31 March 1983 AF/83/20.

## Drug Addicts

**Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what is the estimated total cost and cost per capita of introducing free needles to drug addicts.

**Mrs. Currie:** My right hon. Friend announced in his reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Halifax (Mr. Galley) on 18 December 1986, at column *703*, the establishment of a small number of schemes where drug misusers will be able both to receive counselling and exchange used needles and syringes for sterile equipment. Discussions about the operation of these schemes are currently under way in a number of locations. The costs involved will depend upon the detailed arrangements which have yet to be finalised but we expect them to be small.

With regard to the cost of supply free injecting equipment to drug misusers on a wider basis, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Berwick-upon-Tweed (Mr. Beith) on 5 December 1986, at column *822*.

## Births (Medical Facilities)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number and rate for England and Wales, of *(a)* intensive care places and special care places per 1,000 live births weighing under 2,500 g for each regional and district health authority and nationally and *(b)* intensive care places per 1,000 live births weighing under 1,500 g for each regional health authority and nationally giving (i) the number of nursing and midwifery staff, whole-time equivalent, per place, (ii) the number of medical staff, whole-time equivalent, per place, (iii) the number of sites in which the places are available within each district and region, (iv) the number of places for which the equipment funding was provided by sources other than the National Health Service and (v) the number of whole-time equivalent *(a)* nurses/widwives and *(b)* medical staff per place provided by sources other than National Health Service funding for each year since 1979 to the latest available date.

**Mrs. Currie:** I am sorry I cannot give the hon. Member the information he seeks. Although statistics are routinely collected on the availability of cots in special care baby units, there has been no generally agreed definition of "intensive care" to enable the provision made for it, the related staffing levels or other details requested to be recorded separately.

## Expenditure

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* table 3.14.6 of the Government's expenditure plans 1987-88 to 1989-90 giving *(a)* the number of patients treated in each specialty and category, *(b)* the rate per 1,000 population of both cases/attendances and patients treated in each speciality and category, *(c)* the average percentage change per annum for *(a)* and *(b)*, and *(d)* the cumulative percentage change for each speciality and category.

**Mr. Newton:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the per capita spending on health and personal social services in cash terms and at 1986-87 prices each year since 1979 to the latest available date for *(a)* all ages, *(b)* births, *(c)* 0 to 4 years, *(d)* 5 to 15 years, *(e)* 16 to 65 years, *(f)* 65 to 70 years and *(g)* 75 years and over giving the amount spent on (i) personal social services, (ii) family practitioner services, (iii) hospital and community health services and (iv) total in England.

**Mr. Newton:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

**Sir David Price** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the total public expenditure on health and personal social services in 1978-79; what it is in the current year and what is the projection for 1988-89, measured in real terms; and, in each case, what percentage of total public expenditure and of gross domestic product these figures represent.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 3 February 1987, c. *584*]: The information is as follows:

*Health and Personal Social Services (UK)*

| | *1978-79 outturn £ million* | *1986-87 estimated outturn £ million* | *1988-89 cash plans[5] £ million* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Capital and current expenditure[1] | | | |
| (i) in cash terms | 9,231 | 22,318 | 24,690 |
| (ii) at 1985-86 prices[2] | 17,413 | 21,668 | 22,323 |
| Percentage of public expenditure planning total[3] | 13·9 | 15·1 | 15·9 |
| Percentage of GDP[4] | 5·3 | 5·9 | 5·7 |

[1] Excludes income from charges and land sales.

[2] Revalued using the GDP deflator at market prices.

[3] Includes proceeds from privatisation and housing receipts but excludes reserve.

[4] Average GDP at market prices and based on Treasury forecasts for 1986-87 and 1988-89.

[5] For PSS 1988-89 plans will be reviewed in the light of LA budgets for 1987-88 and demographic and other factors.

## NHS (Property Value)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give his best estimate of the current value of National Health Service land and buildings in England.

**Mrs. Currie:** The chief valuer's office of the Inland Revenue estimates that the value of the National Health Service estate at current use is about £12·7 billion. The replacement value of the building stock is in the region of £20 billion.

## Health Authorities (Economies)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the total cash releasing cost improvements achieved by each health authority in each year from 1979 to the latest available date for England.

**Mr. Newton:** The table shows the regional totals of efficiency savings and cash releasing cost improvements for each year from 1981-82 to 1985-86 and the aggregate savings made by the special health authorities for the London postgraduate teaching hospitals in 1985-86. Figures for earlier years, and for individual districts, are not available centrally.

*Efficiency savings and cash releasing cost improvements*

*£ million*

| *Region* | *1981-82*[1] | *1982-83*[1] | *1983-84*[2] | *1984-85*[1] | *1985-86*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | 1·2 | 2·1 | 2·7 | 4·0 | 5·2 |
| Yorkshire | 0·6 | 2·0 | 3·1 | 7·1 | 10·0 |
| Trent | 1·5 | 2·1 | 3·7 | 8·0 | 13·2 |
| East Anglian | 0·8 | 0·6 | 1·6 | 3·3 | 2·9 |
| North West Thames | 1·2 | 1·8 | 3·3 | 10·6 | 14·3 |
| North East Thames | 1·5 | 4·1 | 4·2 | 11·7 | 17·1 |
| South East Thames | 2·1 | 3·0 | 3·6 | 14·0 | 14·3 |
| South West Thames | 1·2 | 1·2 | 2·8 | 6·9 | 8·5 |
| Wessex | 0·2 | 1·3 | 2·2 | 4·2 | 4·7 |
| Oxford | 0·2 | 0·6 | 1·8 | 3·7 | 4·8 |
| South Western | 1·0 | 1·0 | 2·7 | 4·7 | 6·2 |
| West Midlands | 1·3 | 1·4 | 4·2 | 13·5 | 12·0 |
| Mersey | 1·1 | 2·0 | 2·3 | 6·0 | 8·4 |
| North Western | 1·3 | 2·3 | 3·8 | 7·5 | 13·6 |
| Special Health Authorities: London Postgraduate Teaching Hospitals | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3·1 |
| Total | 15·2 | 25·5 | 42·0 | 105·2 | 138·4 |

*Note:* Figures may not sum due to rounding.

[1] Cash savings reported by regions.

[2] In 1983-84, regional health authorities were expected to achieve the efficiency savings shown, equivalent to some 0·5 per cent. of their cash allocations, but detailed returns on their achievement were not requested.

n/a = Not available.

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the total cash released through the competitive tendering process by each health authority, giving category of services and total, for each year from 1979 to the latest available date for England.

**Mr. Newton:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

## Hospital Beds

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services pursuant to the reply of 23 January, giving the average number of available beds in National Health Service hospitals, if he will give the estimated saving to the National Health Service of cutting available beds for the mentally ill by 14·8 per cent. and for the mentally handicapped by 17·1 per cent. between 1979 and 1985; and what proportion of this saving has been transferred to developing community services for the mentally ill and handicapped for *(a)* children, *(b)* adults and *(c)* both.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

## SCOTLAND

## Electricity

**Mr. Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the figures of maximum demand for electricity consumption in Scotland on 12, 13 and 14 January, indicating the amounts of electricity exported to England on each of these days; and if he will give the total capacity of the Scottish generating system.

**Mr. Lang:** The information set out below has been obtained from the Scottish electricity boards. The total capacity of the Scottish generating system is 8794 MW; the table below shows the capacity which was available for use on the days in question.

|  | *12 January 1987* | *13 January 1987* | *14 January 1987* |
|---|---|---|---|
| (i) Maximum demand for electricity in Scotland (MW) | 6,053 | 6,042 | 5,942 |

| | *12 January 1987* | *13 January 1987* | *14 January 1987* |
|---|---|---|---|
| (ii) Power exported to the Central Electricity Generating Board at the same time (MW) | 287 | 999 | 971 |
| (iii) Total capacity of usable generating plant on Scottish system (MW) | 7,961 | 7,688 | 7,603 |

## Labour Statistics

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the current number of men currently unemployed in Dundee; and what number and percentage of them have been out of work for one year or more.

**Mr. Lang:** On 9 October 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of male unemployed claimants in the city of Dundee district was 10,227, of whom 4,860 (47·5 per cent.) had been unemployed for one year or more.

This information is available in the Library.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish the latest unemployment figures for Dundee by district ward boundary; and if he will express each figure as an unemployment rate based upon data available from economic activity rates.

**Mr. Lang:** On 11 December 1986, the latest date for which information is available, the number of unemployed claimants in each electoral ward in the city of Dundee district was as shown in the table below.

*City of Dundee district*

| *Ward name* | *Total unemployed* |
|---|---|
| Ancra[illegible] | 181 |
| Ardler | 428 |
| Balgillo | 130 |
| Baxter Park | 301 |
| Blackshade | 389 |
| Broughty Ferry | 164 |
| Caird | 487 |
| Central | 378 |
| Clepington | 145 |
| Coldside | 342 |
| Craigie Bank | 240 |
| Craigie Barns | 145 |
| Douglas | 390 |
| Downfield | 231 |
| Drumgeith | 536 |
| Dudhope | 660 |
| Eastern | 147 |
| Fairmuir | 197 |
| Fintry North | 480 |
| Fintry South | 430 |
| Gillburn | 428 |
| Gourdie | 298 |
| Gowrie | 172 |
| Hilltown | 372 |
| Law | 218 |
| Lochee East | 397 |
| Lochee West | 309 |
| Logie | 185 |
| Longhaugh | 799 |
| Maryfield | 326 |
| Menzieshill | 243 |
| Midmill | 713 |
| Monifieth East | 165 |
| Monifieth West | 130 |
| Pitalpin | 317 |
| Riverside | 206 |
| Rockwell | 154 |
| St. Marys | 333 |
| St. Ninians | 246 |
| Sidlaw | 225 |
| Trottick | 565 |
| Wellgate | 579 |
| West Ferry | 216 |
| Whitfield | 806 |
| Total | 14,803 |

Comparable figures for the economically active are not available, and it is therefore not possible to provide meaningful unemployment rates. However, as at the same date, the unemployment rate for the Dundee travel-to-work area, the smallest relevant geographical area for which a rate can be given, was 15·8 per cent.

This information is available in the Library.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will publish data showing the average length of time a person spends on the unemployment register by age group for Dundee, Tayside and Scotland.

**Mr. Lang:** The information is not available in the form requested. The table below relates to the median, and not the average, duration of unemployment for claimants in each age group who had completed a period of unemployment in the city of Dundee district, Tayside region and Scotland in December 1986, the latest date for which information in available.

*Median duration of unemployment (weeks)*

| *Age group* | *City of Dundee district* | *Tayside region* | *Scotland* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 17 | 9·5 | 8·6 | 8·9 |
| Aged 17 | 9·0 | 9·3 | 11·7 |
| 18 | 17·3 | 15·7 | 16·0 |
| 19 | 25·1 | 18·7 | 14·7 |
| 20-24 | 15·3 | 13·1 | 13·0 |
| 25-29 | 18·0 | 14·7 | 13·7 |
| 30-34 | 21·7 | 12·8 | 12·2 |
| 35-39 | 17·7 | 11·6 | 11·2 |
| 40-44 | 10·9 | 10·3 | 11·2 |
| 45-49 | 13·0 | 10·7 | 12·8 |
| 50-54 | 7·7 | 8·0 | 10·3 |

| Age group | City of Dundee district | Tayside region | Scotland |
|---|---|---|---|
| 55-59 | 13·0 | 7·8 | 11·2 |
| 60 and over | 19·5 | 12·0 | 17·6 |
| All Ages | 14·8 | 12·0 | 12·3 |

This information is available in the Library.

### Fish Farming (Grants)

**Mr. Maclennan** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will now provide further details of the new grant schemes, agreed at the latest meeting of the Council of Fisheries Ministers, to be made available to fish and shellfish farming projects over the next 10 years.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The implementation of the structural measures under the EC regulation approved in December requires thorough examination in consultation with the other fisheries Departments and with the industry and this is now proceeding. We are not yet in a position to provide details about a new grants scheme which will have to be laid before Parliament for approval.

### NHS (Private Patients)

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how the cost of associated services for operations carried out privately within the National Health Service are calculated.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Charges to private patients treated in National Health Service hospitals in Scotland are based on the average cost of treating all patients (both National Health Service and private) in each hospital class. The charges include elements for nursing, medical and support costs; hotel services; other general services, including administration; capital overheads; and, where appropriate, blood handling costs. The charges are reviewed annually.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money health boards are written off as bad debts from private patients in the latest available year.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The figure for 1985-86 was £26,721.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many of the following type of operations have been carried out on private patients within the National Health Service *(a)* hip replacement, *(b)* general surgery and *(c)* other specialties; and if he can provide a breakdown by health board.

**Mr. John MacKay:** This information is not available centrally.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many pay beds there have been within Tayside health board in each year since 1983; and what information he has on future trends in pay bed provision.

**Mr. John MacKay:** In each year since 1983 there have been 11 pay beds authorised within the Tayside health board area. I am not aware of any proposals which would change this figure.

### Manufacturing Jobs

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest estimate of the number of manufacturing jobs lost since June 1979.

**Mr. Lang:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Motherwell, North (Mr. Hamilton) on Tuesday 3 February 1987.

### Private Homes for the Elderly

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the private homes for the elderly within Tayside region and the charges they levy.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The most recent information available centrally is as follows:

*(a)* Private residential homes for the elderly registered by Tayside Regional Council as at 31 March 1986 (by local authority districts):

*Perth and Kinross*
Solsgirth House
Stormont Lodge
Dunearn House
Moncrieff
Glenhelenbank
Northlands
Parkhill House
Rigifa
Dalginross House
Craigmill House
Kincarrathie House
Ivy Lodge

*Angus*
Turin House
Mundamalla
Parklands
Lochbank House
Knockview House
Torkillie House
Caenlochan
Bracknowe

*Dundee*
Whitehorns
St. Helens

*(b)* Private nursing homes registered by Tayside Health Board as at 31 December 1985:

1. Fernbrae, Dundee
2. Moncrieff, Bridge of Earn
3. Roundelwood, Crieff
4. St. Johnston, Perth
5. West Bay, Dundee

Information on charges made by individual homes is not held centrally.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what resources central Government grant to regions and health boards for monitoring standards in private homes for the elderly.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Regional and islands councils have specific statutory duties in connection with the registration and inspection of voluntary and private residential homes and other accommodation provided under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. Health boards have similar duties in connection with private nursing homes. The authorities concerned in both cases are expected to find the funds they require for these purposes from within general resources (including income from registration fees in the case of health boards).

### Farm Workers (Tied Houses)

**Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate how many farm workers are accommodated in tied houses; and if he will estimate how many of those houses' rates are paid by the employer.

**Mr. John MacKay:** It is estimated that out of 21,000 regular hired workers in Scottish agriculture about 14,000 occupy tied cottages, and of those about 11,000 have their rates paid by the farmers.

### Regional Aid

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the total annual value of regional aid paid to firms in Greenock and Port Glasgow in each year since 1979.

**Mr. Lang:** Total payments of regional selective assistance (RSA) under section 7 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 to firms in Greenock and Port Glasgow parliamentary constituency are set out in the table:

| *Year* | *Total Payments (£ million)* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 1·0 |
| 1980-81 | 2·6 |
| 1981-82 | 2·8 |
| 1982-83 | 1·5 |
| 1983-84 | 0·9 |
| 1984-85 | 0·9 |
| 1985-86 | 3·8 |

Comprehensive information on payments of regional development grant (RDG) on a parliamentary constituency basis is not available. However, payments of RDG exceeding £25,000 to firms in the Greenock and Port Glasgow employment local office areas are set out in the table:

| *Year* | *Total Payments £ million* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 0·5 |
| 1980-81 | 1·0 |
| 1981-82 | 5·1 |
| 1982-83 | 7·6 |
| 1983-84 | 2·4 |
| 1984-85 | 8·1 |
| 1985-86 | 8·8 |

### Prison Officers

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many full-time women prison officers are employed in Scottish prisons.

**Mr. Lang:** There were 174 full-time women prison officers employed in the Scottish prison service on 1 January 1987.

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many auxiliary women prison officers are employed in Scottish prisons.

**Mr. Lang:** There were 18 auxiliary women prison officers employed in the Scottish prison service on 1 January 1987.

### Children (Disabilities)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has about the prevalence of *(a)* cerebral palsy and *(b)* other disabilities for children born in each of the last five years.

**Mr. John MacKay:** At present comprehensive information on the prevalence of disability is not available centrally. Some information about the prevalence of certain disabilities is available from the handicapped children's register maintained by the information services division of the Common Services Agency, from which the information set out in the table has been extracted. Methods of improving the collection of data of this nature are currently being investigated.

*Age at 31 December 1985*

| | *Cerebral palsy* | *Other disability* |
|---|---|---|
| <1 | 3 | 144 |
| 1 | 28 | 284 |
| 2 | 41 | 326 |
| 3 | 63 | 479 |
| 4 | 64 | 525 |

### Births (Medical Facilities)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number and rate of 1,000 live births of *(a)* intensive care and special care places per 1,000 live births weighing under 2,500 g for each regional and district health authority and *(b)* intensive care places per 1,000 live births weighing under 1,500 g for each regional health authority and nationally giving (i) the number of nursing and midwifery staff, whole-time equivalent, per place, (ii) the number of medical staff, whole-time equivalent, per place, (iii) the number of sites in which the places are available within each district and region, (iv) the number of places for which the equipment funding was provided by sources other than the National Health Service and (v) the number of whole-time equivalent *(a)* nurses or midwives and *(b)* medical staff per place provided by sources other than National Health Service funding for each year since 1979 to latest available date.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information is not held centrally.

### Neo-natal Deaths

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the number and rate per 1,000 live births of post neo-natal deaths by month of occurance *(a)* from sudden infant death syndrome, *(b)* respiratory diseases, *(c)* congenital abnormality, *(d)* others and *(e)* total for Scotland (i) nationally, and (ii) by health board for each month from 1981 to the most recent available date.

**Mr. John MacKay:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

### Health and Social Services (Capital Expenditure)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the per capita spending on health and personal social services in cash terms and 1986-87 prices each year since 1979 to the latest available date for *(a)* all ages, *(b)* births, *(c)* 0 to four years, *(d)* five to 15 years, *(e)* 16 to 64 years, *(f)* 65 to 74 years and *(g)* 75 years and over giving the amount spent on (i) personal social services, (ii) family practitioner services, (iii) hospital and community health services and (iv) total in Scotland.

**Mr. John MacKay:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Hospital Beds

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the average number of beds available in National Health Service hospitals in Scotland nationally and for each health board for 1979 and 1985 and the percentage change in each case from 1970 to 1985 for *(a)* acute, *(b)* geriatric, *(c)* mental illness, *(d)* mental handicap, *(e)* maternity and *(f)* all specialities.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information is as follows.

*Average available staffed beds by Health Board and Scotland, 30 September 1979*
*Board Speciality Groups*

| *Health Board Specialties* | *Acute* | *Geriatric* | *Mental Illness* | *Mental Handicap* | *Maternity* | *Total All Specialties* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scotland | 21,794 | 9,901 | 17,358 | 6,697 | 2,750 | 58,501 |
| Argyll and Clyde | 1,489 | 1,023 | 1,496 | 339 | 252 | 4,599 |
| Ayrshire and Arran | 1,097 | 629 | 780 | 117 | 213 | 2,837 |
| Borders | 310 | 227 | 328 | — | 33 | 898 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 452 | 285 | 861 | — | 78 | 1,676 |
| Fife | 903 | 501 | 886 | 518 | 145 | 2,953 |
| Forth Valley | 764 | 546 | 925 | 1,230 | 148 | 3,611 |
| Grampian | 1,970 | 859 | 1,570 | 716 | 275 | 5,392 |
| Greater Glasgow | 5,943 | 1,973 | 4,096 | 1,504 | 526 | 14,045 |
| Highlands | 851 | 384 | 859 | 240 | 119 | 2,455 |
| Lanarkshire | 1,870 | 1,065 | 1,704 | 613 | 267 | 5,517 |
| Lothian | 3,793 | 1,277 | 2,150 | 753 | 401 | 8,374 |
| Orkney | 46 | 60 | 1 | — | 12 | 119 |
| Shetland | 62 | 87 | — | — | 11 | 160 |
| Tayside | 2,159 | 878 | 1,694 | 667 | 251 | 5,648 |
| Western Isles | 84 | 106 | 8 | — | 17 | 216 |

*Average available staffed beds by Health Board and Scotland, 30 September 1985*

| | | | *Board specialty groups* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Board* | *Acute* | *Geriatric* | *Mental Illness* | *Mental Handicap* | *Maternity* | *Total — All Specialties* |
| Scotland | 20,373 | 11,076 | 16,307 | 6,016 | 2,563 | 56,334 |
| Argyll and Clyde | 1,381 | 1,020 | 1,457 | 316 | 241 | 4,415 |
| Ayrshire and Arran | 1,171 | 708 | 810 | 121 | 191 | 3,001 |
| Borders | 334 | 241 | 289 | 33 | 30 | 927 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 474 | 326 | 633 | 29 | 70 | 1,531 |
| Fife | 885 | 685 | 972 | 475 | 135 | 3,152 |
| Forth Valley | 722 | 613 | 868 | 1,066 | 139 | 3,407 |
| Grampian | 1,962 | 1,030 | 1,599 | 713 | 255 | 5,558 |
| Greater Glasgow | 5,069 | 2,386 | 3,718 | 1,211 | 523 | 12,907 |
| Highland | 774 | 407 | 684 | 238 | 115 | 2,220 |
| Lanarkshire | 1,766 | 1,006 | 1,685 | 613 | 211 | 5,283 |
| Lothian | 3,646 | 1,490 | 2,087 | 664 | 393 | 8,279 |
| Orkney | 57 | 61 | — | — | 12 | 129 |
| Shetland | 62 | 84 | — | — | 11 | 157 |
| Tayside | 1,986 | 912 | 1,503 | 536 | 221 | 5,158 |
| Western Isles | 85 | 108 | 1 | — | 17 | 211 |

*Average available staffed beds by health boards and Scotland: Percentage change, 30 September 1979-85*
*Board Specialty Groups*

| | | | *Specialties* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Board* | *Acute* | *Geratric* | *Mental Illness* | *Mental Handicap* | *Maternity* | *Total-All Specialties* |
| Scotland | −6·5 | +11·9 | −6·1 | −10·1 | −6·8 | −3·7 |
| Argyll and Clyde | −7·3 | −0·3 | −2·6 | −6·8 | −4·4 | −4·0 |
| Ayrshire and Arran | +6·7 | +12·6 | +3·8 | +3·4 | −10·3 | +5·8 |
| Borders | +7·7 | +6·2 | −11·9 | — | −9·1 | +3·2 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | +4·9 | +14·4 | −26·5 | — | −10·3 | −8·7 |
| Fife | −2·0 | +36·7 | +9·7 | −8·3 | −6·9 | +6·7 |
| Forth Valley | −5·5 | +12·3 | −6·2 | −13·3 | −6·1 | −5·6 |
| Grampian | −0·4 | +19·9 | +1·8 | −0·4 | −7·3 | +3·1 |
| Greater Glasgow | −14·7 | +20·9 | −9·2 | −19·5 | −0·6 | −8·1 |
| Highland | −9·0 | +6·0 | −20·4 | −0·8 | −3·4 | −9·6 |
| Lanarkshire | −5·6 | −5·5 | −1·1 | — | −21·0 | −4·2 |
| Lothian | −3·9 | +16·7 | −2·9 | −11·8 | −2·0 | −1·1 |
| Orkney | +23·0 | +1·7 | −100·0 | — | — | +8·4 |

| *Health Board* | | | *Specialties* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Acute* | *Geratric* | *Mental Illness* | *Mental Handicap* | *Maternity* | *Total-All Specialties* |
| Shetland | — | −3·4 | — | — | — | −1·9 |
| Tayside | −8·0 | +3·9 | −11·3 | −19·6 | −12·0 | −8·7 |
| Western Isles | +1·2 | +1·9 | −87·5 | — | — | −2·3 |

*Notes:*

1. Acute includes supra-area specialties and special categories (communicable diseases, special care baby units, intensive therapy units, accident and emergency and clinical genetics).
2. Geriatric includes the specialty young chronic sick.
3. Figures in columns and rows may not cast exactly to totals due to rounding errors.

## NHS (Property Value)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give his best estimate of the current value of National Health Service buildings and land in Scotland.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information which is held centrally relates to NHS residential accommodation in Scotland which, on the basis of a study in 1985, was valued at about £180 million. The current market value of property in Scotland is assessed only when it is decided to dispose of surplus land.

## NHS (Cash Release)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total cash-releasing cost improvements advanced by each health board in each year from 1979 to the latest available date.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Information on cash-releasing cost improvements has been sought from health boards only since 1985-86. The cash-releasing cost improvements achieved in 1985-86 and boards' estimates for 1986-87 are as follows.

*£'000*

| *Health Board* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* |
|---|---|---|
| Argyll and Clyde | 515 | 1,666 |
| Ayrshire and Arran | 805 | 1,115 |
| Borders | 144 | 269 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | 344 | 407 |
| Fife | 394 | 296 |
| Forth Valley | 421 | 496 |
| Grampian | 589 | 500 |
| Greater Glasgow | 1,670 | 5,520 |
| Highland | 334 | 577 |
| Lanarkshire | 1,570 | 1,927 |
| Lothian | 2,894 | 4,200 |
| Orkney | 38 | — |
| Shetland | 45 | 74 |
| Tayside | 1,274 | 1,374 |
| Western Isles | 45 | 109 |
| TOTAL | 11,082 | 18,530 |

Boards are permitted to retain the sums released by cost improvements.

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will give the total cash released through the competitive tendering process by each health board, giving category of service and total, for each year from 1979 to the latest available date.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Scottish health boards and the Common Services Agency were first asked in 1983 to test the cost-effectiveness of their domestic, catering and laundry services by putting them out to tender. They have been asked to adopt a programme of competitive tendering which should be completed by April 1988. Boards' latest estimates of savings directly attributable to competitive tendering are given below. In addition significant savings have been made by efforts to improve the efficiency of the relevant in-house services.

| *Health board* | *1985-86 £000* | *1986-87[1] £000* |
|---|---|---|
| Argyll and Clyde | — | — |
| Ayrshire and Arran | | |
| Domestic | 52 | — |
| Catering | 9 | — |
| | 61 | |
| Borders | | |
| Domestic | — | 41 |
| Dumfries and Galloway | — | — |
| Fife | | |
| Domestic | 11 | — |
| Catering | 8 | — |
| | 19 | |
| Forth Valley | | |
| Domestic | 8 | — |
| Grampian | — | — |
| Greater Glasgow | — | — |
| Highland | — | — |
| Lanarkshire | | |
| Domestic | — | 29 |
| Lothian | — | — |
| Tayside | | |
| Domestic | 91 | 47 |
| Catering | 27 | 51 |
| | 118 | 98 |
| Common Services Agency | | |
| Domestic | 10 | — |
| Catering | 8 | — |
| | 18 | |
| ALL BOARDS | | |
| Domestic | 172 | 117 |
| Catering | 52 | 51 |
| | 224 | 168 |

[1] To December 1986.

The three island health boards — Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles — were exempted from seeking tenders because of size and geography.

### Hypothermia

**Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will state the number of deaths attributed to hypothermia in each year since 1979 in *(a)* Orkney and *(b)* Shetland.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information is as follows:

*Deaths with any mention of hypothermia—Orkney and Shetland, 1979 to 1986*

| *Year* | *Orkney* | *Shetland* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 1 | — |
| 1980 | 1 | 1 |
| 1981 | — | — |
| 1982 | — | — |
| 1983 | 2 | — |
| 1984 | — | — |
| 1985 | 1 | 2 |
| [1]1986 | — | — |

[1] Provisional.

### Assisted Places Scheme

**Mr. Hirst** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will announce the statistics for the assisted places scheme in the 1986-87 school session in Scotland, and the income scale which will apply to the scheme in school session 1987-88.

**Mr. John MacKay:** At the beginning of the current school session there were 2,574 pupils receiving assistance under the assisted places scheme. Additional pupils will be admitted to assisted places throughout the 1986-87 school session.

Of the 2,574 pupils now in the scheme, 1,198 (46·5 per cent.) attended a fee-paying school prior to taking up an assisted place. The corresponding proportion for the new intake of pupils joining the scheme at the beginning of the current session was 38 per cent.

The scheme continues to concentrate assistance on lower income families. In 1986-87, 1,275 pupils (49·5 per cent. of those in the scheme) will be receiving full fee remission because they have a family income of £6,806 per annum or less. A further 253 pupils (10 per cent.) have family incomes between £6,807 and £8,000 per annum and 109 (4 per cent.) between £8,001 and £8,500.

For school session 1987-88 my right hon. and learned Friend proposes to lay regulations before the House in due course providing for progressive parental contributions for one assisted pupil in relation to family income as follows:

| *Part of relevant income to which the specified percentage applies* | *Parental contribution (percentage)* |
|---|---|
| That part (if any) which exceeds £6,806 but does not exceed £7,400 | 9 |
| That part (if any) which exceeds £7,400 but does not exceed £8,005 | 12 |
| That part (if any) which exceeds £8,005 but does not exceed £9,204 | 15 |
| That part (if any) which exceeds £9,204 but does not exceed £11,049 | 21 |
| That part (if any) which exceeds £11,049 but does not exceed £13,458 | 24 |
| That part (if any) which exceeds £13,458 | 33 |

The relevant income scale is open-ended, but the remission can, of course, be given only where the parental contribution is less than the school tuition fee.

### Legislation

**Mr. Sean Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland on what occasions since June 1979 his Department had to *(a)* introduce amending legislation to legislation introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such legislation had been successfully challenged in the courts and *(b)* amend or withdraw orders introduced since June 1979, because of doubts about legality or because such orders had been successfully challenged in the courts.

**Mr. Rifkind** [*pursuant to his reply,* 26 January 1987, c. *63*]: The costs of a comprehensive reply would be disproportionately high, but the following cases appear relevant.

Clauses 14 and 15 of the Local Government Finance Bill presently before Parliament do not purport to amend existing statute but are concerned to confirm existing administrative practices in ascertaining local authority expenditure or estimated expenditure in Scotland.

Section 4 of the National Health Service (Amendment) Act 1986 followed a successful challenge to a determination made under powers conferred by regulations made under section 7 of the Health and Social Security Act 1984.

Section 26 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1985 clarified an ambiguity in sections 58B(3) and 58(E)1 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, as inserted by the Health and Social Services and Social Security Adjudications Act 1983, revealed in a sheriff court decision in 1984.

The Control of Pollution (Territorial Sea) (Scotland) Revocation Regulations 1985 (No. 1985/178 (s.9)), made following queries by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments, revoked the Control of Pollution (Territorial Sea) (Scotland) Regulations 1984 (No. 1984/867 (s.86)).

### Scottish Development Agency

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will update his answer of 6 March 1986, *Official Report,* c. *251,* to show at 1986 prices Government expenditure on the Scottish Development Agency in each year since the agency was established; and what is his estimate for each year until 1988.

**Mr. Lang** [*pursuant to his reply,* 2 February 1987, c. *534*]: Net public expenditure on the agency for the financial years 1976-77 to 1985-86, together with the estimated outturn for 1986-87 and the planned level for 1987-88, all at 1985-86 prices, are shown below.

*1985-86 prices*

|  | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1976-77 | 37·5 |
| 1977-78 | 83·1 |
| 1978-79 | 99·0 |
| 1979-80 | 104·0 |
| 1980-81 | 107·0 |
| 1981-82 | 94·0 |
| 1982-83 | 116·6 |
| 1983-84 | 97·8 |
| 1984-85 | 81·2 |
| 1985-86 | 94·9 |
| 1986-87 | 88·9 |
| 1987-88 | 88·9 |

As Government expenditure on the SDA is expressed in net terms, the figures are not illustrative of total agency resources over the years. This also partly explains the variations between years.

## DEFENCE

### Research Establishments

**Mr. Bellingham** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will define the terms of reference of the small firms members on the management boards of defence research establishments.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Small firms members will participate in the work of the management boards of defence research establishments on the same basis as other external members, serving on an individual basis and not as representatives of their company. They will bring to the boards the benefit of their experience of industry and commerce in general, and of the small firms sector in particular. Their role will be advisory, but they will be encouraged to participate actively in the discussion of the establishment's plans for the future.

### Multi-launch Rocket Project

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will report on the multi-launch rocket system project; when he expects the first regiment will be equipped; how many regiments in total will be equipped with multi-launch rocket systems; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The contract for European production of MLRS was signed in May 1986. The United Kingdom requirement is to equip three regiments with MLRS, commencing around the end of the decade.

### One-tonne Vehicle (Replacement)

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a decision on the replacement of the one-tonne vehicle; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The assessment of the competitive proposals for this vehicle is still continuing. A decision will be made when it is complete.

### All-terrain Battlefield General Purpose Vehicle

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about trials of an all-terrain battlefield general purpose vehicle.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Competitive evaluation trials of vehicles to meet this requirement started in September 1986 and will complete shortly.

### Defence Projects (Costs)

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the answer of 26 January, if he will indicate the number of projects within each of the specified expenditure bands, details of which have not been publicised on grounds of national security or on other grounds.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The expenditure bands listed by the hon. Member in his earlier question cover a very large number of projects. Some of these have been publicised, others have not. It would not be possible without disproportionate effort to identify those in the latter category.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if Sir Gordon Downey or an official of the National Audit Office has been informed of each defence project where the project definition cost has exceeded £10 million since 1981.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Yes.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee was notifed of each defence project where the project definition cost exceeded £10 million before 7 October 1986;

(2) if the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee has been notified of each defence project where the project cost has exceeded £250 million.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Since 1983 the PAC has been informed of all such projects through the major projects statement except where this was precluded on grounds of national security. The arrangements for informing the Chairman of the PAC of projects excluded from the major project statement were set out in my reply to the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd) on 2 February, at column 517.

### AIDS

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if the pamphlet on AIDS is being distributed to members of the armed services.

**Mr. Freeman:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer which I gave to the hon. Member for Holborn and St. Pancras (Mr. Dobson) on 22 January 1987, at columns 731-32. In addition to those detailed measures to educate and inform service personnel of the dangers of AIDS, we are currently examining the supply of copies of the DHSS pamphlet "AIDS: Don't Die of Ignorance" for distribution to all single personnel, those in barracks or aboard ships, or serving overseas who might not otherwise have been covered by the recent postal drop. All personnel will, in any event, receive the comprehensive Health Education Council booklet "AIDS—What Everybody Needs to Know".

### Falklands Fisheries

**Mr. Franks** asked the Secretary of State for Defence on what basis the charter for the patrol vessels for the Falkland Islands fishery patrol was placed; and what plans he has to encourage competitive tendering for charters and contracts for vessels to meet his Department's requirements.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I shall write to my hon. Friends.

### Mr. Duncan Campbell

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Defence on what dates in 1986 he sent letters to Mr. Duncan Campbell.

**Mr. George Younger:** None.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Beaches (Cleanliness)

12. **Mr. Sedgemore** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on the quality of bathing water at the beaches in the United Kingdom, in regard to the European Economic Community regulations related to coastal bathing water.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Following the answers which my hon. Friend the Minister with responsibility for local government and the environment in Scotland and I gave yesterday, we are now under a formal obligation to ensure that a much larger number, namely 389, of our bathing waters meet the directive's quality standards. We have been surveying the great majority of these in the last year and first indications are that more than half of them already comply with the standards set in the EEC "bathing water" directive.

37. **Sir Peter Blaker** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about measures taken to ensure that the waters around Britain's coast meet the European Community's standards of cleanliness.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Some £70 million is being spent annually on schemes related to the improvement of bathing water quality in the United Kingdom. Of the waters included in the survey I announced in my answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Leeds, North-West (Dr. Hampson) on 18 December 1985, more than half already meet the standards set out in the EEC "bathing water" directive. We expect the spending programme to lead to a steady improvement in the quality of our coastal bathing waters. One of the major schemes is at Blackpool, where the intention is to bring the waters up to the directive's standards. Details of the scheme are being finalised. It will involve substantial re-sewering and probably the disposal of sewage a long way out to sea. In total, it is estimated that some £35 million will be spent and that the scheme will be fully operational by 1993.

On 3 February I announced in reply to a question from my hon. Friend that 366 bathing waters in England and Wales and Northern Ireland were acknowledged to be within the scope of the EEC "bathing water" directive (76/160/EEC) including four at Blackpool. On the same day my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, with responsibility for local government and the environment, in a reply to a question from my Friend the Member for Cunninghame, North (Mr. Corrie) announced that 23 waters in Scotland were acknowledged to be within the scope of the directive. We are under an obligation to see that all these waters meet the directive's standards.

### Bed-and-breakfast Accommodation

19. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make more resources available to local authorities in respect of bed-and-breakfast cost for homeless people.

**Mr. John Patten:** Local authorities have been asked to concentrate their available resources on homeless people and others in special need; it is for them to decide how to accommodate people they have accepted as homeless. Recent Government measures to help reduce reliance on bed-and-breakfast accommodation were set out in answer to a question by the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on 16 January. Further steps are continually being considered by us and, I am sure, by the authorities most concerned.

### Housing Investment Programme

20. **Miss Boothroyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the reduction in real terms in total housing investment programme allocations since 1979-80.

**Mr. John Patten:** The housing investment programme allocation total has been reduced in real terms by 69 per cent. since 1979-80. However, since 1981 local authorities have been making increasing use of the proceeds from the sale of council dwellings to finance housing capital expenditure. In 1987-88 it is expected that more than half their capital expenditure will be financed in this way.

63. **Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received in response to the announcement of housing investment programme allocations for 1987-88.

**Mr. Tracey:** A number of representations have been received.

### Building Controls

21. **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on building controls in green belt and rural areas.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We remain firmly committed to our policy for the protection of green belts as set out in DOE circular 14/84, and to the need to conserve environmentally valuable countryside.

### Council Houses

22. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many council houses were completed in each successive year from 1979 to 1986 inclusive.

**Mr. John Patten:** The figures for England for the years 1979 to 1985 are as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 74,000 |
| 1980 | 74,000 |
| 1981 | 55,000 |
| 1982 | 31,000 |
| 1983 | 30,000 |
| 1984 | 29,000 |
| 1985 | 23,000 |

The provisional number of completions in January to November last year is 17,000.

36. **Mr. Andrew MacKay** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has on the number of empty council-owned dwellings in London.

**Mr. Tracey:** Figures on vacant council dwellings were provided by local authorities in their housing investment programme returns and the totals appear in column A99 of the "HIP1 (1986) all items print", which is in the Library.

42. **Mr. Hayward** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will discuss with local

government organisations the opportunities for improvements to council housing offered by his Department's urban housing renewal unit.

**Mr. John Patten:** Yes. I have already had discussions with representatives of the local authority associations—most recently at a meeting with them on 19 January. At that meeting I offered further discussions between officials about the opportunities being opened up by estate action (as the urban housing renewal unit is now known) for improving council housing. Members of the estate action team are in constant touch with individual local authorities; so far over 130 local authorities have had detailed discussions and visits from estate action.

## Urban Regeneration Grant

23. **Mr. Franks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to pay the first urban regeneration grant.

**Mr. John Patten:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford, North (Mr. Lawler) on 26 January, at column 49.

## Local Government Finance

24. **Mr. Clelland** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next proposes to meet the local authority associations to discuss local government finance.

**Mr. Chope:** We have made clear our willingness to discuss the Government's proposals for the reform of local finance, if the associations wish to do so.

## Structure Plans

25. **Sir David Price** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether it remains his policy to uphold statutory structure plans in determining planning appeals; and what are the factors which might lead him to accept departures from such plans.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** So far as they are material to the particular proposal, development plans must by law be taken into account in determining planning appeals. That does not mean, however, that they cannot be overriden by other material considerations.

## Local Authorities (Tenders)

26. **Mr. Squire** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when the Government propose to introduce legislation to stop local authorities imposing political conditions on firms tendering for contracts.

**Mr. Chope:** As soon as possible this Session.

## Water Rate

27. **Mr. Jack Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will publish the representations he has received from water authorities in respect of the 1987-88 water rate.

**Mr. John Patten:** It is not normal practice to publish such representations.

## Local Government Reform

28. **Mr. Roger King** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of manpower savings as a result of the abolition of the Greater London council and metropolitan counties.

**Mr. Chope:** The Government forecast in November 1984 that 7,000 posts would be saved. Our most recent analysis suggests that some 6,300 posts were saved immediately on abolition as compared with the figure of 7,000 which my right hon. Friend gave on 18 December 1986 on the information then available to him.

I remain confident that the original forecast will be fully realised as the residuary bodies wind down. For example, the London residuary body alone still employs over 3,000 staff.

## North of England

29. **Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the measures which he has taken since June 1983 to assist the north of England.

**Mr. Ridley:** My Department deploys a range of measures to assist those areas of England, including many northern industrial areas, which are experiencing difficulties in adjusting to changing economic and social circumstances.

I have announced the establishment of four new urban development corporations. These are in addition to the existing measures which include the urban programme; enterprise zones; and grants for urban development, urban regeneration and derelict land, the vast proportion of which go to northern industrial areas. The introduction of the uniform non-domestic rate will also cut rate bills substantially for businesses in most parts of the north. In addition rate support grant redistributes about £1 billion from London and the south-east.

## Cowboy Builders

30. **Mr. Burt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the Government doing to help protect home owners against cowboy builders.

**Mr. John Patten:** To help prevent the problems caused to many thousands of home owners by the activities of so-called cowboy builders, I am settng up, with the National Home Improvement Council and Care and Repair Ltd., 50 new centres that will offer practical advice and help, particularly to the elderly, about finding reputable builders and ensuring that work is carried out satisfactorily. The Government are meeting half the £6 million cost of this project. I have also set up a working party to look at the many problems associated with smaller building works. The working party will focus particularly on steps that might be taken by the industry to improve its performance in this area. I have asked it to reply by the end of the year.

## Political and Sexual Propaganda

31. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to announce details of the Government's further proposals to prevent local authorities using ratepayers' money to fund political and sexual propaganda; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr. Boyson:** We intend to include proposals to reinforce part II of the Local Government Act 1986 in the Bill which will contain the proposals to promote efficiency in local government mentioned in the Gracious Speech.

### Party Political Expenditure

32. **Mr. Spencer** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what recent representations he has received on the provisions of the Local Government Act 1985 dealing with expenditure for party political purposes.

**Dr. Boyson:** My right hon. Friend has received numerous representations about one-sided publicity on matters of political controversy issued by local authorities at the expense of ratepayers and taxpayers, and in favour of the Government's stated intention of reinforcing the ban on party political publicity in section 2 of the 1986 Act.

### UK 2000

33. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the progress of UK 2000.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** By next month UK2000 expects to have 92 projects under way. A total of 2,600 community programme workers and 5,500 volunteers will be working on these projects. Further major projects also coming forward include reclaiming and improving many sites along the west midlands railway and canal networks, and an "environment week" in April or May. UK2000 is seeking to ensure that projects are of high quality and that good training and work experience is offered to participants. To date, £500,000 private sector sponsorship in cash and kind has been attracted. UK2000 now operates in both England and Wales. The Prince of Wales committee represents the Welsh participating organisations. Arrangements are being made to extend UK2000 to Scotland.

### Ramsar Convention

34. **Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list information available to him on all current contracting parties to the Ramsar convention on wetlands of international importance, the number of sites each has designated and the total area this covers.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I am advised by the Ramsar convention secretariat that the information is as follows:

*Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention*

| | *Number of Wetlands Designated* | *Areas of Wetland (Hectares)* |
|---|---:|---:|
| Australia | 27 | 1,284,090 |
| Finland | 11 | 101,343 |
| Norway | 14 | 17,545 |
| Sweden | 20 | 271,075 |
| South Africa | 2 | 9,968 |
| Iran | 18 | 1,297,550 |
| Greece | 11 | 78,600 |
| Bulgaria | 4 | 2,097 |
| United Kingdom | 31 | 91,333 |
| Switzerland | 2 | 1,816 |
| Federal Republic of Germany | 20 | 314,315 |
| Pakistan | 9 | 20,990 |
| New Zealand | 2 | 14,807 |
| USSR | 12 | 2,987,185 |
| Italy | 40 | 51,476 |
| Jordan | 1 | 7,372 |
| Yugoslavia | 2 | 18,094 |
| Senegal | 3 | 96,000 |
| Denmark | 26 | 593,372 |
| Poland | 5 | 7,090 |
| Iceland | 1 | 20,000 |
| German DR | 8 | 49,600 |
| Hungary | 8 | 29,450 |
| Netherlands | 13 | 263,185 |
| Japan | 2 | 5,571 |
| Morocco | 4 | 10,580 |
| Tunisia | 1 | 12,600 |
| Portugal | 2 | 30,563 |
| Canada | 17 | 10,380,014 |
| Chile | 1 | 4,877 |
| India | 2 | 119,400 |
| Spain | 3 | 52,392 |
| Mauritania | 1 | 1,173,000 |
| Austria | 5 | 85,150 |
| Algeria | 2 | 8,400 |
| Uruguay | 1 | 200,000 |
| Ireland | 5 | 9,289 |
| Surinam | 1 | 12,000 |
| Belgium | 6 | 7,635 |
| Mexico | 1 | 48,000[1] |
| France | 1 | 85,000 |
| United States | 4 | 350,911 |
| | 349 | 20,234,275 |

[1] Approximately

### Surplus Land

35. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received about his policy of encouraging local authorities to release surplus land for development.

**Mr. John Patten:** My right hon. Friend has received representations from individual local authorities, hon. Members and others in respect of over 160 sites, where he has given notice of his intention to direct those local authorities to dispose of their interest in the land. He has also received representations, some supporting and some opposing his policy, from the local authority associations, the House Builders Federation and from professional organisations, companies and individuals concerned with the development of under-used land. Representations have also been received from members of the public requesting my right hon. Friend to use his powers to register sites and to direct disposal.

### Sports Council

38. **Mr. Pendry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next proposes to meet the chairman of the Sports Council to discuss the council's grant for the coming year.

**Mr. Tracey:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 17 December, at column 582. My right hon. Friend has no immediate plans to meet the chairman to discuss the Sports Council grant. I do, however, meet him on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to the developing of sport.

71. **Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last had an official meeting with the chairman of the Sports Council and what issues were discussed.

**Mr. Tracey:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Stalybridge and Hyde (Mr. Pendry). I last met the chairman on Thursday 22 January.

### Rate Support Grant

39. **Ms. Clare Short** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received from local authorities in response to his rate support grant statement of 13 January.

**Mr. Chope:** We have received representations from eight local authorities in response to the rate support grant statement of 13 January.

### Widdicombe Report

40. **Mr. Maclean** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to make a statement on his response to the Widdicombe report on abuses in local government.

**Dr. Boyson:** My right hon. Friend invited comments on the Widdicombe report by the end of December 1986. So far we have received 334 representations. We shall need to examine these in full before reaching conclusions.

### Nuclear Waste

41. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what developments have taken place over the last six months with regard to feasibility studies into the sub-sea disposal of nuclear waste.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The Department has been participating in an internationally co-ordinated programme of research into sub-sea disposal of nuclear waste, conducted under the auspices of the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD. The United Kingdom research will be complete by 31 March 1987, and reports on feasibility should be available by the middle of the year.

### Rural Areas (Land Use)

43. **Mrs. Shields** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received asking him to relax planning restrictions in rural areas; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Tracey:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given earlier today to the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Mr. Kirkwood).

### Housing Defects Act 1984

44. **Sir John Biggs-Davison** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the progress made by local authorities in implementing the Housing Defects Act 1984.

**Mr. Tracey:** The latest information available to the Department indicates that by the end of September 1986 local authorities in England had repurchased some 3,700 properties and had given 400 grants for reinstatement under the legislation. Local authorities are now making good progress with an increasing proportion of properties being reinstated as more approved repair methods become available. The National House Building Council's subsidiary, PRC Homes Ltd., has now approved 28 repair systems, for eight different house types, covering over two thirds of all designated houses.

### Litter

45. **Sir Anthony Grant** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many convictions there were in each of the last three years for breaches of the Litter Act; what progress has been made by the committee chaired by Mr. Richard Branson; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The number of convictions for breaches of the Litter Act, in the last three years for which figures are available, are given in the table.

Mr. Richard Branson's committee—UK2000—has no responsibility for enforcing the Litter Act, and action to tackle the problem of litter is only one of its concerns.

A report on the progress of UK2000 is given in my answer today to the hon. Member for Cynon Valley (Mrs. Clwyd).

*Table*

*Persons convicted under the Litter Acts*

| Year | Number |
|---|---|
| 1983 | 1,684[1] |
| 1984 | 1,427[2] |
| 1985 | 1,355[2] |

[1] Under Litter Acts 1958, 1971.

[2] Under Litter Act 1983.

**Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will introduce legislation to increase the penalties for dropping litter; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** No. The maximum fine for littering is tied to the Home Office standard scale, which was increased to £400 in 1984. In 1985 the Government made it an arrestable offence for a person suspected of littering not to give his name and address to a policeman on request.

The Government believe that the long-term solution to the litter problem must lie primarily in persuading the public not to drop litter. To this end we give financial support to the Keep Britain Tidy Group, which campaigns continuously against littering, in collaboration with local authorities, voluntary groups, industry and commerce.

### Rates

46. **Mr. Harvey** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what estimate he has made of the likely level of local authority rate increases in 1987-88.

60. **Mrs. Roe** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what average level of rate increases his Department is expecting for the year 1987-88.

**Mr. Chope:** We estimate that if authorities spend at the settlement spending assumption, the average percentage increase in rates in 1987-88 will be 1·2 per cent. Some authorities will have higher increases, while some will be able to reduce their rates. For most authorities, the settlement spending assumption allows for an increase in current expenditure of 5¼ per cent., which is well above inflation. This does not take account of the teachers' pay settlement.

### Homeless and Badly Housed People

47. **Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any proposals to help local authorities provide accommodation for homeless and badly housed single people below pensionable age.

**Mr. Tracey:** It is for local authorities to decide whom they are going to provide accommodation for, taking into account their statutory obligations to the homeless and people in unsatisfactory housing conditions. Recent Government measures from which single people among others stand to benefit were set out in replies to my hon. Friend the Member for South Ribble (Mr. Atkins) on 26 November and to the hon. Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Mr. Wareing) on 16 January.

### Private Rented Housing

48. **Mr. Sackville** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what representations he has received concerning measures to halt the decline in the private rented sector.

**Mr. Tracey:** We continue to receive a steady flow of representations on this issue.

### New Towns

49. **Mr. Dormand** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the future of the three north-east new towns.

**Mr. John Patten:** As required under section 41 of the New Towns Act 1981, the Secretary of State is consulting the relevant local authorities on a proposal to wind up the Aycliffe and Peterlee and the Washington new town development corporations on 31 March 1988. Responses have been requested by 28 February 1987.

### Housing (Right to Buy)

50. **Mr. Powley** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to inform people about the new right-to-buy provisions which have been introduced as a result of the Housing and Planning Act.

**Mr. Tracey:** The Department's booklet "Your right to buy your home" has been revised to take account of the changes, and copies are about to be sent to tenants of council flats and maisonettes. Later this month advertisements in the national press will draw attention to the new booklet, which tenants will be able to obtain by sending in a freepost coupon.

### Pollution

51. **Mr. Ray Powell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next intends meeting colleagues in the European Economic Community to discuss atmospheric and marine pollution and methods of reducing it.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I shall be attending an informal meeting of European Community Ministers on 13 February. It is expected that the Belgian presidency will put atmospheric pollution on the agenda.

52. **Mr. Thurnham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement about the Government's current plans to deal with pollution.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** We place a high priority on preserving and enhancing the quality of our environment, which we believe to be fully compatible with economic growth. We are taking a number of measures to deal with pollution in the United Kingdom and abroad. They include the following.

We are setting up a new unified pollution inspctorate. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution will come into being on 1 April. Its objectives will be to develop a more coherent approach to the control of industrial emissions and discharges to air, water or land in England and Wales and to provide advice that will help the other pollution control authorities to carry out their statutory responsibilities.

To tackle the problem of acid rain, we have authorised the CEGB to retrofit 6,000 MW of existing generating capacity with flue gas desulphurisation equipment. Any future coal-fired power stations will be required to be fitted with low acid-technology.

We propose new comprehensive legislation covering all aspects of industrial air pollution, as described in our recent consultation paper.

Our consultation paper "The Water Environment: The next Steps" set out the Government's proposals for maintaining standards of environmental protection after privatisation of the water industry. These include stronger safeguards against accidental pollution and statutory quality objectives and standards set by the Secretary of State. The new water pollution inspection function envisaged there is being set up as part of HMIP.

On anti-fouling paints, we will continue to exert pressure on the manufacturers and users of paints containing tributyl tin (TBT). Unless there is a marked improvement in TBT levels in sensitive waters, further action may have to be taken; this could include a ban on their use.

We have reached an agreement with the Paintmakers' Association of Great Britain, under which lead ceased to be added by member companies to white gloss, primer and undercoat paints from January 1986; and member companies will cease to add lead to all coloured gloss paints and varnishes from July 1987. We have tabled a memorandum at the EC's Environment Council calling for tighter controls on lead in paint in all member states and we shall be pursuing this within the Community.

We are taking a number of measures, both in the European Community and here in the United Kingdom, to encourage the sale and use of unleaded petrol and cars capable of running on it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced his intention to create a tax differential in favour of unleaded petrol to offset its higher production costs.

We shall be playing a full part in European Year of the Environment. In that connection, we are sponsoring the international pollution abatement fair and conference in April. We shall continue to support the pollution abatement technology award scheme and the new Europewide scheme which is modelled on it.

We are also looking at ways in which the development of pollution abatement technology can be encouraged.

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. is undertaking a multi-million pound capital programme at Sellafield which has already reduced discharges to the environment to one sixth of the levels in 1979; further reductions should be achievable in the 1990s.

**Mr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how he intends to recast the Government's proposals for the maintenance of water quality and pollution control under a regime of privatised water authorities, to meet the European Commission's four criteria, set out by the Environment Commissioner in the European Parliament on 10 December 1986.

**Mr. John Patten:** When our detailed proposals for water privatisation are published in legislation in due course it will be possible for the hon. Member to make judgments upon them.

**Mr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on his policy on water privatisation in the light of representations made to him by the Council for the Protection of Rural England about the legal acceptability in European Economic Community terms of the Government's proposals for water pollution control under a privatised regime.

**Mr. John Patten:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Mrs. Golding).

### Water Authorities and Environmental Protection Boards

53. **Mr. Geraint Howells** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the funds allocated to the water authorities and environmental protection boards for each of the last five years and the relevant estimate for each of the next five years.

**Mr. John Patten:** Water authorities are given annual allocations of external finance in line with the controls which the Government exercise over all nationalised industries and consistent with industry totals published in annual public expenditure White Papers. External finance limits (EFLs) set for the five years to 1986-87 are set out in the table. EFLs for 1987-88 are also given. With the exception of Welsh water authority the 1987-88 figures exclude allocations for flood defence works which have yet to be notified to authorities. EFLs for later years will normally be notified only after public expenditure totals have been finalised.

*External Finance Limits: Water Authorities*

| | *1982-83* | *1983-84* | *1984-85* | *1985-86* | *1986-87* | *1987-88*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northumbrian | 35·8 | 20·0 | 20·0 | 22·0 | 18·0 | 2·0 |
| North West | 84·0 | 79·0 | 87·0 | 84·5 | 58·0 | 49·0 |
| Severn Trent | 61·9 | 66·3 | 40·0 | 55·2 | 7·9 | −8·0 |
| Yorkshire | 53·4 | 30·0 | 34·0 | 31·0 | 25·8 | 19·0 |
| Anglian | 87·4 | 85·0 | 60·0 | 46·0 | 45·7 | 27·0 |
| Thames | −3·0 | −10·5 | −34·0 | −60·0 | −92·0 | −98·0 |
| Southern | 40·7 | 33·5 | 23·0 | 11·0 | 2·0 | −9·0 |
| Wessex | 21·7 | 27·3 | 16·0 | 21·0 | 26·8 | 21·0 |
| South West | 13·8 | 12·5 | 11·0 | 4·9 | 4·7 | ·0 |
| Welsh | 25·2 | 23·0 | 22·6 | 21·0 | 17·3 | [1]13·3 |

[1] Figures for 1987-88 exclude flood defence, except for Welsh water.

### Community Charge

54. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment in what way he expects the proposed community charge for England and Wales to differ from that for Scotland.

**Mr. Chope:** The main features of the community charge will be the same throughout Great Britain. Inevitably, there will be a number of differences in the operation of the community charge in England and Wales and in Scotland, largely reflecting differences in the legal systems and administrative practice. My right hon. Friends have placed in the Library a document which sets out how they envisage the community charge working in England and Wales.

### Lead

55. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest information on concentrations of lead in the air.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** Air lead levels in the first quarter of 1986 averaged 0·29 micrograms per cubic metre compared with 0·56 micrograms per cubic metre during the same period in 1985. This is a direct consequence of the Government's decision to reduce the maximum lead content of petrol with effect from 31 December 1985. Warren Spring Laboratory has now published a full report on these data and I have arranged for a copy to be placed in the Library of the House.

### International Year of the Homeless

56. **Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what his Department has done to support the International Year of the Homeless.

**Mr. Tracey:** The Department is constantly considering ways of preventing and relieving homelessness in this country and will continue to do so during and after the Year. Measures already announced include the financial assistance we are giving for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless Trust's leaflet aimed at preventing homelessness by informing young people about accommodation possibilities before they decide to leave home.

### Gipsies

57. **Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of pitches provided on official sites for gipsies by each authority in West Yorkshire.

**Mr. Tracey:** As at July 1986 the number of pitches provided on official sites in West Yorkshire is: 32 in Bradford; 16 in Leeds; 22 in Wakefield; and a nil return from Calderdale and Kirklees.

### Construction Industry

58. **Mr. Rowe** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a statement on the outcome of the forum on construction industry training held in January by the Minister of Housing, Urban Affairs and Construction, the hon. Member for Oxford, West and Abingdon (Mr. Patten).

**Mr. John Patten:** There was a wide measure of agreement at this forum which was called by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment, the hon. Member for Rossendale and Darwen (Mr. Trippier) and myself. As a result, the chairman of the construction industry training board agreed to put together proposals by the end of March to increase the number of entrants into craft training by 4,000. The board also agreed to prepare an action plan by the end of April which will cover: medium-term measures to deal with the skill shortages problem; ways of improving the provision and uptake of training for site managers and supervisors; and ways of improving the industry's investment in the training of experienced operatives and craftsmen.

### Housing Statistics

59. **Mr. Raynsford** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will inform the House of the number of households accepted as homeless, the number of council houses completed, the number of housing association houses coming into letting, whether as a result of new build or rehabilitation, and the estimate of the total number of private sector lettings in England and Wales, respectively, in 1979 and 1986.

**Mr. Tracey:** The numbers of new dwelling completions for local authorities and for housing associations in 1979 and in the first three quarters of 1986 appear in table 6.1 of "Housing and Construction Statistics 1975-1985" and in table 1.2 of "Housing and Construction Statistics No. 27", which are available in the Library. Figures of dwellings renovated by housing associations in England are in tables 7.1 and 2.13, respectively, of the same publications.

In England, the estimated stock of dwellings rented from private owners at December 1979 was around 2,040,000. At September 1986 there were about 1,540,000 private rented dwellings.

English local authorities accepted 57,200 households as homeless in 1979. The figures for the first three quarters of 1986 appear in table 1(a) of press notice No. 13 issued by this Department on 16 January 1987, which is available in the Library.

For Welsh figures, I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

### Severe Weather Damage

61. **Mr. Stan Thorne** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will make a special financial allowance to the local authorities to ensure that damage to pavements and roads caused by the recent bad weather is repaired as soon as possible.

**Mr. Chope:** No. General deterioration in road and pavement condition caused by a harsh winter is something highway authorities should be budgeting for and mention as they see fit in their annual transport policy and programmes submission to the Department of Transport.

### Planning Decisions

62. **Mr. Jessel** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any plans to change the criteria for determining whether planning decisions are called in.

**Mr. Tracey:** As explained in paragraph 50 of our recent response to the Environment committee (Cm 43, "Planning: Appeals, Call-in and Major Public Inquiries," of 17 December 1986) my right hon. Friend and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales are considering this matter. Any resulting changes will be announced as soon as possible.

### Liverpool

64. **Mr. Heffer** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will meet Liverpool council leaders to discuss the city's budget proposals.

**Mr. Chope:** It is the responsibility of the Liverpool city council to balance its budget for 1987-88 within the resources available to it.

69. **Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will pay a visit to Liverpool to meet council leaders to discuss the city's budget proposals.

**Mr. Chope:** It is the responsibility of the Liverpool city council to balance its budget for 1987-88 within the resources available to it. My right hon. Friend has no present plans to visit Liverpool.

### Nuclear Accidents

65. **Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what assessment his Department has made of the long-term effects on the environment of a worst case nuclear accident under adverse meteorological conditions.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Members for Stockton, North (Mr. Cook) and for Newport, East (Mr. Hughes) on Monday 2 February.

### Planning Applications

66. **Mr. Chapman** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if his Department will monitor and make statistics available about the numbers and types of planning applications on established green belt land and the decisions thereon made by local planning authorities or himself.

**Mr. Tracey:** There is no central register of planning applications for development in the green belt. The number of appeals which, since 1985, have been recorded in the planning inspectorate's relevant case record system is too small to provide reliable statistical information at present.

### Uncollected Council Rents

67. **Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate of the average percentage of annual council rents uncollected by local authorities; and what is the average for the inner London boroughs.

**Mr. Tracey:** According to the latest available comprehensive figures provided by local authorities, the average of cumulative arrears (expressed as a percentage of the annual rent collectable) for authorities in England was 5·7 per cent. and for the inner London boroughs 14·8 per cent.

### Water Authorities

68. **Mr. Allan Roberts** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will make a statement on the progress and plans for privatisation of water authorities.

**Mr. John Patten:** As my right hon. Friend explained in his statement of 3 July 1986, we are preparing the necessary legislation and intend to proceed with the privatisation of the water authorities as soon as practicable.

### London Marathon

70. **Mr. Canavan** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many representations he has received to date about the organisation of the London marathon; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** Since my answer of 17 December 1986, at column 593, I have received one letter, from the chairman of the London visitor and convention bureau.

### Sporting Championships

72. **Mr. Ashton** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what financial and other support is offered to cities bidding to host world and European championships in or on sport.

**Mr. Tracey:** We would wish to offer every diplomatic, promotional and administrative assistance for United Kingdom cities bidding to host international sporting events. Careful planning, skilled marketing and close liaison with potential sponsors by the city authorities and governing bodies of sport should obviate the need for public expenditure on such events.

The Sports Council may also assist local authorities in efforts to attract international events.

### Middlesbrough

73. **Mr. Holt** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment by how much the rate base for Middlesbrough has changed for each of the past five years for commercial-industrial ratepayers.

**Mr. Chope:** Following is the available information on annual changes in non-domestic rateable values for Middlesbrough:

| | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| 1982 | +1·4 |
| 1983 | −1·8 |
| 1984 | +2·3 |
| 1985 | +1·3 |
| 1986 | −3·2 |

*Note:* The underlying rateable values are net of mandatory reliefs on charitable properties and non-domestic voids.

### Peak Park Planning Board

74. **Mr. McLoughlin** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any plans to pay an official visit to the area administered by the Peak park planning board; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** My right hon. Friend has no plans for a visit.

### Block Grant

75. **Mr. Patchett** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what has been the cumulative reduction in block grant in real terms since 1981-82.

**Mr. Chope:** The figures requested are as follows:

| | *1* *Block grant in cash terms* *£ million* | *2* *Block grant at 1986 prices* *£ million* | *3* *Reduction from previous year at 1986 prices* *£ million* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1981-82 | 8,346 | 10,673 | — |
| 1982-83 | 8,349 | 9,955 | −718 |
| 1983-84 | 8,389 | 9,576 | −379 |
| 1984-85 | 8,412 | 9,204 | −372 |
| 1985-86 | 8,439 | 8,692 | −512 |
| 1986-87 | 8,302 | 8,302 | −390 |
| 1987-88 | 8,832 | 8,513 | +211 |
| | | | −2,160 |

*Notes:*

The figures in column 1 are the entitlements based on the latest RSG report or supplementary report for the year concerned. Those for 1985-86, 1986-87 and 1987-88 are those included in the Secretary of State's announcement of his firm intentions for the rate support grant report 1987-88, the third supplementary report for 1985-86 and the first supplementary report for 1986-87 made on 13 January.

The figures in column 2 have been produced using the GDP deflator.

### Business Rates

76. **Mr. David Atkinson** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what further representations he has received on his proposal for a unified business rate as a replacement for commercial rates.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend has placed a summary of responses to the Green Paper in the Library. Since the consultation period ended a number of further representations have been received.

### Inner City and Urban Renewal

77. **Mr. Freeson** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he last met the building industry's Group of Eight to discuss inner city and urban renewal matters.

**Mr. John Patten:** I last saw the group on 23 July last year, when issues relating to urban regeneration were discussed.

### Derelict Land Grants

**Mr. William Powell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total of derelict land grants made to the Corby development area in *(a)* 1985-86 and *(b)* 1986-87 to date.

**Mr. John Patten:** Following is the information:

*Derelict land grants paid to*

| | *1985-86*<br>*£ million* | [1]*1986-87*<br>*£ million* |
|---|---|---|
| Corby DC | 2·13 | 2·73 |
| Commission for the New Towns | 0·02 | — |
| TOTAL | 2·15 | 2·73 |

[1] to date.

### Home Insulation

**Mr. Favell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he has any proposals to tighten up building regulations relating to the insulation of new homes.

**Mr. John Patten:** A consultative paper on proposals for changes to the regulations was circulated by the Department on 15 December. A copy has been placed in the Library. The proposals envisage higher standards for the conservation of fuel and power, but would allow greater flexibility on how these could be achieved.

### Property Services Agency

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will set out in tabular form for 1 April 1985 and 1 April 1986 *(a)* the total number of architects, including landscape architects, employed by the Property Services Agency and *(b)* the equivalent figure for the design office of the directorate-general of design services.

**Mr. Chope:** The information is as follows:

| | *1 April 1985* | *1 April 1986* |
|---|---|---|
| *(a)* Architects (including Landscape Architects) in PSA | 419 | 444 |
| *(b)* Architects (including Landscape Architects) in the Design Office of the Directorate General of Design Services | 31 | 43 |

The figure for the design office at 1 April 1986 includes eight architects in the students training office, which was transferred from the directorate of civil accommodation in 1985-86.

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the total number of staff in post in the Property Services Agency on 1 April 1985 and 1 April 1986 respectively, identifying separately non-industrial and industrial staff.

**Mr. Chope:** The numbers of staff in post on 1 April 1985 and 1 April 1986 were as follows:

| | *1 April 1985* | *1 April 1986* |
|---|---|---|
| Property Services Agency | | |
| Non-industrial | 14,491 | 14,710 |
| Industrial | 11,354 | 10,361 |
| Total | 25,845 | 25,071 |
| The Crown Suppliers | | |
| Non-industrial | 1,375 | 1,417 |
| Industrial | 559 | 521 |
| Total | 1,934 | 1,938 |
| Overall Total | 27,779 | 27,009 |

The figures for 1 April 1985 include 1,549 staff wholly engaged on work for United States forces and those for 1 April 1986 include 1,608.

### Metropolitan Areas

**Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what progress is being made towards the introduction of unitary development plans in the metropolitan areas.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I am today issuing for comment draft regulations which prescribe some of the procedures for preparing unitary development plans together with a draft circular and memorandum for local authorities. The drafts are being sent to the local authority associations and others for comment by 3 April. Copies of the letter and drafts are being placed in the Library.

Progress is being made in all the metropolitan areas towards the preparation of strategic guidance which my right hon. Friend will consider issuing to local planning authorities to assist them in preparing their unitary development plans. The London Planning Advisory Committee has been set up and is considering the scope and content of advice which the committee may offer about the strategic guidance for Greater London. In the other metropolitan areas arrangements are being made for the local authorities to prepare advice on the scope and content of the guidance.

### Climatic Variability

**Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what plans he has to implement the recommendations relating to his responsibilities in the report "Social and Economic Responses to Climatic Variability in the United Kingdom".

**Mr. Tracey** [*pursuant to his reply,* 27 January 1987, c. *174*]: I shall write to the hon. Member.

# Written Answers to Questions

*Thursday 5 February 1987*

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Reyes Syndrome

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what requests for funding into research related to Reyes syndrome have been made to his Department; and what was the response.

**Mr. Walden:** The Medical Research Council, which receives its grant-in-aid through the Department, is the main Government agency for the promotion of medical research in the United Kingdom. I understand that the MRC has received two requests from the National Reyes Syndrome Foundation of the United Kingdom outlining proposed research studies. These requests were transferred to the council from the Department of Health and Social Security. The applicants have been invited to submit detailed project grant applications to the council.

### Job Training Scheme

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science (1) what representation he has on each of the 14 Manpower Services Commission sector groups connected with the job training scheme;

(2) what representation he has on the advisory group for the development of the job training scheme;

(3) what representation he has in the modular accreditation development programme for the job training scheme;

(4) what representation he has on the technical control group of the job training scheme.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** The Department is not represented on the groups referred to by the hon. Member. They are, I understand, informal groups involving the major examining and validating bodies. The MSC has brought them together with the immediate purpose of examining the qualifications which might most appropriately be made available for the new scheme. I understand that the MSC will be further consulting the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, on which Her Majesty's Inspectorate has an observer, on the issues relating to qualifications which arise from the job training scheme. Mr. Oscar De Ville, chairman of the NCVQ, has said that the council will work closely with the MSC to help ensure that the qualifications are of high quality and are relevant to the standards required by employers.

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what plans he has to involve Her Majesty's inspectorate in ensuring the quality of education and training delivery in the job training scheme.

**Mrs. Rumbold:** Where Her Majesty's inspectors observe job training scheme provision in the course of their inspections of colleges they will discuss their judgments about its quality with those concerned and comment, as appropriate, in their published reports on the colleges. In addition, I understand that the MSC's training standards advisory service is likely to be involved in inspecting the quality of the new scheme.

### Departmental Vote (Cash Limits)

**Mr. Pawsey** asked the Secretary of State for education and Science if he will give details of any revised cash limits for his Department's votes for 1986-87.

**Mr. Kenneth Baker:** Cash limits for six of the Department's Votes for 1986-87 have been revised to reflect estimated outturn. The adjustments are as follows:

| *Class* | *Vote* | *Description of Expenditure* | *Current cash limit* | *£'000 Revision* | *Revised cash limit* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| XII | 1 | Schools, further education and other services | 211,094 | −130 | 210,964 |
| XII | 3 | Universities, etc. | 1,564,274 | −1,507 | 1,562,767 |
| XII | 4 | Central Administration | 53,604 | +1,032 | 54,636 |
| XII | 5 | Research Councils etc.: Agricultural and Food Research Council | 52,679 | +4,470 | 57,149 |
| XII | 8 | Research Councils, etc.: Science and engineering Research Council | 315,529 | +658 | 316,187 |
| XII | 9 | Research Councils, etc.: Economic and Social Research Council | 23,634 | +186 | 23,820 |

Supplementary Estimates for Votes 4, 5, 8 and 9 will be presented for parliamentary approval.

The increase on Vote 4 is required to cover the part-year costs of an increase in the Department's manpower ceiling at 31 March 1987 from 2,417 to 2,450 and to meet other increases in the level of activity. The Department's running cost target for 1986-87 has accordingly been revised from £54 million to £55 million.

The increase on Vote 5 is required to assist with staff redundancy costs following the contraction of commissioned research and development work.

On Vote 8 the increase is required to enable the payment by the council of contributions towards the United Kingdom subscription to the European Space Agency on behalf of the department of the Environment and the Department of Transport.

The increase on Vote 9 is required to cover costs arising from unexpectedly high transfers out of the council's superannuation scheme; and to finance 15 new studentships for whom responsibility has transferred from the Department of the Environment to the council.

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Flood Defence Work

**Mr. Moynihan** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food whether he is yet in a position to make an announcement about finance for water authorities' flood defence work in 1987-88.

**Mr. Jopling:** Yes. The Secretary of State for Wales and I have reviewed the arrangements for grant-aid for water authorities' flood defence works. Under current arrangements the grant rates for each water authority are recalculated annually. We have decided to end these arrangements and to substitute a system under which each water authority in England and Wales, or, as appropriate, local land drainage committee, will qualify for one of four grant rates, depending on its resources and flood defence requirements. The grant rates will be 15, 35, 45 and 55 per cent. There will also continue to be a sea defence supplement of 15 per cent.; and we are increasing the maximum rate of grant for sea defence schemes from 61 to 65 per cent. The new arrangements will provide the water authorities with a firmer basis for forward planning.

I am today notifying the water authorities in England of their new grant rates and of their grant earning ceilings for flood defence works for 1987-88. Most areas will qualify for higher rates of grant than in the current year. In particular, all areas with significant sea defence works will receive higher grant rates. In England as a whole this extra grant will amount to £4·5 million, making a total grant commitment of £16·6 million. Almost half the extra money will be devoted to the east coast sea defences. It has been possible to accept in full the Anglian water authority's bid for resources for 1987-88, with the result that Anglian is expected to receive over £3 million more than the sum originally allocated for 1986-87. Most of the remainder of the extra grant will be devoted to a major sea defence scheme at Seaford in Sussex.

The increased grant for 1987-88 follows an increase of £1·25 million in grant-aid in the current year, most of which was spent on works on the east coast.

### Monetary Compensatory Amounts

**Mr. Austin Mitchell** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, further to his answer to the hon. Member for Great Grimsby on 17 December 1984, *Official Report*, column *34*, concerning monetary compensatory amounts, what effect the recent realignment of currencies within the European monetary system has had or will have on the coefficient used in calculating the monetary compensatory amounts; what effect this has on the prices paid to farmers in the United Kingdom and in other EEC countries; and if he will publish in the *Official Report* a table showing *(a)* the increase in the central rate of the European currency unit in each year since 1973, and *(b)* the increase in the rate for common agricultural policy prices and the corresponding increases for the United Kingdom and West Germany.

**Mr. Gummer:** Following the EMS realignment on 12 January, the coefficient used in calculating MCAs has been increased by approximately 2·54 per cent. This has no effect on CAP support prices, expressed either in ecus or in national currencies. The ecu, which was created in 1979, has both a central rate and one or more representative rates for CAP purposes (green rates) against the national currencies of each member state. It is therefore not possible to provide the table requested.

### Lyminge Forest (Land Purchase)

**Mr. Maclennan** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what information he has regarding proposals to purchase land on the site of Lyminge forest in Kent; whether discussions have taken place with the Forestry Commission; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Islington, South and Finsbury (Mr. Smith) on 29 October 1986, at columns 165-66.

Outline planning permission for a leisure development at this site was not granted, and the land has not been placed on the market.

### Toxic Waste

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if there have been any applications to the United Kingdom Government to carry out a test-burn of toxic PCB wastes at sea in 1986 or 1987.

**Mr. Gummer:** No.

### Food Sales

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what recent sales of food have been negotiated in relation to the provision of butter and beef to the Soviet Union; and what is the sale price in terms of pence per pound.

**Mr. Gummer** [*pursuant to his reply*, 3 February 1987, c. *574*.]: The most recent sale of butter to the USSR was in November 1986. None was sold from the United Kingdom. Had any sales taken place from the United Kingdom, the price would have been approximately 10p/lb.

The regulation under which intervention beef could have been made available to traders for bulk sales to third countries including the USSR, was agreed in December 1985. No sales have taken place recently from the United Kingdom. The most recent prices (in sterling terms) at which this beef would have been made available to traders are as follows:

Bone-in forequarters: 32/lb.
Bone-in hindquarters: 49p/lb.
Boneless cuts: 38p to 59p/lb depending on the cut.

These prices include export refunds and United Kingdom mcas where applicable.

The prices at which sales to the USSR are concluded are a matter for the traders concerned.

## OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT

### AIDS

**Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will list in the *Official*

*Report* those projects supported by Her Majesty's Government which assist African countries to prevent the spread of AIDS;

(2) whether he has received any representations from developing countries requesting help to combat the spread of AIDS;

(3) whether he has received any representations from the World Health Organisation requesting help to combat the spread of AIDS;

(4) what proportion of his Department's overall budget is spent helping African and other developing countries to tackle AIDS;

(5) whether any consideration is being given to increasing resources available to African countries to combat AIDS.

**Mr. Eggar:** We believe that support for programmes co-ordinated by the World Health Organisation is the most effective way of assisting developing countries to cope with AIDS. We have recently given £250,000 to the WHO's global AIDS programme for work in such countries; this represents about 0·02 per cent. of the estimated net aid programme for 1986-87. The WHO is planning expansion of its work as a matter of urgency. When we have details, we expect to provide some additional support.

In response to a few direct requests for assistance from aid recipient countries, we are providing specialist advice, training and some small items of medical equipment.

**Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made by his Department on the long-term effect of AIDS on the economic position of eastern and central African countries.

**Mr. Eggar:** Our assessment is that the spread of AIDS, if unchecked, would have a serious detrimental effect on the economic and social development of any country. ODA officials, in consultation with other concerned organisations, are considering what analytical work is needed to determine the relationship between AIDS and economic and social change in developing countries.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Zircon Satellite

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General on what date he became aware of the involvement of Duncan Campbell in a proposed BBC television programme on the Zircon satellite.

**The Solicitor-General:** I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's answer to him on 26 January 1987.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General on what date he consulted Treasury Counsel, as referred to by the Solicitor-General on 27 January, *Official Report,* column 274, about the possibility of obtaining an injunction against the *New Statesman* in connection with publication of material about the Zircon satellite.

**The Solicitor-General:** On 20 January 1987.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General if he will place in the Library a record of discussions between his office and Mr. Duncan Campbell in 1986 concerning publication of material about the Zircon project.

**The Solicitor-General:** There have been no such discussions.

### Mr. Duncan Campbell

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General how many written communications passed between himself and Mr. Duncan Campbell in 1986; and if he will place copies in the Library.

**The Solicitor-General:** Three written communications passed between my right hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General and Mr. Duncan Campbell in 1986, one from Mr. Campbell and two from the Attorney-General. None of them contained any reference to satellites, intelligence gathering or GCHQ.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### Falklands Fisheries

**Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many applications he has received for fishing licences in the Falkland Islands exclusive fisheries zone; from which countries these applications have been made; and how many from each country.

**Mr. Eggar:** A total of 532 applications for licences to fish in the Falkland Islands interim conservation and management zone (FICZ) from 1 February until 30 June 1987 were received by the Falkland Islands Government. The table gives a breakdown by country and fishery. A number of these applications applied to both of the two fishing grounds for which licences have been granted.

| *Country* | *Area A (Illex squid fishery) North of 51°20′* | *Area B (Loligo squid fishery) South of 51°20′* |
|---|---|---|
| Japan | 146 | 19 |
| Republic of Korea | 117 | 9 |
| Taiwan | 116 | 0 |
| United Kingdom | 3 | 4 |
| Spain | 29 | 65 |
| Poland | 42 | 27 |
| Netherlands | 9 | 9 |
| France | 1 | 1 |
| Federal Republic of Germany | 2 | 2 |
| Italy | 9 | 9 |
| Greece | 0 | 1 |
| Chile | 1 | 2 |
| (Flags of Convenience) | 15 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 490 | 157 |

### Immigration

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many settlement applications at the post in Dhaka were *(a)* received, *(b)* granted, *(c)* refused, *(d)* deferred at first interview, *(e)* lapsed, *(f)* outstanding and *(g)* outstanding and awaiting first interview for each quarter since the beginning of 1985.

**Mr. Waddington:** I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is given in the following table.

*Applications in Dhaka for entry clearance for settlement in the United Kingdom*[1]

*Number of persons*[2]

| *Applications* | 1985 *1st quarter* | *2nd quarter* | *3rd quarter* | *4th quarter* | *Year* | 1986 *1st quarter* | *2nd quarter* | *3rd quarter* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Newly received | 1,780 | 1.880 | 2,390 | 1,980 | 8,030 | 1,630 | 1,570 | 1,520 |
| Granted[3] | 1,260 | 1,300 | 1,760 | 1,680 | 6,000 | 1,320 | 900 | 1,050 |
| Refused initially | 1,140 | 900 | 1,080 | 1,140 | 4,260 | 1,170 | 820 | 430 |
| Deferred[4] | 730 | 750 | 1,000 | 990 | 3,470 | 1,430 | 1,300 | 1,320 |
| Lapsed or withdrawn[5] | 120 | 120 | 160 | 210 | 610 | 560 | 990 | 870 |
| Outstanding at end of period | 12,600 | 12,500 | 12,500 | 11,900 | 11,900 | 10,800 | 9,800 | 9,300 |
| Of which: | | | | | | | | |
| Awaiting first interview | 10.500 | 10,400 | 10,400 | 9,500 | 9,500 | 7,700 | 6,500 | 5,500 |

[1] Excluding applications for a certificate of entitlement or a confirmation of the right of abode.

[2] Wives, children, persons for immediate settlement, husbands, male fiancees, and female fiancees since 26 August 1985 (when the entry clearance requirement for female fiancees was introduced).

[3] Including applications granted on appeal.

[4] Including applications referred to the Home Office for decision.

[5] The increase in 1986 reflects applicants for entry clearance who had a claim to the right of abode being considered instead for a certificate of settlement or a confirmation of the right of abode.

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the maximum, minimum and average times taken between the deferral of a decision on a settlement application made at the post in Dhaka and the interviewing of the sponsor in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Waddington:** I have been asked to reply.

I regret that the information requested is not readily available.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Select Committee Reports

**Mr. Cash** asked the Lord Privy Seal when Her Majesty's Government expect to reply to the first report of Session 1986-87 from the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on Ministers and Civil Servants, and to the first report of Session 1986-87 from the Liaison Committee on Accountability of Ministers and Civil Servants to Select Committees of the House of Commons.

**Mr. Biffen:** The Government's response to both reports is published today as a Command Paper (Cmnd. 78). Copies of the response have been placed in the Library.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Terrorism (Syrian Involvement)

Q40. **Mr. Dalyell** asked the Prime Minister if any evidence was provided to the police by Nezar Hindawi regarding Syrian involvement in terrorist activities in Europe; and if she will make a statement.

**The Prime Minister:** It would not be in the public interest, nor would it assist our efforts to counter terrorism, to confirm or deny the precise source of evidence in a particular case.

The evidence produced at Nezar Hindawi's trial is, of course, now a matter of public record.

### Peterhead

Q132. **Mr. McQuarry** asked the Prime Minister if she will pay an official visit to Peterhead.

**The Prime Minister:** I have at present no plans to do so.

### Football Supporters (Card Scheme)

**Mr. Pendry** asked the Prime Minister if she will make a statement on her correspondence with the *Today* newspaper about its proposal for a 100 per cent. membership card scheme for football supporters.

**The Prime Minister:** *Today* newspaper, and a number of other organisations and individuals, have written to me in support of membership schemes. I have welcomed the support for such schemes which the Government believe will assist in identifying, isolating and deterring troublemakers.

### "The Secret Society"

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Prime Minister (1) if, pursuant to her answer of 26 January, *Official Report*, column *18*, she will give details of the sense in which the Government became aware of the British Broadcasting Corporation's plan for one or more programmes entitled "The Secret Society";

(2) what was the nature of the information available to Her Majesty's Government before the week beginning 6 October about the British Broadcasting Corporation's intentions to make one or more programmes on the Zircon satellite.

**The Prime Minister:** I have nothing to add to my reply to the hon. Gentleman on 26 January, at column *18*, or to the reply of my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to the hon. Gentleman on 29 January, at column 335.

### Engagements

**Mr. Roger King** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 5 February.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 5 February.

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Prime Minister if she will list her official engagements for Thursday 5 February.

**The Prime Minister:** This morning I presided at a meeting of the Cabinet and had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others, including one with the President of the Commission of the European Communities. In addition to my duties in this House I shall be having further meetings later today.

## SCOTLAND

### Caterpillar Tractor Company

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions his Department has had with the Caterpillar Tractor Company about its future plans in the light of the redundancies announced at its Uddingston plant; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lang:** At a meeting on 20 January my right hon. and learned Friend conveyed to senior representatives of the company the Government's concern at the announcement of its intention to close the Uddingston plant. This development was in strong contrast with the company's statement last September that the plant was a "Plant with a Future" and would be the subject of a £62·5 million investment programme. My right hon. and learned Friend formally asked that the closure decision should be reconsidered. A meeting with my officials took place on 2 February at which the company gave further details of the background to the closure decision. A telex from the company president reconfirming the closure decision was received on 3 February. My right Hon. and learned Friend has made clear his disappointment at this news but has also underlined his continuing readiness to consider any proposal to retain viable manufacturing and employment at the Uddingston facility.

### Highlands and Islands Development Board

**Mr. Donald Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what level of funding was given by the Scottish Office to the Highlands and Islands Development Board in 1985-86, and 1986-87; and what is the proposed level for the financial year 1987-88.

**Mr. Lang:** the information is contained in table 3.16 of the "Government's Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90" (Volume II, Cmnd. 56-II).

The HIDB's gross expenditure comprises not only the amounts shown above, but income generated from receipts. The expected level of receipts in 1987-88 will enable the gross expenditure to exceed that in 1986-87 in real terms.

### NHS Hospitals

**Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many National Health Service hospitals have been opened in Scotland; and what is the bed gain as a result of these openings, for each year since 1979.

**Mr. John MacKay:** Details of all hospital developments are not held centrally as minor capital projects are delegated to health boards. The information for major capital projects is as follows. The total planned bed complement is shown for each year, but it should be noted that many of the beds provided are replacements for outdated facilities elsewhere and are not additions to overall complement:

| *Year* | *Number of hospitals* | *Number of beds* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 2 | 90 |
| 1980 | 10 | 372 |
| 1981 | 6 | 1,022 (+95 day places) |
| 1982 | 5 | 210 (+46 day places) |
| 1983 | 10 | 912 (+95 day places) |
| 1984 | 6 | 510 (+30 day places) |
| 1985 | 4 | 1,220 (+180 day places) |
| 1986 | 4 | 1,115 (+10 day places) |

### Lord-Lieutenancies

**Mr. Pollock** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether he has any plans to review the present boundaries of the lord-lieutenancies within Grampian region.

**Mr. Rifkind:** The areas in which lord-lieutenants in Scotland discharge their functions are determined by Order in Council. I do not propose to advise Her Majesty to adjust the boundaries within Grampian region as assigned under the Lord-Lieutenants Order 1975 (1975 No. 428).

### Homelessness

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is his latest estimate for the number of homeless people in Scotland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** For the number of homeless persons in Scotland, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Glasgow, Shettleston (Mr. Marshall) on 23 January, at column *759*.

The very difficult problems which can arise in dealing with homeless people call for the exercise of good housing management and close co-operation between all the agencies involved. The Government have offered practical guidance on meeting the housing needs of single people in part 7 of the "Scottish Housing Handbook" and provide funding to several voluntary organisations concerned with the homeless nationally. My right hon. and learned Friend believes that housing authorities are now adopting a more flexible approach to homeless persons in their allocation policies and in the use of their existing stock. The 12·5 per cent. increase in capital investment on the housing revenue account provisionally announced for 1987-88 will enable authorities which have this as a priority to do more for the homeless.

### Crime Statistics

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what was the number of crimes of violence against the person in Scotland *(a)* in the 12 months ended April 1979 and *(b)* in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Lang:** For the purpose of this reply, the term "violence against the person" is taken to include all non-sexual crimes of violence (group 1 of the standard classification) apart from robbery, those crimes of indecency (group 2) which contain a violent element, and certain crimes involving malicious and reckless conduct.

Following the revision, with effect from 1980, of the classification of crimes and offences, recorded crime figures for earlier years are available on a calendar year basis only. For this reason, figures for the 12 months to April 1979 are not available. However, in 1978 there were 7,466 crimes of violence against the person recorded in Scotland. In the period December 1985 to November 1986, 13,091 crimes of violence against the person were recorded in Scotland.

The figure for 1985-86 is not precisely comparable with published figures for calendar years as the latter incorporate amendments that arise in the course of the year, including the deletion of incidents found on investigation not to be crimes.

### Alcohol Addiction

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how much money was spent in Scotland on research into cures for alcohol addiction in each of the past five years;

(2) how much money was spent in Scotland on research programmes on alcohol addiction in each of the past five years.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information is not available in the form requested. The figures for research projects on alcohol addiction funded by the Scottish Home and Health Department are as follows:

| | £ |
|---|---|
| 1981-82 | 42,064 |
| 1982-83 | 48,099 |
| 1983-84 | 41,952 |
| 1984-85 | 69,648 |
| 1985-86 | 81,160 |

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how many deaths were recorded as due to diseases normally associated with alcohol addiction in Scotland in each of the last five years;

(2) how many deaths were recorded in Scotland in each of the past five years from diseases normally associated with alcohol addiction.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The figures are as follows for deaths from selected causes, in Scotland, in the years 1981-1985.

*Deaths From Selected Causes—Scotland, 1981-1985*

| | *International Classification of Diseases Codes** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Year* | *291* | *303* | *305·0* | *425·5* | *571·0-3* | *Total* |
| 1981 | 2 | 130 | 23 | 8 | 167 | 330 |
| 1982 | 1 | 123 | 44 | 9 | 163 | 340 |
| 1983 | 6 | 112 | 35 | 9 | 177 | 339 |
| 1984 | 2 | 106 | 40 | 11 | 193 | 352 |
| 1985 | 2 | 124 | 44 | 14 | 193 | 377 |

*ICD 291 — Alcoholic psychosis.
ICD 303 — Alcoholic dependence syndrome.
ICD 305·0 — Non-dependent abuse of alcohol.
ICD 425·5 — Alcoholic cardiomyopathy.
ICD 571·0 — Alcoholic fatty liver.
·1 — Acute alcoholic hepatitis.
·2 — Alcoholic cirrhosis of liver.
·3 — Alcoholic liver damage unspecified.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money was spent in Scotland in each of the past five years on curing people addicted to or misusing alcohol.

**Mr. John MacKay:** This information is not available.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many hospital beds in Scotland were taken up in each of the past five years by patients suffering from physical and psychiatric ailments normally associated with alcohol addiction or alcohol misuse.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The average daily number of beds in NHS hospitals in Scotland in the last five years for which information is available, occupied by patients for whom the principal diagnosis is alcoholic psychosis, alcohol dependence syndrome, non-dependent abuse of alcohol, alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver ad other chronic liver disease without mention of alcohol was as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 693 |
| 1981 | 651 |
| 1982 | 624 |
| 1983 | 654 |
| 1984 | 640 |

### Community Halls Advisory Service

**Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide grant-aid under the Further Education (Scotland) Regulations to the Scottish community halls advisory service following the representations made to him by that organisation.

**Mr. John MacKay:** I shall consider this proposal against competing applications for grant from other voluntary organisations. Those concerned will be advised of the outcome early in the new financial year.

### Buses

**Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many notifications have been given of new services, alterations to services or withdrawal of services, respectively, by bus operators in each region and islands area since 26 January.

**Mr. Ancram:** Registrations of bus services in Scotland are the responsibility of the traffic commissioner for the Scottish traffic area. However, I understand that in Scotland there have been 57 new services registered to operate from 26 January 1987, 220 variations to existing services and 69 withdrawals of previously registered services. These figures are still provisional and are not available broken down by region and islands area.

### Job Training

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what representation there is from his Department on the modular accreditation development programme for the job training scheme;

(2) what representation there is from his Department on the technical group of the job training scheme;

(3) what representation there is from his Department on the advisory group for the development of the job training scheme;

(4) what representation there is from his Department on each of the 14 Manpower Services Commission sector groups connected with the job training scheme.

**Mr. Lang:** The Scottish Office is not directly represented on any of the groups established under the modular accreditation development programme, that is, the advisory group, the technical control group, or the 14 sector working groups. However, one of Her Majesty's inspectors of schools in Scotland, seconded from the Scottish Education Department to the Manpower Services Commission, is the chairman of the technical control group. Also, the Scottish Vocational Education Council is represented on all these groups as one of the four accreditation bodies.

### Free School Transport

**Mrs. McCurley** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will provide details of the number of pupils for whom education authorities in Scotland provide free school transport.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information taken from the survey of school transport undertaken in September 1986 is as follows:

| | *Pupils Attending Primary Schools* | *Pupils Attending Secondary Schools* | *Pupils Attending Special Schools or Classes* | *Total Pupils* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Free transport provided under section 50 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 | 37,915 | 99,061 | 9,456 | 146,432 |
| Free transport provided in spare seats under section 51(2) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 | 2,736 | 1,072 | — | 3,808 |
| Scotland Total | 40,651 | 100,133 | 9,456 | 150,240 |

I have arranged for a copy of the return from each authority to be placed in the Library.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Telephone Equipment

**Mr. Neale** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he has completed his review of the regulations affecting the installation, pre-connection, inspection and designation of maintenance contractors of single line call routeing apparatus; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Butcher:** Not yet, but I expect that the Director General OFTEL will shortly give advice on these matters to the Secretary of State.

### Merchant Shipping

**Sir Edward du Cann** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will set out in the *Official Report* the tonnage of merchant ships ordered by United Kingdom companies for registration outside the United Kingdom in each year since 1983, together with the latest available figure for 1986.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** Records do not allow us to identify the tonnage of merchant ships ordered by United Kingdom companies for registration outside this country, since such tonnage is accounted to the country of registration. We can, however, identify the gross tonnage under construction abroad which was intended for United Kingdom registration when first ordered, but was subsequently registered outside the United Kingdom. This information is as follows:

| | *'000 gross tonnes* |
|---|---|
| 1983 | 147 |
| 1984 | 306 |
| 1985 | 63 |
| January-September 1986 | 35 |

### Motor Components Industry

**Mr. Leighton** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what efforts he is making to improve the performance of British motor components manufacturers.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The Government have created a climate in which industry, including motor components manufacturers, can prosper. It is for the components manufacturers, as for industry generally, to take advantage of this climate. Through their national quality campaign the Government have sought to encourage industry to raise the quality of products made in the United Kingdom. Industry, too, can play its part, as illustrated by Jaguar's "Pursuit of Excellence" awards, recognising the achievements of its best component suppliers, which the Government warmly welcome.

### Brewers and Distillers (Assistance)

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much financial assistance was given to brewing and distilling companies under the various industry acts in England, Wales and Scotland, respectively, in each of the past five years.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

### Timeshare Developments

**Mr. Michael Cocks** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will propose to timeshare developers the inclusion with their sales literature of his Department's recently published consumer leaflet, entitled "Your Place in the Sun, or is it, The Time Share Buyer's Check List"; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** I have no plans at present to make such a proposal. But several timeshare developers have already requested and been sent supplies of the leaflet, which I understand they will be issuing to their customers.

**Mr. Michael Cocks** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what investigation his Department has made of the practice of time share developers offering unsolicited gifts to potential customers apparently picked at random and approached directly; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Howard:** The offering of "gifts" in return for viewing a time share development or attending a presentation is a form of sales promotion and as such is controlled by means of the British code of sales promotion practice. The code is administered by the Advertising Standards Authority.

My Department has referred a number of such cases to the authority for investigation and the authority has secured changes in the wording of promotional literature of certain companies operating in this way.

### Taxis

**Mr. Bendall** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the firm that was building the CR6 taxi will repay some of the moneys received for the development of the vehicle from the Government; and if he will make a statement on the latest position with regard to the company's proposal to introduce a new taxi capable of carrying wheelchair-bound passengers based on the FX4.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** Following negotiations with my Department last year, Manganese Bronze Holdings plc agreed to repay a significant proportion of the grant for the CR6 taxi project made under the support for innovation scheme. The company is already providing to order a version of the FX4, the FX4W, which can carry wheelchair-bound passengers.

### Eurofer Plan

**Mr. Donald Stewart** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will instruct the British Steel Corporation to make public any proposals which it is submitting under the Eurofer plan to the EEC;

(2) if the British Steel Corporation's Eurofer proposals contain any further cuts in steel-making in Scotland.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The Eurofer plan is a matter for the European steel producers, and potential contributions by BSC and other United Kingdom and European steel producers to remove excess steel capacity are necessarily confidential at this stage. BSC accepts that any contribution it makes must be consistent with the strategy announced in August 1985, and must not prejudice strategy decisions thereafter. This position was reaffirmed in the answer my right hon. Friend gave to the right hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Williams), on 28 January 1987, at column 326.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

### Mobile Support Units

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what training and instructions are given to Royal Ulster Constabulary headquarters mobile support units on how to shoot at targets.

**Mr. Tom King** [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 January 1987, c. *301*]: The training and instructions to all member of the RUC on the use of firearms are in accordance with the "Manual of Guidance on Police use of Firearms" issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers joint standing committee on the police use of firearms. Officers allocated to duties with HMSU receive additional training commensurate with the duties they perform.

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what training is received by headquarters mobile support units in the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

**Mr. Tom King** [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 January 1987, c *301*]: Officers attached to headquarters mobile support units are regular members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. They receive additional in-force training to enable them to carry out the duties assigned to the units.

### Informers

**Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will make a statement on his policy concerning the use of informers and their application by the Northern Ireland special branch;

(2) what instructions have been given to Royal Ulster Constabulary officers concerning the use of informers; and to whom the Home Office guidelines have been circulated in the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

**Mr. Tom King** [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 January 1987, c. *301*]: Instructions to RUC officers on the use of informers are in accordance with the Home Office guidelines on the subject which have been promulgated to the force, and which are also an integral part of detective training. It would not be in the public interest to make them publicly available.

## TRANSPORT

### Radioactive Material

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what regulations govern the transport of nuclear fuel and fuel flasks; if he has any plans to review these regulations; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moore:** The regulations and conditions for the transport in this country of all radioactive materials (including nuclear fuel) are based on the internationally accepted standards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safety series No. 6. A copy is held in the Library. For United Kingdom road consignments these are given effect by the following:

The Radioactive Substances (Carriage by Road) Great Britain Regulations 1974 (S.I. 1974 No. 1735) and Amendment Regulations 1985 (S.I. 1985 No. 1729).

The Radioactive Substances (Carriage by Road) Northern Ireland Regulations 1983 (S.R. 1983 No. 344) and Amendment Regulations 1986 (S.R. 1986 No. 61).

For rail consignments:

British Rail List of Dangerous Goods (LDG) and Conditions of acceptance by Freight train and Passenger Train or Similar Service (1977 Edition).

For Sea:

The Merchant Shipping (Dangerous Goods) Regulations 1981 (S.I. 1981 No. 1747).

For Air:

The Air Navigation (Dangerous Goods) Regulations 1985 (S.I. 1985 No. 1939).

The above regulations are currently being revised to take account of the 1985 edition of IAEA regulations. In addition, the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1985 (S.I. 1985 No. 1333) apply to all modes of transport.

### Fishing Industry (Safety)

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to amend the regulations relating to safety matters on the carrying of immersion suits on United Kingdom registered fishing vessels; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The carriage of life-saving appliances on fishing vessels is currently under examination by the Department in consultation with the fishing industry as part of the review of the Fishing Vessel (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish in the *Official Report* the number of fishermen who were *(a)* drowned, *(b)* killed in accidents on board and *(c)* injured in accidents on board whilst working on United Kingdom registered fishing vessels in 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** The numbers of deaths and of accidents to fishermen reported to the Department are published annually in the Department's booklet "Casualties to Vessels and Accidents to Men". The figures shown for 1986 will be published later this year.

Up to and including 1985, figures for non-fatal accidents on vessels under 24·4 m in length are not available; and those figures for vessels greater than 24·4 m include all accidents reported, however minor the injury.

From and including 1986, the published statistics will show separate figures for three sizes of vessel; but in line with those for other industries, only those non-fatal accidents which caused an incapacity lasting for more than three days after the day of the accident are now rquired to be reported.

*Number of deaths and accidents*

| | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Drownings*[1] | | | | | |
| Fishing vessels 24 m and over | — | — | 1 | — | — |
| Fishing vessels under 24 m | 4 | 12 | 11 | 20 | — |
| Fishing vessels 40 m and over | — | — | — | — | — |
| Fishing vessels between 24·4 m and 40 m | — | — | — | — | 8 |
| Fishing vessels between 10 m and 24·4 m | — | — | — | — | 8 |
| *Deaths due to other accidents* | | | | | |
| Fishing vessels 24 m and over | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | — |
| Fishing vessels under 24 m | 10 | 7 | — | 1 | — |
| Fishing vessels 40 m and over | — | — | — | — | — |
| Fishing vessels between 24·4 m and 40 m | — | — | — | — | — |
| Fishing vessels between 10 m and 24·4 m | — | — | — | — | 1 |
| *Non-fatal accidents* | | | | | |
| Fishing vessels 24 m and over | 90 | 64 | 73 | 37 | — |
| Fishing vessels under 24 m | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | — |
| Fishing vessels 40 m and over | — | — | — | — | [2]14 |
| Fishing vessels between 24·4 m and 40 m | — | — | — | — | 36 |
| Fishing vessels between 10 m and 24·4 m | — | — | — | — | 37 |

[1] Drownings include recorded as missing at sea

[2] One non crew member is excluded

n/a = not available

*Note:* The total number of deaths in 1984 (13) amends by one the deaths (12) shown in *Hansard*, Vol. 90, columns 611-612.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he has any plans to change the Fishing Vessel (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Michael Spicer:** My Department is reviewing the Fishing Vessel (Safety Provisions) Rules 1975 in consultation with the fishing industry.

## London Road Assessment Studies

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will state the closing date for submissions on the first stage reports of the London road assessment studies;

(2) what public involvement there will be in drawing up the terms of reference for the next stage of the London road assessment studies.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We have not set any deadline and will take account of comments and suggestions at any stage. We will be discussing the terms of reference for the next stage of the studies with the local authorities concerned.

## Trams (London)

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what proposals have been made to his Department in the past year regarding the re-introduction of tram services in London.

**Mr. David Mitchell:** None.

## Seat Belts

**Mr. Sheerman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is his estimate of the proportion of cars and car-derived vans on the road, manufactured after October 1981, which are not fitted with rear restraints.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** We think that from 90 to 95 per cent. are not fitted with rear adult belts. Some of these vehicles will have one or more child restraints.

## Road Accident Statistics

**Mr. Sheerman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will publish details of road casualties and casualty rates in 1985 for Great Britain by parliamentary constituency.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Road accident data are not coded to parliamentary constituencies. I regret that this information is not available.

## WALES

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what are the latest unadjusted figures for unemployment in *(a)* Newport, *(b)* Gwent and *(c)* Wales; and if he will give the equivalent figures for 1979 on the most nearly comparable basis.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** In December 1986 the numbers unemployed in Newport TTWA, Gwent and Wales were 12,558, 27,923 and 173,546 respectively. Precise comparisons with the position in 1979, however, cannot be made as methods of compilation and collection have altered, and there have been some boundary changes in the intervening period. On the basis of the definitions then in use, the figures for Newport TTWA, Gwent and Wales in December 1979 were 6,274, 14,734 and 85,177 respectively.

### Council House Sales

**Mr. Anderson** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what is the average net receipt to public funds per unit of public sector housing sold; and what is the average cost of replacing that unit, both figures at the latest available date.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The average net selling price and the average cost of providing new local authority dwellings during 1985 were £8,800 and £26,800 respectively. Similar information relating to Housing Association dwellings is not collected centrally.

### Welsh College of Music and Drama

**Mr. Gwilym Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the date of the last inspection of the Welsh College of Music and Drama by Her Majesty's inspectors of education; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Her Majesty's Inspectorate undertook a formal inspection of certain aspects of provision at the Welsh College of Music and Drama between 17 and 21 November 1986. The inspectorate's findings will be submitted to me as part of its report about initial teaching training provision in the public sector institutions in South Glamorgan.

### One-Parent Families

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what information he has as to the number of households in *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales which are one-parent families; and how many of them are (i) divorced mothers, (ii) separated mothers, (iii) unmarried mothers, (iv) divorced fathers and (v) widowed mothers.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Estimates based upon information from the 1984 and 1985 labour force surveys in which some 3,000 households in Wales were sampled each year, are as follows. The samples are too small to provide reliable estimates of numbers of lone fathers in Wales or of lone parents in Clwyd.

*Estimated lone mothers[1] in Wales, 1984 and 1985*

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Divorced mothers | 22,000 |
| Single mothers | 9,000 |
| Separated/Widowed mothers | 12,000 |

[1] Excludes households where cohabiting couples declared themselves to be "common-law married". Dependent children are defined as aged under 16 or never married and 16 to 18 and in full-time education.

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many one-parent families in *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales in each year from 1981 to 1985, inclusive, included a head of the household who was unemployed.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The information requested is not available. However, the 1981 census of population recorded 1,52[illegible] unemployed heads of lone adult households with children in Wales, of whom 195 lived in Clwyd.

### Hospital Beds

**Mr. Rogers** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what are the numbers of available beds in National Health Service hospitals in Wales for each year since 1979 expressed as totals and by specialties.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** Information on numbers of available beds is given in the regular publication "Bed Use Statistics", copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

**Mr. Rogers** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many National Health Service hospitals have been opened in Wales; and what is the bed gain as a result of these openings for each year since 1979.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** The information is given in the following table:

| *Hospital* | *Opening Date* | *Bed Gains* |
|---|---|---|
| Ysbyty Glan Clwyd | May 1980 | Reduction of 67 |
| Mold Community Hospital | April 1984 | 19 |
| Ysbyty Gwynedd | July 1984 | 71 |
| Princess of Wales District General Hospital | October 1985 | 13 |
| Morriston District General Hospital | October 1985 | 66 |
| Ystradgynlais Community Hospital | March 1986 | Reduction of 19 |
| Wrexham Maelor District General Hospital | June 1986 | 29 |

### NHS Staff

**Mr. Rogers** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what are the numbers of staff employed by the National Health Service in Wales expressed as whole-time equivalents as well as actual full-time and part-time numbers.

**Mr. Mark Robinson:** At 30 September 1985, the latest date for which the required information is available, the National Health Service in Wales (including the Welsh Health Common Services Authority) employed the equivalent of 55,321 whole-time staff. This comprised 41,087 full-time staff and 23,832 part-time staff.

[1] Including the Welsh Health Common Services Authority.

### Lumi-Low

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales (1) if he will expedite consideration of the application by Lumi-Low for selective financial assistance and regional aid; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will explain the delay in processing the application by Lumi-Low for regional aid; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** The company is aware that further consideration of its application for regional selective assistance depended on its providing essential supporting information, which it did not supply until 4 February 1987.

### Spectrum Packaging

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what action he proposes to take to enable Spectrum Packaging to remain at Deeside industrial park; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** I am well aware of the background to this case. The Welsh Development Agency has worked hard to encourage Spectrum Packaging to continue production at Deeside industrial park. The decision on where to locate rests with the company.

### Re-chem International, Torfaen

**Mr. Boyes** asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement about the alleged pollution from polychlorinated biphenyls caused by Re-chem International in Torfaen, near Pontypool.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** There is no evidence that the operations of the Re-chem International plant near Pontypool result in the presence of PCBs or other toxic substances in the local environment at levels significantly different from those in areas remote from chemical incineration or other industrial operations.

### Radioactive Waste

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Merionnydd Nant Conwy on 15 January, *Official Report*, column *283*, concerning reports received from the radioactive waste management advisory committee, what is the title of the relevant paper mentioned in his reply; and if he will place a copy of this paper in the Library.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** It is not the practice to make publicly available individual papers submitted to the radioactive waste management advisory committee.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### Tobacco

**Mr. Pendry** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much duty was collected on *(a)* domestically produced cigarettes and *(b)* imported cigarettes in 1985-86; what are his estimates for the current financial year; what representations he has received regarding the respective treatment as regards duty of imported and domestically produced cigarettes; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Brooke:** It is estimated that the tobacco products duty collected in 1985-86 on domestically produced and imported cigarettes was £3,660 million and £391 million respectively. Forecasts of receipts are not made at this level of detail.

Several representations about the duty on imported and domestically produced cigarettes have been received.

### Registration Fees

**Sir William Clark** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to ensure that registration fees to a self regulating organisation are an allowable deduction from the income arising out of such registration.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I take it that the question refers to self-regulating organisations for investment businesses under the Financial Services Act.

The tax deductibility of initial and periodic registration fees to these organisations will depend on the precise nature and purpose of the payments. It will not be possible to determine their tax treatment until the SROs have been established and their rules have been formulated.

### EC Budget

**Dr. Godman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest figure for the proportion of the European Commission budget spent on *(a)* all fisheries support, *(b)* the social fund and *(c)* the regional fund.

**Mr. Brooke:** The figures in the 1986 budget as adopted, the latest available, are:

| | *per cent.* |
|---|---|
| *(a)* Fisheries support (title 4) | 0·5 |
| *(b)* Social fund (chapters 60 and 61) | 7·2 |
| *(c)* Regional fund (chapters 50 and 51) | 6·7 |

The Community has not yet adopted a budget for 1987.

### Alcohol

**Dr. Godman** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was raised from taxes on alcohol in the last financial year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Brooke:** It is estimated that the revenue raised from taxes on alcohol in the financial year 1985-86 is as follows:

*£ million*

| *Excise duty* | *VAT*[1] | *Total* |
|---|---|---|
| 4,197 | 2,060 | 6,257 |

[1] Estimate based on consumers' expenditure data.

### Company Cars

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is his latest estimate of the percentage of total mileage of company cars spent on private motoring.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

### Social Security Benefits

**Mr. Dormand** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer which social security benefits, including pensions, are subject to taxation; and which are not subject to taxation.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** The following social security benefits are taxable: retirement pension, widow's pensions, widowed mother's allowance, widow's allowance, industrial death benefit, invalid care allowance, unemployment benefit, and supplementary benefit paid to the unemployed and to strikers.

The remaining social security benefits (including any child additions to the benefits listed above) are not taxable.

Payments made by employers under the statutory sick pay scheme are taxable.

### Customs and Excise

**Mr. Forth** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any changes are proposed in the cash limit and running costs limit for Her Majesty's Customs and Excise.

**Mr. Brooke:** Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the cash limit for class XIX vote 2 will be increased by £1,971,000, from £393,768,000 to £395,739,000. This is primarily to cover the cost of increased legal charges falling on the department, and other additional costs associated with drugs investigation work; £161,000 is for work carried out for the Department of Transport whose running costs limit is being reduced by the same amount as announced by the Secretary of State for Transport on 2 February (*Official Report*, c. 531); £60,000 is for charges raised by the Scottish courts administration whose original estimate incorporated a reduction of that amount; and £1,750,000 will be charged to the reserve. The department's gross running costs limit will be increased by £1,971,000 from £384,123,000 to £386,094,000.

### Channel Tunnel

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer in what circumstances there will be mutual inspection of passenger luggage by United Kingdom Customs and Excise officials at Frethun and by French customs officials at Ashford.

**Mr. Brooke** [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 February 1987, c. *539*]: None. The treaty provides for the juxtaposition of frontier controls in respect of shuttle train services. Inward and outward inspection checks on luggage by United Kingdom and French customs officials will be undertaken on a consecutive basis at the Frethum and Cheriton terminals. It is proposed that there will be clearance arrangements at Ashford by United Kingdom customs for passengers joining or leaving through rail services at British Rail's proposed international station.

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether French Customs and Excise officials will examine passenger luggage on trains using the Channel fixed link on the train; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Brooke** [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 February 1987, c. *539*]: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to his questions on 23 January, *Official Report* column 783-84.

**Mr. Stuart Holland** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many meetings have taken place between the French and United Kingdom authorities responsible for Customs and Excise examination on future Channel tunnel traffic.

**Mr. Brooke** [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 February 1987, c. *539*]: Customs officials take part in all meetings of the frontier control working groups, which have been held at approximately monthly intervals since last June.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Jobcentres

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General how many staff are currently employed by jobcentres, for each Manpower Services Commission region; and how many staff, by region, are planned for 1987-88, 1988-89 and 1989-90.

**Mr. Lee:** The information is not available in the precise form requested. Statistics on the allocation of staff are maintained by programme other than location. In March 1987 there will be 9,835 people employed, nationally, mainly in jobcentres, on programmes which cover the principal jobcentre activities, including helping long-term unemployed people through job clubs and the restart programme. The comparable planning figure for 1988 and 1989 is 10,318 in each year.

Figures for the total number of staff allocated, by programme, to individual regions of Manpower Services Commission employment and enterprise group are available for 1987 and 1988 but will take some time to extract. I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as I have the information and will place a copy of my letter in the Library.

### Community Programme (Member's Correspondence)

**Dr. Godman** asked the Paymaster General, pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Greenock and Port Glasgow on 17 November 1986, *Official Report*, column 68, when the hon. Member can expect to receive the promised letter about the Manpower Services Commission's inquiry into the funding of certain community programme projects; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** I shall write to the hon. Member shortly about the outcome of the Manpower Services Commission inquiry.

### Restart Scheme

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Paymaster General if he will make a statement on the progress to date of the job restart scheme; and if he will indicate the number and types of work mainly involved.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The restart programme has been making good progress. By 8 January 1987, 779,051 people had been interviewed. A worthwile offer that might lead to employment had been made to around nine out of 10 of those interviewed. The restart programme offers counselling interviews at which long term unemployed people are helped to identify and find possible ways of getting back to work. These include job interviews (including those where the jobstart allowance may be payable), opportunities for further training or for places on the community programme, the chance to join a jobclub, take up a place on a restart course or develop an idea about self employment with the help of the enterprise allowance scheme.

We have no means of knowing exactly how many people have found work after taking part in the programme. Some people have been placed in jobs as a direct result of their restart interview. Many others have found jobs because they are given information, advice and other help at the interview or in one or other of the opportunities offered at the interview. We do not follow up each individual and are unable to give details of the types of work which people enter.

### Job Clubs (Lancashire)

**Mr. Pike** asked the Paymaster General if he will give the figures for the latest date available for the Burnley job club of *(a)* total participants to date, *(b)* how many are currently in employment and *(c)* how many are employed through the community programme.

**Mr. Lee:** A total of 136 people joined Burnley job club between 27 May 1986 and 9 January 1987. Of the 103 who left, 66 (64 per cent.) went into jobs and 9 (9 per cent.) into the community programme. It is not known how many are currently in employment.

**Mr. Pike** asked the Paymaster General if he will list in the *Official Report* the job clubs in Lancashire and indicate the number of members at each club at the latest date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Lee:** The number of members in each Lancashire job club, on 2 February, was as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Accrington | 19 |
| Blackburn | 26 |
| Blackpool South (1) | 27 |
| Blackpool South (2) | 28 |
| Burnley | 32 |
| Chorley | 25 |
| Fleetwood | 20 |
| Lancaster | 17 |
| Nelson | 24 |
| Preston (1) | 32 |
| Preston (2) | 24 |
| Skelmersdale | 23 |

### Apprenticeships

**Mr. Pike** asked the Paymaster General what was the total number of apprentices in the north-west region in 1978 and each subsequent year.

**Mr. Lee:** Estimates of the numbers of persons undertaking an apprenticeship in the north-west region are available from the labour force survey as follows:

| *Year (Spring)* | *Number of apprentices (thousands)* |
|---|---|
| 1979 | 39 |
| 1983 | 41 |
| 1984 | 37 |
| 1985 | 43 |

Separate information relating to apprenticeships included in the regular employees in employment estimates for manufacturing industries in the north-west region is available as follows:

| *Year (March)* | [1]*Number of apprentices (thousands)* |
|---|---|
| 1981 | 18·6 |
| 1982 | 15·4 |
| 1983 | 12·7 |
| 1984 | 11·2 |
| 1985 | 9·3 |
| 1986 | 7·7 |

[1] Many of those receiving apprenticeship training under YTS (since 1983), specifically those without a contract of employment, are not counted as employees and are therefore not included in these figures. With the move away from traditional apprentice training in many industries some long duration schemes of a type which previously could have involved apprenticeships may not now be so classified.

### Labour Statistics

**Mr. Hannam** asked the Paymaster General what are the unemployment figures broken down by male, female and under 25 years, 25 to 50 years of age and over 50 years of age for each of the past four years, in the parliamentary division of Exeter.

**Mr. Lee:** The table gives the numbers of unemployed male and female claimants in the age groups requested for October of each year since 1983 in the Exeter parliamentary constituency. The comparison is affected by the change in the compilation of unemployment statistics in March 1986.

The information is available in the Library.

*Unemployment by age analysis—Exeter parliamentary constituency*

| | *October 1983* | | *October 1984* | | *October 1985* | | *October 1986* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Males* | *Females* | *Males* | *Females* | *Males* | *Females* | *Males* | *Females* |
| Under 25 years | 1,160 | 695 | 1,292 | 833 | 1,213 | 888 | 1,104 | 772 |
| 25 — 49 years | 1,300 | 458 | 1,399 | 606 | 1,464 | 626 | 1,498 | 663 |
| Over 50 years | 549 | 162 | 619 | 204 | 592 | 214 | 634 | 203 |
| TOTAL UNEMPLOYED | 3,009 | 1,315 | 3,310 | 1,643 | 3,269 | 1,728 | 3,236 | 1,638 |

**Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Paymaster General what is the number of *(a)* men and *(b)* women who were registered as unemployed in the London borough of Wandsworth on 31 January.

**Mr. Lee:** The information is not available. The January 1987 unemployment count date was the 8 January and these figures will be released at 11.30 am on 12 February 1987.

**Mr. Tom Cox** asked the Paymaster General what has been the period of time broken down into categories of *(a)* three months, *(b)* six months, *(c)* nine months, *(d)* one year, *(e)* two years, *(f)* three years and over that period of time that (i) men and (ii) women registered as unemployed in the London borough of Wandsworth have been unemployed.

**Mr. Lee:** The following information is in the Library. The table shows the numbers of unemployed male and female claimants who had been unemployed for the durations requested at 9 October 1986, the latest date for which such an analysis is available, in the London borough of Wandsworth.

*Unemployed claimants in the London Borough of Wandsworth at 9 October 1986*

| | *Male* | *Female* |
|---|---|---|
| Under 3 months | 2,714 | 1,707 |
| 3 to 6 months | 1,442 | 848 |
| 6 to 9 months | 1,163 | 564 |
| 9 months to 1 year | 739 | 347 |
| 1 to 2 years | 1,952 | 689 |
| 2 to 3 years | 1,082 | 333 |
| Over 3 years | 2,020 | 461 |
| Total unemployed | 11,112 | 4,949 |

**Dr. Godman** asked the Paymaster General how many people were employed in the brewing and distilling industry in the United Kingdom in the last year for which figures are available.

**Mr. Lee:** The Department's employment statistics are produced on a quarterly basis and cannot be expressed in precisely the manner requested.

In September 1986 (the latest date for which figures are available) there were 19,000 employees in employment in the spirit distilling and compounding industry in Great Britain. A further 52,000 were employed in brewing and malting and the production of wines, cider and perry.

Estimates for the brewing and malting industry are not separately available.

These estimates are subject to considerable potential estimation error due to the relatively small number of employees in the industry.

Figures for the United Kingdom are not available.

## Training

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Paymaster General (1) if he will publish in the *Official Report* details of the divergence between predicted and actual expenditure in 1986 on each Manpower Services Commission programme area within the vocational educational and training group and the employment and enterprise group;

(2) what plans he has to seek the views and advice of the area manpower boards on his proposed extension of the job training scheme;

(3) if the eligibility rules for the job training scheme will allow women who are unemployed, but not in receipt of benefit, to participate in the scheme and receive a training allowance.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** I shall reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

## Job Training Scheme

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Paymaster General which industry-led bodies have been organised to set the standards of competence for the job training scheme.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** Acting on the recommendations of the White Paper "Working Together—Education and Training" (Cmnd. 9823), the Manpower Services Commission has set in hand a programme involving industry bodies, examining and validating bodies and officials from the National Council for Vocational Qualifications to accelerate work to provide accreditation based on standards of competence for training programmes. The programme will begin by identifying existing vocational qualifications suitable for JTS.

Many industry bodies are involved, including:

National Retail Training Consortium
Institute of Grocery Distribution
Administrative Business and Commercial Training Group
National Computing Centre
Computing Services Industry Training Council
Hairdressing Training Board
Hotel and Catering Training Board
Hotel and Catering Institutional Management Association
Agricultural Training Board
Knitting and Lace Training Board
Clothing and Allied Products Industry Training Board
Construction Industry Training Board
Road Transport Industry Training Board
Engineering Industry Training Board

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Paymaster General in what proportion of the schemes in the job training scheme pilot areas managing agents have sought the support and involvement of trades unions prior to making job placements.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** This information is not available.

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Paymaster General what plans he has to review, monitor and evaluate the job training scheme in its 10 pilot areas.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** An interim evaluation is underway. The sub-group of the Manpower Services Commission which is overseeing the design, monitoring and evaluation of the new job training scheme will be considering longer term evaluation arrangements.

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Paymaster General if he will specify, for each of the job training scheme pilot areas *(a)* the number of trainees involved, *(b)* the number of hours of training received, *(c)* the location of the training and the occupational areas involved, *(d)* the range in the size of the firms providing job placements, *(e)* the qualifications being sought by trainees and *(f)* the drop-out rate of trainees.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke:** The job training scheme pilots involve a variety of individual training programmes tailored to the needs of the people concerned based on an individual assessment of the training needs of each trainee, and the qualifications which are to be sought. The programme provided is a combination of directed training and practical experience, organised to produce the most effective results. Information about the number of hours of training received, the location of training provided, the range in the size of firms providing practical experience placements and qualifications being sought by trainees will be evaluated regularly by independent researchers. A first report is expected in the spring.

The following table shows, for each of the pilot areas, the number of entrants since the pilot programme began and the numbers in training in the week ending 30 January. A total of 15·5 per cent. left before the end of the scheme but this figure includes a number of people who left because they had found a job.

| *Pilot area* | *Cumulative number of starts* | *Number in-training* |
|---|---|---|
| Dundee | 124 | 114 |
| Billingham | 86 | 67 |
| Huddersfield | 100 | 85 |

| Pilot area | Cumulative number of starts | Number in-training |
|---|---|---|
| Preston | 160 | 128 |
| Stoke | 141 | 128 |
| Leicester | 53 | 52 |
| Port Talbot | 160 | 130 |
| Plymouth | 218 | 172 |
| Crawley | 94 | 83 |
| Ealing | 57 | 49 |
| Total | 1,193 | 1,008 |

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Paymaster General how many entrants and filled places there were to the new job training scheme in each of the nine pilot areas at 6 January and the most recently available date.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke** [*pursuant to his reply*, 4 February 1987]: I regret that my previous reply did not include the figures for Preston which is one of the nine original pilot areas. They are as follows:

*Preston*

| | | Number |
|---|---|---|
| *9 January* | | |
| | Entrants | 104 |
| | On Scheme | 81 |
| *23 January* | | |
| | Entrants | 138 |
| | On Scheme | 106 |

### Dangerous Substances

**Mr. Terry Davis** asked the Paymaster General, further to the answer of 16 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *528*, about dangerous substances, whether all 118 sites notified to the Health and Safety Executive were included in the list of sites published by the Health and Safety Executive in its news bulletin 1986-972 on 28 March 1986.

**Mr. Trippier:** None of these sites were included in the list published on 28 March 1986. The extent to which such sites are capable of presenting a major accident hazard is still being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive.

### Industrial Tribunals (Birmingham)

**Mr. Terry Davis** asked the Paymaster General whether everyone who sits as a part-time chairman of industrial tribunals in Birmingham is legally qualified.

**Mr. Lee:** Yes. Chairmen of industrial tribunals must be barristers of solicitors of not less than seven years' standing.

### Youth Training Schemes

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Paymaster General how many people are currently on youth training schemes in Leicester and in the east midlands.

**Mr. Trippier:** At 31 December 1986, the latest date for which figures are available, there were 2,379 young people in training on YTS in Leicester and 39,502 young people in training on YTS in the east midlands and eastern region of the Manpower Services Commission.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Paymaster General how many people have completed youth training schemes in Leicester and the east midlands to date; how many left before completing their full entitlement to training; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Paymaster General whether he has any information as to the number or percentage of young people who have found work following the successful completion of youth training schemes in Leicester and in the east midlands; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Trippier:** The Manpower Services Commission conducts a regular follow-up survey of YTS leavers three months after young people leave the programme. The latest full year's results, covering leavers between 1 April 1985 and 31 March 1986, show that of those young people who completed their programmes in the Leicester local authority district, 78 per cent. were in employment three months after leaving YTS.

The corresponding figures for the Manpower Services Commission's east midlands and eastern region is 73 per cent.

These figures are very encouraging and reflect great credit on industry, commerce and all those providing training opportunities on YTS.

### Employment Measures (Statistics)

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Paymaster General if he will estimate the numbers of unemployed people who have benefited from the Government's employment measures since May 1979; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee** [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 February 1987, c. 480]: It is not possible to give a precise number. Certain of the schemes benefit both the employed and the unemployed. However, since May 1979, almost 6·5 million people have benefited from the employment, training and enterprise measures run by my Department and the Manpower Services Commission.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Departmental Cash Limits

**Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he has any changes to announce to his Department's cash limits.

**Mr. Ridley:** Yes. I propose the following changes.

*DOE Central*

The non-voted net cash limit for new towns (DOE/NT 1) has been reduced by £3·94 million from minus £95·74 million to minus £99·68 million to take account of receipts from disposals of property, which were higher than forecast, to provide for a transfer of £0·5 million to DOE/LA1 and to provide for a transfer of £0·94 million to the Housing Corporation's approved development programme. This last provides for the purchase by Redditch YMCA housing association of 77 flats in Redditch formerly owned by the Commission for the New Towns.

The Housing Corportion's cash limit (DOE/HC 1) is correspondingly increased by £0·94 million from £586·49 million to £587·43 million.

The cash limit for Class X, Vote 2 has been reduced by £1·45 million from £181·09 million to £179·64 million. Of this, £1·15 million will be borne in the Development Commission's grant-in-aid subhead. This will not affect gross spending by the commission in 1986-87 as it expects to realise and retain an equivalent sum in extra receipts from its factory building programme. The remaining £0·3 million reflects a lower than anticipated payment to the Zoological Society of London in respect of its private sector capital matching grants regime.

The cash limit for Class X, Vote 4 has been reduced by £1 million, from £83·0 million to £82·0 million. This decrease reflcts an expected shortfall in the original Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission expenditure programme.

Finally, the non-voted cash limit for local authorities' capital expenditure (DOE/LA 1) has been increased by £1·5 million, from £2,366·62 million to £2,368·12 million in respect of additional spending on the homes insulation scheme. £1 million of this is being transferred from other Departments, and £0·5 million is being found from the reduction in the DOE/NT 1 cash limit.

The above net reductions totalling £4·95 million partially offset an increase in provision being sought in a Spring Supplementary Estimate for the non-cash limited Class IX.1 Vote which is to be presented to Parliament shortly.

*Property Services Agency*

The cash limit for Class XX, Vote 18 relating to Civil Accommodation Services has been increased by £0·8 million from £150·129 million to £150·929 million to meet increased expenditure as a result of the fire at Hampton Court.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Television Sets

Q.188 **Mr. Hardy** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many television sets are provided in Government offices in London; and how many of these are available for the use of Ministers.

**Mr. Chope:** This information is not available centrally.

### Council Housing

**Mr. James Lamond** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the number of council houses sold in each of the metropolitan boroughs which comprise the former Greater Manchester council for each year from 1980 to 1986.

**Mr. Tracey:** Dwelling sales reported by each metropolitan borough in Greater Manchester for the financial years 1980-81 to 1985-86 appear in the following issues of "Local Housing Statistics" which are available in the Library:

| *Year* | *Issue Number* |
|---|---|
| 1980-81 | 62 |
| 1981-82 | 63 |
| 1982-83 | 67 |
| 1983-84 | 75 |
| 1984-85 | 79 |
| 1985-86 | 79 |

Figures for the first half of 1986-87 have been provided by the boroughs, except Manchester and Salford, and are as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Bolton | 43 |
| Bury | 43 |
| Oldham | 97 |
| Rochdale | 134 |
| Stockport | 135 |
| Tameside | 0 |
| Trafford | 110 |
| Wigan | 122 |

**Sir Hugh Rossi** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will give the comparative figures for arrears in England and Wales of *(a)* council house rents and *(b)* local authority mortgage repayments, showing (i) the global sum, (ii) the number of cases and (iii) the relationship of these figures to the total numbers of lettings and mortgages, respectively.

**Mr. Tracey:** I shall answer this question shortly.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what was the total rent roll for local authority dwellings in 1985-86 in each local authority in England;

(2) what arrears were owed to each of the local authorities in 1985-86 by *(a)* current tenants and *(b)* former tenants.

**Mr. Tracey:** Tables placed in the Library in response to the question from my hon. Friend the Member for Mid-Staffordshire (Mr. Heddle) on 10 December 1986, at column 188, set out the accumulated rent arrears owed by current and former tenants to local authorities in England at 1 April 1986 together with their annual rent rolls.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of the total rent roll in each local authority in England in 1985-86 was *(a)* owed in arrears, *(b)* written off and *(c)* collected.

**Mr. Tracey:** The data requested are not available in the form requested.

### Falkland Islands

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what are the estimated annual costs to his Department of works in the Falkland Islands.

**Mr. Chope:** The total estimated cost of works for the Ministry of Defence in the Falklands to date is £309 million for the Mount Pleasant airport complex and £132 million for the Army garrison, the port facility and other works. Now that the major building programme is virtually complete the Property Services Agency's involvement in the Falklands will be mainly concerned with maintenance. The costs will be in the order of £7 million to £8 million per annum, but will vary from year to year in accordance with needs and will all be borne on the Defence Accommodation Services Vote, Class I, Vote 4.

### Toxic Waste Dumps

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he maintains a central register of toxic waste dumps; whether the drainage waters from such dumps are subjected to routine monitoring by his Department or any other agency; and to what extent the implications of drainage on the water table in the vicinity of each dump are taken into account.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** My Department does not keep a central register of specifically toxic waste dumps, although such sites will be included in the Hazardous Waste Inspectorate's record of licensed disposal sites. The monitoring of drainage waters from such sites is carried out, where specified as a site licence condition, either by the relevant regional water authority or by the relevant waste disposal authority on their behalf; the implications of site drainage on the water table are taken into account when both planning and site licensing are determined. The waste disposal authority has a duty to refuse an application for a waste disposal licence for the purpose of preventing pollution of water.

## Drains and Sewers

**Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has as to how many miles of drains and sewers in the north-west were built *(a)* in the 19th century and *(b)* before 1914 and as to how many are in need of repair and replacement; and what percentage of the total mileage this represents in each case.

**Mr. John Patten:** North-west water estimates the total length of sewers in the region to be approximately 30,000 km. The proportion of these built before 1900 or before 1914 is not known; the authority estimated in 1978 that some 5,000 km, or 17 per cent. of its sewers were built before 1880.

It should be stressed that the age of a particular sewer has been found, in most cases, to provide little guidance as to its condition or to the likelihood of its failure within any given period. Information on the condition of sewers is a matter for the authority and is not kept centrally.

The authority has provisionally identified some 570 km (about 2 per cent.) of sewers as requiring replacement, renovation or reinforcement within the next three years.

## Design Services

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will set out in tabular form for 1 April 1985 and 1 April 1986 the total number of staff in post in the Directorate General of Design Services; and whether he will break those figures down into Civil Service grades, indicating also the number of persons trained in relevant professional disciplines.

**Mr. Chope:** The number of staff in post in the Directorate General of Design Services on 1 April 1985 and 1 April 1986 was as follows:

| | *1 April 1985* | *1 April 1986* |
|---|---|---|
| Grade 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Grade 3 | 1 | — |
| Grade 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Grade 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Grade 6 | 15 | 19 |
| Grade 7 | 69 | 79 |
| Professional and Technology Group | 299 | 308 |
| Science Group | 2 | 1 |
| Administrative Group | 94 | 107 |
| Secretarial and other staff | 26 | 25 |
| | 514 | 550 |
| *Professionally qualified staff comprised:* | | |
| Architects and Landscape Architects | 45 | 54 |
| Civil Engineers | 56 | 59 |
| Mechanical and Electrical Engineers | 55 | 49 |
| Quantity Surveyors | 40 | 50 |
| Building Surveyors | 11 | 17 |
| Land Surveyors | 4 | 4 |
| Other staff with scientific or technical qualifications | 183 | 184 |

The figures for 1 April 1986 include 23 staff in the students training office transferred from the Directorate of Civil Accommodation to the design office in 1985-86.

## Property Services Agency

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what was the value of the work, identified separately as new construction and maintenance, carried out by the Property Services Agency in 1984, 1985 and 1986; and how much of it was outside the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Chope:** The value of work carried out by PSA in the three financial years from 1983 to 1986 was as follows:

| | *New Construction* | | *Maintenance* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *United Kingdom £ million* | *Overseas £ million* | *United Kingdom £ million* | *Overseas £ million* |
| 1983-84 | 648 | 145 | 566 | 127 |
| 1984-85 | 733 | 235 | 554 | 128 |
| 1985-86 | 796 | 255 | 584 | 138 |

These figures are on a cash basis and are net of fees paid to consultants and the resource costs of PSA staff engaged on the work.

## Radiation

**Mr. Adley** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the 20 areas in England and Wales with the highest levels of naturally occurring radioactivity and the reasons why these levels occur in the areas concerned.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** The largest source of exposure to naturally occuring radioactivity in England and Wales is from the build-up of radon gas in houses. For the country as a whole, the mean annual dose is 1 milliSievert per year (mSv/y). Higher than average doses arise because of geological factors, particularly the natural uranium content of the ground, and the permeability of the rock and soil to radon. The National Radiological Protection Board has been carrying out national and regional studies to identify houses where radon gives rise to high annual doses of radioactivity. The results are not necessarily representative of the housing stock as a whole in the area, as they represented a deliberate attempt to identify houses with high radon concentrations. But the areas identified by the NRPB with the highest mean indoor exposure to radon products are:

| *Location and County* | *Grid Square* | *Number of dwellings surveyed* | *Mean annual dose (mSv/y)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Eastern part of Sedgemoor, Somerset | ST 43 | 1 | 56 |
| North-eastern edge of Dartmoor, Devon | SX 88 | 4 | 41 |
| Coast area of Mount's Bay, Cornwall | SW 52 | 2 | 40 |
| North-eastern edge of Dartmoor, Devon | SX 78 | 11 | 38 |
| Coas area near Tintagel Head, Cornwall | SX 09 | 1 | 37 |
| West of St. Austell, Cornwall | SW 95 | 21 | 35 |
| Northern part of Dartmoor, Devon | SX 68 | 1 | 31 |
| Northern edge of Dartmoor, Devon | SX 79 | 2 | 28 |
| West of Truro, Cornwall | SW 74 | 6 | 27 |
| South of Camborne, Cornwall | SW 63 | 13 | 27 |
| Eastern edge of Dartmoor, Devon | SX 77 | 11 | 25 |

| Location and County | Grid Square | Number of dwellings surveyed | Mean annual dose (mSv/y) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Northen part of Bodmin Moor, Cornwall | SX 18 | 6 | 23 |
| Southern edge of Dartmoor, Devon | SX 65 | 10 | 22 |
| Central part of Dartmoor, Devon | SX 67 | 6 | 22 |
| South-western edge of Dartmoor, Devon and Cornwall | SX 46 | 2 | 21 |
| Northern edge of Dartmoor, Devon | SX 69 | 5 | 20 |
| Coast area north of St. Agnes Head, Devon | SW 75 | 14 | 19 |
| Eastern edge of Dartmoor, Devon and Cornwall | SX 47 | 6 | 18 |
| North of Penzance, Cornwall | SW 43 | 6 | 17 |
| South-eastern edge of Dartmoor, Devon | SX 76 | 10 | 16 |

The fewer the number of dwellings surveyed, the less reliance should be given to the result.

Radon gives rise to doses of alpha radiation. The presence in the ground of minerals with radioactive content can also give rise to naturally occurring gamma radiation, but the doses received are much lower: the highest in England and Wales being less than 1 mSv/y.

### Resource Allocations

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what account is taken of the needs of women, ethnic minority groups and people with disabilities in the distribution of rate support grant, housing investment programme authorisation and urban programme and community refurbishment scheme funds.

**Mr. John Patten:** The distribution of these resources depends on a wide range of factors. Allocations are made in the light of consultations with the local authority associations, or in response to bids submitted by individual local authorities, or both.

In many cases it would be very difficult to specify that part of the resources which was being allocated solely for the benefit of the particular groups of people to which the hon. Member refers. However, substantial resources are directed through the urban programme to help local authorities meet the special needs of inner city residents. In 1986-87, for example, some £9 million will be directed to victim support schemes, over £35 million will support nearly 1,300 projects specifically for the benefit of ethnic minority communities. In addition, many of the 1,400 or so community and welfare projects supported through the urban programees will be of direct benefit to the elderly, disabled and other disadvantaged groups.

### London Research Centre

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what arrangements he intends to make to ensure the continuation of the London Research Centre together with the Acompline and Urbaline databases after 31 March 1987; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Chope:** Arrangements for the future of the London Research Centre, including the Acompline and Urbaline databases, are under discussion between the London Residuary body, and the London boroughs.

### Opinion Polls

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what use his Department has made of commissioned opinion polls in the past five years.

**Mr. Ridley:** I shall answer this question shortly.

### Housing Provision

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what procedures are in operation within his Department to ensure that schemes funded through the urban housing renewal unit promote equality of opportunity in housing provision for ethnic minority groups, women and people with a disability; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John Patten:** Applications for support by estate action (formerly the urban housing renewal unit) are formulated by local authorities taking account of local needs and circumstances. My Department considers all applications on their merits, but we insist that an objective of every scheme must be to secure better delivery of services to all the people who live on the estates.

### Equal Opportunities

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment which sections in his Department have responsibility for the formulation, promotion and implementation of policies of equal opportunity; and how many staff are employed on such work.

**Mr. Ridley:** In 1986 my Department, jointly with the Department of Transport, set up a special unit with the specific responsibilities for formulating, promoting and implementing equal opportunities policies within the Departments. The unit has five staff.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the directives, circulars, regulations and any other publications which have been produced by his Department since 1979 to advise or direct local authorities on matters of equal opportunity.

**Mr. Ridley:** My Department has published the following documents since 1979 which relate specifically to equal opportunities as they affect local authorities:

Local Authorities and Racial Disadvantage: Report of a Joint Government Local Authority Association Working Group (1982).

Local Authorities and Racial Disadvantage: Report of a Conference held at Church House, Westminster (March 1983).

The Urban Programme: Tackling Racial Disadvantage (1983).

Ethnic Minorities and the Urban Programme: Report of a Research Project (1982).

In addition, various circulars, publications and so on will have dealt inter alia with equal opportunities issues. A full list of these could be provided only at disproportionate expense.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will provide a breakdown of the number of staff in his Department by section and grade who are *(a)* women and *(b)* from a minority ethnic group; and if he will express each as a percentage of total staff.

**Mr. Ridley:** This information about staff from ethnic minority groups is not currently available, although the voluntary monitoring surveys still in progress will provide some of the information in the future.

Information about women, in the detail and form requested, could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what formal procedures exist in his Department for the purpose of measuring performance in respect of equal opportunities in recruitment, selection, training, promotion and career progression of staff.

**Mr. Ridley:** It is one of the aims of my Department's equal opportunities programme of action to monitor the effectiveness of its equal opportunities policies. My Department is now reviewing the best means to achieve this.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what specific initiatives are currently in operation in his Department which are aimed to be of benefit to women or ethnic minority groups.

**Mr. Ridley:** There has long been a policy of equal opportunities for women and ethnic minority staff in my Department. Specific recent initiatives include: provision of opportunities for part-time working and job-sharing; special leave arrangements for maternity, domestic and other personal reasons; measures to reduce the risk of discrimination in recruitment and promotion (for example through briefing for promotion boards); conduct of surveys of ethnic origin; some women-only training courses in management and special skills; establishment of an equal opportunities unit.

### Councillors (Voting Rights)

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment why a Conservative party councillor in East Sussex county council who had declared an interest in respect of discretionary education awards was recently given a dispensation to vote at council meetings; and why it was not given in respect of that authority's party and resources committee.

**Mr. Chope:** This application for the Secretary of State's dispensation under section 97(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 was dealt with in accordance with the long-established policy contained in DOE circular 105/73. Where a member's declared interest is immediate, the prohibition on speaking and voting is generally strictly maintained. Where a declared interest is not immediate, dispensation to speak is readily given; and dispensation to vote is given *(a)* if at least half of the council or relevant committee would otherwise be disabled, or *(b)* elected party balance on the council or committee would otherwise be upset. In the case in question, the disabilities imposed by the member's declared interest, which was not an immediate one, would have affected party balance in the council but not in the policy and resources committee; dispensation was therefore granted to vote in the council but not in the committee.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will list the number of occasions by name of councillor, local authority and date when he exercised his powers under section 97(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to remove a disability to vote.

**Mr. Chope:** The Secretary of State currently exercises his powers under section 97(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to remove a disability to vote on approximately 1,000 occasions a year. Statistical monitoring of applications does not record information in the form requested by the hon. Member and the cost of meeting the request would therefore be disproportionate.

### Football Supporters

**Mr. Pendry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what discussions he has had with the *Today* newspaper about its proposal for a 100 per cent. membership card scheme for football supporters; and when he expects to respond to the Football League's paper on hooliganism at football matches.

**Mr. Tracey:** None. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department and I will be meeting the Football League and the Football Association on 23 February, when we shall take forward our discussions about the league's paper.

### Disabled Persons

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what percentage of staff in his Department are registered disabled; and if his Department is exempt, or has applied for exemption, from the 3 per cent. provision of the Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944.

**Mr. Ridley:** My Department employs 1·1 per cent. registered disabled non-industrial staff (as at February 1987). Figures are not readily available for industrial staff.

The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 is not binding on the Crown. Successive Governments have, however, undertaken to accept the same responsibilities as other employers, consistent with the principle of fair and open competition.

### Birmingham (Convention Centre)

**Mr. Corbett** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he expects to be able to make a decision on an application for £6 million urban development grant towards the cost of building a hotel as part of Birmingham's international convention centre by 28 February.

**Mr. John Patten:** A decision will be made as soon as possible on the application for £6 million grant to the proposed five-star hotel, but in view of the complexity of the application and the large amount of grant sought, I cannot say whether it will be before 28 February.

### Rating Valuation

**Mr. Maxwell-Hyslop** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he expects to publish his White Paper on the revaluation of commercial and industrial premises in England; and when he expects the actual revaluation to take place.

**Mr. Chope:** My right hon. Friend intends to lay shortly the orders necessary for a revaluation of non-domestic property in England and Wales to take effect from 1 April 1990. The principal order will require the approval of both Houses of Parliament.

**Mr. Rooker** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will set out the principles behind the continued rating valuation differences between flats and houses.

**Dr. Boyson:** There is no statutory distinction between houses and flats for rating purposes. Both are assessed on the basis of the annual rent which they would have commanded on the open market in 1973: the date of the last revaluation.

### London Docklands Development Corporation

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many vacancies currently exist on the board of the London Docklands Development Corporation.

**Mr. John Patten:** Three.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he next expects to make appointments to the board of the London Docklands Development Corporation.

**Mr. John Patten:** In addition to the three existing vacancies, several appointments are due to expire in July this year. Careful consideration is currently being given to appointments.

### Land Register

**Mr. Steen** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many staff are currently employed in his Department to manage the register of vacant and derelict public land; and what is the annual cost in each of the last five years.

**Mr. John Patten** [*pursuant to his reply*, 28 January 1987, c. *244*]: Maintenance of the registers of unused and underused land owned by public bodies involves the following tasks:

- *(a)* entering new sites on the registers and removing sites as they are brought into use or sold, including keeping the computerised database up to date;
- *(b)* discussing with owning bodies their own plans for using sites on the registers to establish whether directed disposals might be appropriate;
- *(c)* considering requests from members of the public for land to be entered on the registers and for the Secretary of State to use his power to direct disposal of land that is entered on the register;
- *(d)* issuing notices of proposed directions under section 99 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980; considering representations from land owners;
- *(e)* sending out directions to dispose of land under section 98 of the Act; monitoring progress towards disposal; taking legal proceedings to enforce compliance where necessary;
- *(f)* making the registers available for inspection by the public, including interrogation of the computerised database.

This work is combined with other duties by staff working in 11 locations around the country: the equivalent of 19 full-time staff are currently so employed. The basic staff cost for 1986-87 is estimated to be £297,000; for 1985-86 it was estimated to be £268,000. The staff costs attributable to this work in earlier years were not separately identified.

### Defective Housing

**Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment if he will now consider giving the owners of houses of the defective categories designated in the Housing Act 1985, but which never formed part of public housing stock, rights comparable to those given to owners of such housing which did once form part of the public housing stock.

**Mr. John Patten** [*pursuant to his reply*, 2 February 1987, c. *493*]: We have at present no plans to extend the housing defects legislation to cover privately developed houses.

### Home Insulation

**Mr. Rowlands** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he proposes to bring to an end the current grant arrangements for loft insulation; and when he intends to implement the amended regulations announced on 19 December *Official Report*, column *757*.

**Mr. Tracey:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Norwood (Mr. Fraser) on Thursday 29 January, at column 316.

### Local Authority Finance

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has of the total spending by London borough councils in each of the past five years on *(a)* police monitoring units, *(b)* women's support units, *(c)* ethnic minority policies and *(d)* gay and lesbian policy initiatives.

**Mr. Chope:** I shall answer this question shortly.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Diplomatic Immunity

13. **Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the procedure by which the police seek to verify the legitimacy of claims for diplomatic immunity by persons being questioned about or charged with criminal offences; if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to how this procedure applied in the case of the husband of the United States diplomat in respect of whom diplomatic immunity was not waived; and what stage the police inquiries had reached in this case when immunity was claimed.

**Mr. Mellor:** The verification arrangements are set out in the consolidated circular to the police, a copy of which is in the Library. The Department received a report of the incident two days after the police interview with Mr. James Ingley on 18 December 1985. No claim to immunity was made at that time, but police inquiries had meanwhile established entitlement to immunity and Mr. Ingley was accordingly released on the same day.

We understand that Mr. Ingley no longer has immunity, and the alleged offence is extraditable under the United States-United Kingdom extradition treaty. The Crown Prosecution Service was asked to consider the evidence. However, the Director of Public Prosecutions has now decided that the evidence is insufficient for a prosecution, and therefore no basis for an extradition request exists.

## Guildford and Woolwich Bombings

14. **Mr. Flannery** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received following his decision not to refer the cases of those convicted for the Guildford and Woolwich bombings and of the Maguire family to the Court of Appeal.

30. **Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received since he announced his decision not to refer to the Court of Appeal the cases of those sentenced for the Guildford bombing and of the Maguire family.

**Mr. Hurd:** I have received 10 letters expressing regret at my decision in the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings case; four letters expressing similar views in regard to the Maguire case; and 12 letters expressing similar views in regard to both cases.

## Civil Defence

15. **Dr. Blackburn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of county and district centres have been fitted with air conditioning systems and filters able to protect against chemical weapons.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** This information is not kept centrally, but the Government have not asked that such measures be taken, and so far as we know none have.

17. **Mr. McQuarrie** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research has been completed on probable civilian casualties within a radius of 20 km of military targets resulting from chemical attack.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** In the absence of a ban on chemical weapons, the Government judge it prudent to conduct a variety of studies into the effects of chemical weapons and protection against them. This work is not yet complete.

18. **Mr. Gerald Bowden** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what protective equipment his Department issues to the police and fire service and to the civil protection volunteers who may have to work in the open under chemical attack.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** None; a decision will be taken when the work on protection against chemical attack is complete.

**Mr. Robert Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will conduct a series of regional civil defence exercises based on the scenario of an attack which will include chemical weapons on ports, airfields and military installations in the United Kingdom.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Government support and encourage regional civil defence exercises. These are intended primarily to test plans and procedures. Such a scenario would not be appropriate until the work on chemical protection is complete, and any relevant plans made.

26. **Mr. Sackville** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps have been taken to protect the public against the effects of chemical attacks.

61. **Mr. Terlezki** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department plans to provide protection for the general public along the lines already adopted by Switzerland, Sweden and Norway against the effects of chemical weapons.

19. **Mr. Neil Thorne** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance his Department gives to local authorities to provide for the protection of the civilian population against the effects of chemical weapons in their emergency planning.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** None. These matters will be considered when the work on chemical protection is complete.

37. **Mr. Lord** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what chemical detection monitoring equipment he proposes to issue to local authorities; and when they can expect to receive them.

48. **Mr. Evennett** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will arrange for tuition in chemical warfare protection to be given at police and fire service staff colleges.

51. **Mr. Aspinwall** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what equipment he proposes to issue to local authorities to detect the presence of chemical agents.

53. **Mr. Hunter** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will issue instructions on the signals to be used over the existing warning system to indicate a chemical attack.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** Consideration will be given to these matters when the work on chemical protection is complete.

49. **Mr. Hayes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training the police and fire services and civil protection volunteers receive in protective measures against chemical warfare.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** None at present, consideration will be given to this matter when the work on chemical protection is complete.

50. **Mr. Speller** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation civil defence committee is doing any work on protective measures for the civilian population against chemical weapons.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Civil Defence Committee exchanges information on a wide range of civil defence matters including protection against chemical weapons. It does not, as an organisation, initiate specific research studies.

60. **Mr. Waller** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the revised version of the "Protect and Survive" pamphlet will be published.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The new civil protection public information material issued in December, is intended to replace "Protect and Survive" for peacetime purposes. In the event of an emergency, detailed practical advice on protective measures would be issued through the media.

## Animals (Experiments)

16. **Mr. Alton** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what studies his Department has conducted into the effect of a ban on the testing of cosmetics on animals.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** We have given very careful thought to the question of cosmetics testing but do not believe that an abitrary ban would be sensible or justifiable. The course which we have adopted is to impose rigorous controls over all experimentation involving living animals. This approach was endorsed by Parliament during the passage of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. The main provisions of the new Act are now in force. They will ensure that all applications for experimental work involving animals receive detailed scrutiny and only work which can be justified will be allowed. Additionally, we have decided that all applications for projects involving cosmetics will be examined by the Animal Procedures Committee.

### Armed Police Raids

20. **Mr. Raynsford** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will make a statement on the policy and management of armed police raids.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** This was a subject which was closely examined by the Home Office working group on police use of firearms whose conclusions and recommendations my right hon. Friend announced in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Norwich, North (Mr. Thompson) on 3 February at column *562-3.*

### Prison Officers

21. **Mr. Alexander** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals to improve both the working and the living conditions of prison officers working in Her Majesty's prisons; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** Prison officers stand to benefit from many aspects of the Government's policies for, and record levels of expenditure on the prison service. Particular examples are the prison building programme, which includes planned expenditure of some £20 million on staff facilities as well as other improvements in officers' working conditions; and the "Fresh Start" initiative which will substantially reduce officers' average working week while enhancing their basic pay and general working arrangements.

### Chief Constables

22. **Mr. Wareing** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the regulations governing the conduct of chief constables.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** None. We are, however, reviewing the arrangements for the investigation of allegations against senior police officers, including chief constables.

### Police Authorities

23. **Mr. Marlow** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to introduce legislation to amend the law in respect of the responsibilities and powers of police authorities over local police forces.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** No.

### Immigration Control

25. **Mr. Tony Lloyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to improve the operation of the system of immigration control.

**Mr. Waddington:** Recent changes have improved the operation of the control. The arrangements will continue to be kept under review in the light of changing patterns of travel and traffic.

### Birmingham Pub Bombings

27. **Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to move the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings to one prison to enable them to prepare their case in the Court of Appeal; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** If their legal representatives believe that a meeting between the men would be beneficial then consideration would be given to such a request.

31. **Mr. Benn** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the persons interviewed during his inquiries in the 15 months that elapsed between the submission by the hon. Member for Harborough (Sir J. Farr) in October 1985 and his statement on 20 January to the House, in relation to the Birmingham pub bombings case.

**Mr. Mellor:** Officials had meetings with Mr. Christopher Mullin; Dr. Frank Skuse and his solicitor; and Mr. George Walker, formerly Director of the forensic science service laboratory at Chorley. Senior officers of the West Midlands police had a meeting with Mr. Mullin and interviewed Mr. Thomas Clarke, formerly a police constable in that force.

39. **Miss Maynard** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received regarding his decision to refer the convictions of the six men convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings to the Court of Appeal.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have received 10 letters, five welcoming my right hon. Friend's decision, four expressing regret and one commenting on one aspect of the case.

### Television (Advertising Time)

28. **Mr. Ottaway** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any plans to seek to amend section 9 of the Broadcasting Act 1981 in respect of the responsibilities of the Independent Broadcasting Authority for determining advertising time on independent television.

**Mr. Mellor:** No.

### City of London (Business Activities)

29. **Mr. Simon Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions arising from business activities in the City of London were begun in each of the years 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police for the City of London that the available information, which relates to fraud, is as follows:

*Prosecutions in the City of London arising from investigations commenced by the Metropolitan and City Police Company Fraud Department 1983-86*

| | Number |
|---|---|
| 1983 | 20 |
| 1984 | 31 |
| 1985 | 37 |
| 1986 | 20 |

The steps we are taking, including the new powers in the Financial Services Act, the establishment of the serious fraud office and other measures in response to the report of the Fraud Trials Committee (chaired by Lord Roskill) are evidence of our determination to tackle business and financial crime energetically and effectively.

### Merseyside Police Authority

32. **Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the Merseyside police authority concerning police expenditure and the Merseyside police authority for the precept for 1987-88.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The authority has written to my right hon. Friend about the adequacy of the maximum precept for 1987-88 which would be derived from the formula provided in the Local Government Finance Bill. A delegation from the authority is coming to discuss this matter with me on 10 February.

### Police Authorities (East Midlands)

33. **Mr. Leigh** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the level of funding to police authorities in the east midlands.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** It is for police authorities in the east midlands, as in the rest of England and Wales, to determine the resources to be made available to their forces. Fifty-one per cent. of what each police authority spends in a particular year for police purposes is met by the Home Office through police grant. The remaining 49 per cent. is met by the police authority from its own resources, which consist of block grant from the Department of the Environment and rates.

### Crack and Cocaine

34. **Mr. Moynihan** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evidence he has of the trend in crack and cocaine addiction; and what new measures are being taken to interdict the trade and punish offenders.

**Mr. Mellor:** The number of new addicts notified to the Home Office for addiction to cocaine, either alone or with other drugs, was 345 (1983), 471 (1984) and 490 (1985). The smoking of cocaine in its base form, including crack, remains rare in the United Kingdom. Much of our overall strategy against drug misuse is relevant to cocaine, in particular the allocation of £1 million for reducing cocaine production and trafficking in South America; deployment by Her Majesty's Customs and Excise of additional investigation staff against cocaine smuggling; and the posting of United Kingdom drugs liaison officers to relevant parts of the world. The Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986, which came fully into force last month, constitutes a powerful new weapon in the fight against traffickers in cocaine and other drugs.

### Coroners

35. **Mr. John Hunt** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will seek to amend the Coroners (Amendment) Act 1926 to extend the jurisdiction of a coroner beyond low water mark in those cases where a drowning takes place several miles out to sea or where the body is not recovered.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** We have no immediate plans to do so.

### Independent Broadcasting Authority

36. **Mr. Heathcoat-Amory** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the chairman of the Independent Broadcasting Authority; and what subjects were discussed.

**Mr. Mellor:** My right hon. Friend last met the chairman, together with other members of the authority, on 7 January. A wide variety of matters concerning the independent television system was discussed.

### Crime Prevention

38. **Mr. Patrick Thompson** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the total expenditure by Government Departments on crime prevention initiatives.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Government's policy is to encourage the use of crime prevention measures as an integral part of public and private planning. It is not therefore always possible to separate expenditure on crime prevention from other expenditure, although crime prevention measures increasingly feature in the Government's programmes. Among the main items of Government crime prevention expenditure in this financial year are: an estimated £3·2 billion spent on the police in England and Wales, much of whose work involves crime prevention; an estimated £28 million spent under the Department of the Environment's Urban Programme and Estates Action; and £2·5 million used for crime prevention publicity. The 7,000 places approved under the Manpower Services Commission's community programme crime prevention initiative represent an annual expenditure of about £33 million.

43. **Mr. Wood** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for developing the Home Office crime prevention publicity campaign.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The third phase of the "Magpies" publicity campaign is to be launched on 23 February 1987. The purpose of the campaign is to encourage householders to improve the physical security of their homes and the "Magpies" television commercials will be shown for the first time on the TV South, TV South West, Harlech TV and Anglia Television areas. There will be a reminder television campaign in the north of England. The television campaign will be reinforced in the new areas by the house-to-house distribution of 6·6 million leaflets. Further coverage will be achieved through advertising in national newspapers and magazines. The full campaign will cost £1·7 million.

The 1987-88 crime prevention publicity budget has been increased from £2·6 million to £4·8 million. The greater part of the additional funds will be spent on a new national advertising campaign which is now in development.

### Citizenship

40. **Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received concerning appeal rights for those claiming British citizenship by descent.

**Mr. Waddington:** We have received a number of letters from right hon. and hon. Members, from interested organisations and law practitioners and from members of the public.

### Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme

41. **Mr. Janner** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the criminal injuries compensation scheme cost in 1984-85 and 1985-86; and how much has been allocated for 1986-87.

**Mr. Mellor:** The information is as follows:

*Cost of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme*

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 39·5 |
| 1985-86 | 45·9 |
| 1986-87 (Supply Estimate) | 49·9 |

### Victim Support Schemes

42. **Mr. Couchman** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what financial provisions his Department will be making to assist the development of local victim support schemes; and what plans he has for assessing the performance of such schemes.

**Mr. Mellor:** We plan to provide up to £2 million in 1987-88 to local victims support schemes, as part of a new programme of funding totalling £9 million over three years with the primary purpose of enabling local schemes to employ full-time co-ordinators. We shall also continue to provide a grant to the National Association of Victims Support Schemes which advises local schemes and helps to co-ordinate their development. Arrangements for administering the new funding for local schemes are being discussed with the national association, and will include measures to assess the effectiveness of this form of support in relation to the service provided by local schemes.

### Trials (Scientific Witnesses)

44. **Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the cases involving scientific witnesses from the Home Office laboratory at Chorley which have been referred to the Court of Appeal since 1979.

**Mr. Mellor:** There have been five such cases apart from the Birmingham pub bombings case. The five cases were among 11 referred to the Court of Appeal in 1984, all of which involved evidence given by the former forensic scientist, Dr. Alan Clift. The five cases which related to Dr. Clift's work at the Chorley (or, formerly, Preston) laboratory were:

Geoffrey Mycock, convicted of murder, housebreaking and larceny on 7 February 1969 at Preston;
Dieter Otto Schnepel, convicted of murder on 20 October 1970 at Manchester;
Michael Szpytma and Alan John Sample, convicted of assault occasioning actual bodily harm on 22 November 1971 at Liverpool;
Melvin Harrison, convicted of murder on 27 July 1972 at Liverpool;
Norman Berry North, convicted of manslaughter on 9 May 1973 at Preston.

Mr. Schnepel abandoned his appeal, and Mr. Harrison's appeal was dismissed. The convictions of Mr. Mycock, Mr. Szpytma and Mr. Sample were quashed.

### Prisons

45. **Mr. Neil Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress and scale of the prison building programme.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle (Mr. Leigh) on 20 November 1986.

55. **Mr. Forth** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many additional prison places will be created by 1991 through the prison building and refurbishing programmes.

**Mr. Mellor:** By 1991 we shall have created about 9,900 additional places. Of this 5,100 will be in purpose-built new establishments (three of which have already been opened) and a further 4,800 places through redevelopment schemes at existing establishments.

### Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

46. **Mr. Tim Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information he has as to the number of neighbourhood watch schemes in the Thames Valley police authority area.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** On 31 December 1986 there were 155 neighbourhood watch schemes in the Thames Valley police authority area, nearly double the number which had existed three months before.

### Fraud Squad

47. **Mr. Jessell** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will now seek to recruit additional professional staff to the fraud squad.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The recruitment and disposition of police officers within each force is a matter for chief officers of police. Arrangements exist for the police to secure professional advice in the investigation of fraud through the fraud investigation group, which is operated by the Director of Public Prosecutions. Proposals are currently under consideration in the Criminal Justice Bill to build on these arrangements in establishing a Serious Fraud Office which will work with the police in the investigation of serious or complex frauds and will provide specialist professional expertise.

### Local Authorities (Election)

52. **Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has any plans to introduce legislation to change the system by which local authorities are elected; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** We have no plans to change the simple majority system of voting at local authority elections in Great Britain. We are still considering a recommendation by the Widdicombe committee of inquiry into the conduct of local authority business that all councillors in England and Wales should be elected every four years by whole-council elections based on single-member electoral areas.

### Police Duties

54. **Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his Department has carried out any research into the proportion of police time spent on duties other than the prevention or detection of crime; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** There are only a few police duties which are not connected in some way with the prevention or detection of crime, and the Department has not conducted a study of the proportion of police time spent on such duties. But many of the research projects carried out by the Home Office involve studying how police time is spent. A current study being conducted in conjunction with the West Midlands police, which aims to release officers from administrative tasks for operational duties, is due to be completed later this year. Two further projects are studying the tasks of uniformed patrol officers, and the results of this research will be published in due course.

### Probation Service

56. **Mr. Alex Carlile** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any proposals for increasing funding for the probation service over the next five years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** The Government's plan for expenditure on the probation service are set out in their 1987 public expenditure White Paper (Cmnd. 56-II), published in January. The White Paper covers the years up to and including 1989-90, beyond which there are as yet no plans.

### Road Traffic Legislation

57. **Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the resources available to police forces to enforce road traffic legislation.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** It is a matter for individual chief officers of police to determine how best to deploy their resources in the light of local conditions. The total strength of the police service in England and Wales on 30 November 1986 was 121,732 (an increase of 10,239 since May 1979), of whom about 8 per cent. are deployed on specialist traffic duties. Uniformed officers performing general duties also take action to enforce road traffic legislation.

### Crime Victims

58. **Mr. Nicholas Baker** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what new initiatives are being taken by his Department to assist the victims of crime.

**Mr. Mellor:** We propose in the Criminal Justice Bill to extend the range of cases in which compensation orders may be made, to empower the courts to order the proceeds of forfeiture orders to be paid in compensation to the victim, and to give injured victims a statutory right to compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. The Bill would also extend measures protecting the anonymity of rape victims back to the time when the offence is committed, and enable children under 14 to give evidence by video link in cases involving a sexual offence or violent attack.

We also plan to give increased financial assistance to local victims support schemes. In 1987-88, as well as continuing to provide a grant to the National Association of Victims Support Schemes, we shall make available up to £2 million to local schemes as part of a new programme of funding totalling £9 million over three years. This is intended primarily to enable schemes to employ full-time co-ordinators so that the best use can be made of volunteer resources.

Advice has been offered to the police on the treatment of women who are victims of violence. A copy of the Home Office circular 69/1986, issued in October 1986, is in the Library.

### Sentencing Policy

59. **Mr. Yeo** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received regarding policy towards minimum and maximum sentences.

**Mr. Mellor:** We receive many letters about sentencing policy; some suggest the alteration of existing maxima; others propose the introduction of minimum sentences. As my hon. Friend knows, we consider the existing maxima to be generally satisfactory. In our view statutory minimum sentences would be an injustifiable interference with judicial discretion.

### Prison Population

62. **Sir John Farr** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the prison population at the latest date for which figures are available; and how this compares with 1979.

66. **Mr. Knox** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were in prison at the most recent count.

**Mr. Mellor:** On 23 January 1987 the total prison population in England and Wales was 46,827 plus 58 Immigration Act detainees held on a temporary basis in Erlestoke.

On 31 January 1979, the nearest equivalent date for which figures are available, the total was 41,405.

### Police Strengths

63. **Mr. Robert Atkins** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any immediate plans to review constabulary strengths throughout the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** As my right hon. Friend stated on 20 May 1986 in reply to a question from my hon. Friend the Member for Westminster, North (Mr. Wheeler) at columns *124-25*, following a review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary of the manpower needs of provincial forces, the aim is to approve total increases in their establishments of the order of 2,000 posts over the next few years. We shall shortly be considering applications from police authorities for increases in the financial year 1987-88.

## Drug Offenders

64. **Mr. Baldry** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the average number of offenders serving prison sentences for drug offences in England and Wales in 1979, 1983, 1985 and 1986.

**Mr. Mellor:** The available information relates to persons serving an immediate custodial sentence on 30 June in Prison Department Establishments in England and Wales for drugs offences. This is published annually in "Prison Statistics England and Wales" (Table 1.8 of the latest issue, for 1985, Cmnd 9903). Provisional information for 1986 shows about 2,800 persons serving sentences for these offences.

## Prison Officers and Prisoners

65. **Mr. Galley** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what has been *(a)* the percentage increase in the number of prison officers and *(b)* the percentage increase in the average prison population since 1979; and if he will make a statement on the progress of negotiations on reforming working practices in the prison service.

**Mr. Mellor:** The number of prison officers has increased by 21·52 per cent. since 1979, whilst the average daily prison population has increased by 10·77 per cent. Discussions with the Prison Officers' Association and the other Prison Service trade unions on reforming working practices are still under way, and we very much hope that they can be brought to a speedy and agreed conclusion.

## Crime Costs

67. **Mr. Haynes** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department is conducting any current research into the economic cost of crime.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Tottenham (Mr. Atkinson) on 18 December 1986 at columns 1340-41.

## Crime Statistics

68. **Mr. Frank Cook** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total number of crimes in England and Wales *(a)* in the 12 months ended March 1979 and *(b)* in the most recent 12 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to a question from the hon. Member for Bassetlaw (Mr. Ashton) on 18 December 1986 at column 643. Statistics of notifiable offences recorded by the police are published each quarter in a Home Office Statistical Bulletin (issue number 39/86 on 12 December being the most recent).

## Immigration

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the passengers from the Indian sub-continent who sought entry to the United Kingdom at Heathrow airport between 11 and 15 October 1986, were *(a)* admitted within that period, *(b)* refused entry within that period, *(c)* refused entry at a later date and *(d)* still await a decision.

**Mr. Waddington:** The information readily available refers to passengers who arrived at Heathrow airport, Terminal 3 only and is as follows:

*(a)* approximately 5,000
*(b)* 331
*(c)* 294
*(d)* 297

*Note:* The figures at c and d above do not include cases transferred to other ports.

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers and immigration officers were involved in the operations on 12 December 1986 at (i) prison department headquarters at Cleland house and (ii) the Parole Board at Abel house; how many people and of what nationalities were *(a)* interviewed and *(b)* detained in the operation; for how long and where; what was the immigration status of those who were arrested and not charged; for how long they were under arrest; and with regard to what breaches of immigration controls these people were interviewed or charged.

**Mr. Waddington:** This was a single major joint operation, involving 16 police officers and 15 immigration officials, planned specifically to investigate suspected offences under the immigration laws.

A total of 26 people employed by a contract cleaning company were interviewed, 25 Ghanaians and one Nigerian. Of these 14 were arrested and taken to Rochester Row police station with the following results:

Five (including the one Nigerian) were charged with working in breach of conditions;
Three were judged to be illegal entrants;
Three were charged with overstaying;
Two were overstayers who were given notice of intention to deport them; and
One, whose status was in doubt, was bailed to re-appear the next day but failed to do so. He remains untraced.

Following initial custody at Rochester Row police station two of these people were transferred to Harmondsworth detention centre the following day, and two others to Latchmere House remand centre on 15 December, pending removal from the United Kingdom. The periods spend in detention in these cases were: 1½, 14, 19 and 33 days.

In the other cases in which people were arrested the periods spent in custody, all at Rochester Row police station, were:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 4 hours or less | 1 |
| Over 4 but under 6 hours | 3 |
| Over 6 but under 9 hours | 2 |
| Over 9 but under 24 hours | 4 |

Of the 12 people who were dealt with at their place of work:

Two were judged to be illegal entrants. They were released temporarily pending removal from the United Kingdom;
Two were found to have been refused leave to enter and to be on temporary admission pending further consideration of their cases;
One was an overstayer, time-barred from prosecution, whose case merited further consideration;
Four were found to have no restrictions on their taking of employment in the United Kingdom;
Three were asked to produce evidence of their status, which could not be determined at the time. Their cases are still under consideration.

This operation was conducted in accordance with the recommendations of Home Office Circular 131/1980, of which a copy was placed in the Library in December 1980.

**Sir Trevor Skeet** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he proposes to make any changes to the list of ports of entry designated under the Immigration Act 1971.

**Mr. Hurd:** An order will shortly be made to replace the Immigration (Ports of Entry) Order 1972 as amended. Ramsgate will be added to the list of seaports and hoverports now designated and Ramsgate Hoverport will be deleted from that list. Leeds/Bradford Airport will be added and Lydd (Ferryfield) deleted from the list of airports.

Edinburgh (Turnhouse) and Newcastle (Woolsington) Airports will be re-designated as Edinburgh and Newcastle respectively.

### Harmondsworth Detention Centre

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how often Her Majesty's inspectors of prisons inspect Harmondsworth detention centre.

**Mr. Waddington:** Since the new Inspectorate of Prisons was set up in January 1981 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons has not yet inspected the immigration detention centre at Harmondsworth.

### Metropolitan Police

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Metropolitan police receives towards the cost of each remand prisoner detained in a police station; and what was the total sum received by the Metropolitan police in 1986.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Metropolitan Police recover from the Home Office Prison Department the full costs of holding prisoners in police stations. The costs between 1 January and 30 November 1985 (the latest period for which the information is available) are estimated to be about £4 million. These will have been paid by the end of the 1986-87 financial year.

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many remand prisoners have been detained in police stations in each Metropolitan police division in each month of 1986; and what were the minimum, average and maximum lengths of such detentions.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that for operational reasons he would not wish the police stations in which remand prisoners are held to be identified. The other information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. I understand, however, that during 1986 the average daily total of remand and convicted prisoners detained in police establishments in the Metropolitan police district was 101, with the highest number being 235. I also understand that the longest period for which a male prisoner has been detained in police cells is 31 nights and that the corresponding period for a woman prisoner is 44 nights.

### Prisoners (Home Leave)

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were allowed *(a)* terminal home leave and *(b)* short home leave in 1985; and how many of these failed to return to prison.

**Mr. Mellor:** *(a)* 1,046; *(b)* 971. The figures collected centrally do not distinguish between failures to return from terminal home leave, short home leave and pre-parole leave. The total numbers of home leaves in all three categories granted in 1985 was 4,440. 243 prisoners failed to return. These figures exclude young offenders.

### Rape

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the number of rape offences reported to the police in 1984, 1985 and 1986 by police force area; and if he will also list the percentage clear-up rate for offences of rape.

**Mr. Mellor:** The available information is on the number of offences of rape recorded by each police force and is published annually in "Criminal Statistics, England and Wales, Supplementary Tables" (table S.3.1 in volume 3 of the issue for 1985). Figures for 1986 are not yet available. The clear-up rate for rape in England and Wales was 67 per cent. in 1983, 68 per cent. in 1984 and 64 per cent. in 1985. Part of the fall in 1985 is attributable to changes in police recording practice, resulting in an increasing proportion of the cases reported being recorded as offences. Clear-up rates for individual forces are based on small numbers and so are subject to wide variation and may be misleading.

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will introduce legislation to provide for statutory minimum imprisonment sentences in cases of convictions for rape; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hurd:** Sentencing in individual cases is a matter for the courts. It is a fundamental principle of our criminal justice system that they should be able, in sentencing, to take account of the particular circumstances of each offence and offender. Even with a uniquely despicable offence like rape there can be many variable factors which make it impossible to prescribe by a minimum sentence which would be just in every case. I think it better to rely on the Court of Appeal's ability to lay down guidelines for the Crown Court to follow, and on the Government's proposals in clause 29 of the Criminal Justice Bill.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in each of the last 10 years, having served a sentence of imprisonment for rape, were subsequently convicted for a further offence of rape or sexual assault; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Mellor:** I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Ealing, North (Mr. Greenway) on 16 December 1986 at columns *481-82.*

### EC (Tourism)

**Mr. Gregory** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration was given during the British presidency of the European Community to the implications for tourism of eliminating barriers, and particularly the hindrances to personal movement within the European Community; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waddington:** The United Kingdom in common with other member states recognises the advantages to tourists in reducing frontier controls within the Community. In that connection discussion continued during the presidency of the draft frontier controls directive which would abolish routine customs and immigration checks at the Community internal land borders.

### Television Licences

**Mr. Clelland** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many television licences were issued to *(a)* betting shops, *(b)* public houses and *(c)* hotels in Great Britain in 1986; and what proportion of the total income from television licences each category represented.

**Mr. Mellor:** Separate records are not kept of television licences issued to betting shops and public houses. As at 30 September 1986 1,574 special hotel licences were in force. The revenue raised by these licences represents 0·1 per cent. of total gross licence revenue. This is in addition to revenue from standard television licences issued to smaller hotels and guest houses, which are required to pay only the standard fee if television is installed in fewer than 16 bedrooms. The number of such licences is not recorded separately.

### Postmen (Dog Attacks)

**Mr. Watts** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the rising incidence of attacks on postmen by dogs, he has any plans to seek to increase the penalties available to the courts to deal with dog owners who fail to keep their dogs under proper control.

**Mr. Mellor:** We have no present plans to do so.

### BBC

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he was consulted by the Metropolitan police before they sought warrants for the police raid on BBC Scotland's Glasgow office.

**Mr. Hurd:** No.

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis as to the nature of items removed from BBC Scotland offices in Glasgow which are now in their possession.

**Mr. Hurd:** I have nothing to add to what I said in the House during the debate on 3 February.

### Police (Legal Actions)

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many civil actions were brought against the Commisioner of Police of the Metropolis in 1986; and how many of these were settled out of court.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commisioner of Police of the Metropolis that in 1986 there were 188 cases in which a writ or summons was served on him in respect of alleged wrongful acts by police officers. Of these 188 cases, eight have so far been concluded by a settlement out of court.

### Royal Residences (Security)

**Mr. Greenway** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he is satisfied with the standard of security at Sandringham house and other royal residences; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** At about 3.45 pm on Thursday 22 January an intruder scaled the perimeter gates at Sandringham House and moved towards the residence. He was detected as he entered the property and was detained by the police before he reached the house. He was found to have a history of mental illness and was taken to hospital. I am studying a report on the incident from the chief constable of Norfolk.

Although the security arrangements were effective in detecting the intruder the police are, as a matter of course, reviewing them. Their conclusion will be considered by my Department in the Standing Committee which monitors royal security. Substantial improvements have been made to the security arrangements at all the royal residences in recent years and are kept under constant review.

### Journalists (Identity Cards)

**Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what approaches he has made to chief constables suggesting the issuing of identity cards to journalists; how many such cards have been issued; on what criteria they are issued; what representations he has received urging that such cards should be issued; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I am writing to the hon. Member.

### Drink-Driving Offences

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the answer of 12 January, *Official Report*, c. *71-72*, if he will take the necessary steps to obtain and publish in the *Official Report* details of the number of motorists stopped and positively breathalysed for drunken driving in the Metropolitan police area between Christmas and new year's day; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Commisioner of the Police of the Metropolis tells me that between 8 December 1986 and 4 January 1987 inclusive there were 1,802 positive roadside screening tests in the Metropolitan police force area. Information on the total number of tests carried out has not been collated and could presently be obtained only at disproportionate cost. But it will be included in the Home Office bulletin "Statistics on Breath Tests—England and Wales" to be published in the middle of this year.

### Fresh Start Programme

**Mrs. Virginia Bottomley** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the progress of the fresh start programme in the prison service.

**Mr. Mellor:** Discussions on the fresh start proposals are continuing with all the prison service trade unions. A progressive series of development exercises, and a related training programme for the staff concerned, is planned to begin next month.

### Fascist Conference

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will give instructions that French and Italian Fascists, due to attend a conference in London in the week beginning 9 February be refused entry into the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Hurd:** No.

### Wheel Clamping

**Mr. Pavitt** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what was the total sum paid by the Metropolitan police to the private contractors in respect of the penalties paid on wheel-clamped vehicles during December 1986.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The Commissioner of the Police of the Metropolis has informed me that a total of £86,747·59 was paid to the contractors for their work on clamping carried out between 1 December and 27 December 1986.

### Police Cars (Accidents)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons were killed by speeding police cars in 1986; what was the location in each case; and what was the coroner's inquest verdict in each case.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** The information requested is not available centrally. Arrangements have been made for information to be collected from 1 January this year on the number of accidents involving police vehicles which cause death or serious injury in each police force area.

### Ethnic Minorities

**Dr. Cunningham** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the applications he has received for funding of posts under section 11 of the Local Government Act 1966 since he issued draft revised administrative guidelines for section 11 grants on 26 March 1986; and if he will state against each application, his reasons for not granting section 11 funding.

**Mr. Waddington** [*pursuant to his reply*, 26 January 1987, c. *27*]: Information on fresh applications for new posts, or proportions of new posts, received since 26 March 1986 is set out in the following table. In a small number of other cases applications not made on the proper form have been returned to the local authority. Applications received after 26 March 1986 but before the new guidelines came into force on 1 October 1986 were considered under the guidelines set out in Home Office Circular No. 97/1982. During the same period we also considered plans from a number of local education authorities for the reorganisation of sometimes substantial numbers of teaching posts found to be ineligible for grant during a recent general administrative review of posts.

| *Date of application* | *Local authority* | *Posts for which grant sought* | *Current position* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 April 1986 | Wandsworth | 1 publicity officer | Approved |
| | | 1 race training officer | Approved |
| | | 1 liaison officer | Approved |
| | | 1 development officer | Refused because insufficient evidence of special needs |
| 7 April 1986 | Wandsworth | 1 senior library assistant | Approved |
| 10 April 1986 | Lancashire | 1 co-ordinator, race equality unit | Approved |
| 11 April 1986 | Kirklees | 4 community liaison teachers | Approved |
| 11 April 1986 | | 10 part-time youth workers | Approved |
| | | 4 part-time youth leaders | Approved |
| | | 12 ancillary youth workers | Approved |
| | | Various language support assistants (630 hours) | Approved |
| | | 1 inspector for multicultural education | Approved |
| | | 1 assistant education officer | Approved |
| | | 6 curriculum development staff | Approved |
| | | 2 language advisory teachers | Approved |
| | | 2 language advisory teachers | Refused because posts already filled |
| | | 2 community language teachers (teaching of mother tongue to 'O' level) | Refused because posts not meeting special needs |
| 12 May 1986 | Bolton | 1 liaison officer | Approved |
| | | 1 clerical officer | Approved |
| 12 May 1986 | Warwickshire | 4 advisory teachers | Approved |
| | | 7 peripatetic teachers | Approved |
| | | 3 secretarial support posts | Approved |
| | | 500 hours English home tuition | Approved |
| | | 2 education co-ordinators | Approved |
| | | 2,500 hours community language tuition | Refused because not meeting special needs |
| | | 3 community language advisory teachers (teaching of mother tongue to 'O' and 'A' level) | Refused because not meeting special needs |
| | | 1 co-ordinator for M/C arts | Refused because not meeting special needs |
| 14 May 1986 | Nottingham City | 1 clerk/typist | Approved |
| 14 May 1986 | Southwark | 1 race equality officer (planning) | Refused because insufficient evidence of special needs |
| 14 May 1986 | Lewisham | 1 Caribbean Focus co-ordinator | Approved |

| *Date of application* | *Local authority* | *Posts for which grant sought* | *Current position* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 June 1986 | London Boroughs Grants Unit | 1 race relations adviser | Approved |
| 5 June 1986 | Bristol City | 1 sports motivator | Refused because special needs not identified |
| 9 June 1986 | Liverpool | 1 Caribbean Focus co-ordinator | Approved |
| 11 June 1986 | Walsall | 1 ethnic minority business development officer | Approved |
| 1 July 1986 | Brent | 1 Caribbean Focus co-ordinator | Approved |
| 15 July 1986 | Bolton | 1 education social worker | Approved |
| 16 July 1986 | Kensington and Chelsea | 1 administrative assistant | Approved |
| 24 July 1986 | Leeds | 2 trainers | Approved |
| | | 1 clerical assistant | Approved |
| 28 July 1986 | Manchester | 2 race officers | Approved |
| | | 6 race officers | Refused because the posts not meeting special needs |
| 15 August 1986 | Bolton | 1 business development worker | Approved |
| 18 August 1986 | Southwark | 1 race adviser | Approved |
| | | 1 liaison officer | Approved |
| | | 1 administrative officer | Approved |
| 19 August 1986 | Bolton | 3 mother-tongue instructors in primary schools | Approved |
| 4 September 1986 | Cambridge | 2 community social workers | Approved |
| | | 1 occupational therapist | Approved |
| | | 1 adviser under 5's | Approved |
| 10 October 1986 | Nottinghamshire | 1 senior welfare rights officer | Under consideration |
| | | 2 welfare rights officers | Under consideration |
| | | 1 team clerk | Under consideration |
| | | 1 information officer | Under consideration |
| 29 October 1986 | Lancashire | 1 ethnic senior librarian | Approved |
| | | 3 assistant librarians | Approved |
| | | 2 clerical assistants | Approved |
| 3 November 1986 | Lancashire | 10 nursery nurses | Under consideration |
| | | 1 nursery nurse | Under consideration |
| | | 9·4 clerical assistants in primary schools | Approved |
| | | 5 clerical assistants in district education offices | Approved |
| [illegible]ber 1986 | Luton | 1 equal opportunities officer | Under consideration |
| [illegible] November 1986 | Hounslow | 4 race support workers | Approved |
| 12 November 1986 | Brent | 2 librarians | Approved |
| | | 6 administrative assistants | Under consideration |
| | | 1 outreach worker | Under consideration |
| | | 2 welfare rights officers | Under consideration |
| | | 2 race advisers | Under consideration |
| 12 November 1986 | Leeds | 3 training co-ordinators | Approved |
| 14 November 1986 | Gloucester City | 1 employment assistant | Approved |
| 14 November 1986 | Kent | 1 senior social worker | Under consideration |
| | | 3 social workers | Under consideration |
| | | 1 team clerk | Under consideration |
| 17 November 1986 | Leeds | 3·5 patients' advocates | Under consideration |
| 17 November 1986 | Avon | 1 development officer | Approved |
| | | 1 administrative officer | Approved |
| | | 1 clerk/typist (Bristol Black Business Association) | Approved |
| 19 November 1986 | Wakefield | 1 liaison officer | Under consideration |
| | | 1 welfare assistant | Under consideration |
| 21 November 1986 | Leeds | 2 equal opportunity officers | Under consideration |
| 25 November 1986 | Oldham | 1 catering officer | Under consideration |
| 26 November 1986 | Tameside | 1 ethnic minorities officer (arts and libraries) | Under considertion |
| 27 November 1986 | Oldham | 1 ethnic minority policy officer | Under consideration |
| 28 November 1986 | Nottinghamshire | 2 youth workers | Under consideration |
| | | 1 clerical assistant | Under consideration |
| | | 20 part-time youth hours | Under consideration |
| 2 December 1986 | Slough | 1 health education officer | Under consideration |
| 3 December 1986 | Bradford | 2 school development officers | Under consideration |
| | | 2 organisers (home tutoring and outreach work) | Under consideration |
| | | 1 language scheme liaison worker | Under consideration |
| 3 December 1986 | Bradford | 20 part-time tutors | Under consideration |
| | | 40 part-time ESL tutors | Under consideration |
| | | 50 part-time creche workers | Under consideration |
| 3 December 1986 | Rossendale | 1 race relations officer | Under consideration |
| 4 December 1986 | Warwickshire | 2 youth workers | Under consideration |
| | | 9 part-time youth leaders | Under consideration |
| 9 December 1986 | Oxford City | 1 equal opportunities officer | Under consideration |
| 9 December 1986 | Rochdale | 4 race relations advisers | Under considertion |
| 9 December 1986 | Leeds | 1 medical visitor | Under consideration |
| | | 1 housing visitor | Under consideration |
| 10 December 1986 | Bradford | 1 school development officer | Under consideration |
| 10 December 1986 | Waltham Forest | 1 personnel officer | Under consideration |
| 12 December 1986 | Bradford | 1 youth and community education worker | Under consideration |
| | | 3 development workers | Under consideration |

| *Date of application* | *Local authority* | *Posts for which grant sought* | *Current position* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2 co-ordinators | Under consideration |
| | | 1 outreach worker | Under consideration |
| | | 1 youth and community education officer | Under consideration |
| | | 10 part-time youth and community workers | Under consideration |
| 16 December 1986 | Merton | 1 part-time teacher of Urdu | Under consideration |
| 18 December 1986 | Bradford | 2 religious education assistants | Under consideration |
| | | 1 welfare rights officer | Under consideration |
| 19 December 1986 | Sheffield | 0·5 information officer | Under consideration |
| 19 December 1986 | Birmingham | 1 policy adviser | Under consideration |
| | | 4 assistant trading standards officers | Under consideration |
| | | 1 food hygiene assistant | Under consideration |
| | | 2 consumer education officers | Under consideration |
| 19 December 1986 | Oldham | 1 assistant road safety officer | Under consideration |
| 30 December 1986 | Nottinghamshire | 1·5 lecturers | Under consideration |
| | | 1 clerk | Under consideration |
| 5 January 1987 | Lancashire | 1 community liaison officer | Under consideration |
| 6 January 1987 | Warwickshire | 1 social worker | Under consideration |
| | | 1 project assistant | Under consideration |
| 8 January 1987 | Reading | 1 principal health officer | Under consideration |
| 9 January 1987 | Waltham Forest | 2 personnel officers | Under consideration |
| 13 January 1987 | Waltham Forest | 1 head of race relations Unit | Under consideration |
| 15 Janaury 1987 | Wycombe | 1 community liaison officer | Under consideration |
| 16 January 1987 | Birmingham | 3 road safety officers | Under consideration |
| 20 January 1987 | Bradford | 1 school and community development officer | Under consideration |

## DEFENCE

### Territorial Army

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has received the report on the release of employees for Territorial Army service from the national employer liaison committee; if he will make the report public; if he will list the membership; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** The national employer liaison committee has now issued an interim report, which makes a number of recommendations aimed at, inter alia, increasing employers' awareness of the role and importance of the Territorial Army, thereby encouraging a greater degree of co-operation from them. These recommendations are being considered. The membership of the committee, to whom I would like to express the Department's gratitude for their worthy efforts, is as follows:

NATIONAL EMPLOYER LIAISON COMMITTEE (NELC) — MEMBERSHIP

*Chairman*
Mr. R. T. S. Macpherson CBE, MC, TD, DL.
*Representatives from Industry, Commerce and Trade Unions*
Mr. A. J. Gooding.
Chairman
Gooding Group Ltd.

The Right Hon. Earl Jellicoe DSO, MC.
Chairman
Davy Corporation.

Mr. J. Leigh Pemberton.
Managing Director
Whatman Reeve Angel plc.

Mr. F. A. Baker.
Representing TUC.

Mr. J. Miller.
James Miller & Partners Ltd.

Sir Trevor Holdsworth.
GKN plc.

Mr. J. Lyles BSc., ATI, JP.
Chairman
S. Lyles plc.

Sir J. J. Salisse.

*Representatives from MOD and Council of TAVRAs*
DGTA & Org.—Maj. Gen. C. E. W. Jones CBE.
AUS(A).—Mr. M. J. Culham.
Chairman Council of TAVRAs — Lt. Gen. Sir Peter Hudson CB, CBE, DL.
Brig. TA—Brig. P. P. Orchard Lisle TD, ADC, DL.
Vice Chairman Council of TAVRAs—Col. G. S. P. Carden CBE, TD, DL.

*May be in Attendance*
DARC—Brig. W. K. L. Prosser CBE, MC.
Col. TA—Col. A. C. Ward OBE.
Secretary Council of TAVRAs—Maj. Gen. M. Matthews CB.

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he is now in a position to make an announcement about the payment of Department of Health and Social Security benefits to members of the Territorial Army; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** Members of the Territorial Army in receipt of supplementary benefit may earn an additional £4 per week from Territorial Army sources without effect on benefit, and are allowed to aggregate the total disregard of £32 per month. A procedure has also been introduced to reduce the delay in re-commencing both unemployment and supplementary payments on return from annual camp. The Government are now considering the position of members in receipt of unemployment benefit, and I hope to make an announcement on this shortly.

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his Department's review of vehicles and the use of ammunition by the Territorial Army.

**Mr. Freeman:** Although reviews of vehicle holdings and the use of ammunition are being undertaken as part of the normal process of programme management, none of them relate specifically to the Territorial Army, although their needs will, of course, be taken into consideration.

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list in the *Official Report* for each of the years from 1978 (i) the strength and (ii) the establishment of the Territorial Army.

**Mr. Freeman:** The respective figures for (i) strength and (ii) establishment of the Territorial Army at 1 April for each of the years from 1978 are:

| *Year* | *Strength* | *Establishment* |
|---|---|---|
| 1978 | 60,645 | n/a |
| 1979 | 59,387 | 72,635 |
| 1980 | 63,292 | 73,666 |
| 1981 | 69,524 | 73,666 |
| 1982 | 72,062 | 74,961 |
| 1983 | 72,825 | 73,765 |
| 1984 | 71,415 | 75,051 |
| 1985 | 73,675 | 77,659 |
| 1986 | 77,681 | 80,185 |

The corresponding figures for the home service force, which is an integral part of the Territorial Army, from 1984, following the formation of the new force are:

| *Year* | *Strength* | *Establishment* |
|---|---|---|
| 1984 | 317 | n/a |
| 1985 | 911 | 4,110 |
| 1986 | 3,005 | 4,200 |

### Gun Battery, Belize

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the continuance of the gun battery in Belize.

**Mr. Stanley:** It is not our practice to comment on details of future force levels.

### Commando Forces (Air Defence)

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement about the provision of air defence for commando forces.

**Mr. Stanley:** Our commando forces are equipped with their own point air defence capability, and depending on the deployment option and other circumstances, could also call on air defence cover from the assets of the amphibious group or from Allied land-based aircraft.

Additionally, as I announced in the House on 1 July 1986, at column 916, financial provision has been made in our forward plans for a Rapier battery for the United Kingdom/Netherlands landing force, although this does not yet represent a firm commitment.

### Defence Budget (Exchange Rates)

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state the sterling/deutschmark exchange rate on which his budget for British Army of the Rhine was prepared; if he plans to make any further provision for changes in the exchange rate; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Stanley:** The 1986-87 defence estimates were prepared in accordance with established practice on the basis of an end June 1985 spot rate of 3·90 deutschmarks to the pound. Changes in the rates of exchange are one of a number of factors taken into account during the financial year for monitoring and controlling defence expenditure within the cash limit.

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will state the effect in sterling terms on the defence budget of a one pfennig change in the sterling/deutschmark exchange rate.

**Mr. Stanley:** The effect of a one pfennig change in the exchange rate in 1986-87 on the defence budget, excluding local drawings of salaries and allowances which are not sensitive to the full effect of exchange rate movements, is some £2 million to £2·5 million.

### Operation Lean Look

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will report on the current progress of operation Lean Look.

**Mr. Stanley:** The Lean Look programme of some 4,000 uniformed manpower savings in the support areas to permit enhancements to the front line is well on course. In particular, manpower cover will be made available in 1987-88 for the initial build up of personnel for the 12th in-theatre armoured regiment for BAOR, for Royal Engineers armoured and explosive ordnance disposal enhancements, and for additional Army Air Corps pilots.

**Mr. Best** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what consideration is being given to introducing a lower training liability for some members of the Territorial Army; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Freeman:** A trial was launched in September 1986 at selected Territorial Army hospitals, aimed at testing the effectiveness of a lower training liability on the recruitment and retention of certain specialised medical personnel in Royal Army Medical Corps (volunteer) units. This trial is scheduled to run for two years.

A further proposal is under consideration to introduce a lower training liability for experienced Territorial Army members who, for special business or domestic reasons, would be unable to fulfil the prescribed training commitment for their unit. The precise details of this scheme are being worked out, with a view to its introduction in training year 1987-88.

### Nuclear Deterrent

**Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what recent consideration has been given within NATO to the status of the United Kingdom nuclear deterrent.

**Mr. Stanley:** Britain's NATO partners have welcomed the contribution made by British nuclear forces to the overall credibility of the Alliance's deterrent capabilities and have expressed their continued support for the efforts of the United Kingdom to maintain the effectiveness of its nuclear deterrent forces. I refer the hon. Member to the communiqués issued following the March 1986 and October 1986 meetings of the NATO nuclear planning group, copies of which are in the Library.

**Mr. Deakins** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the United Kingdom nuclear deterrent is covered by obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation treaty.

**Mr. Stanley:** The North Atlantic Treaty does not deal with the detail of national contributions to NATO's integrated military structure. However, those member countries who contribute to the integrated military structure have agreed that changes in their contribution to the Alliance are properly the subject of multilateral consideration within NATO.

### RAF Vehicle (Accident)

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will specify the precise identities of the operators and authorities responsible for emergency arrangements in relation to the accident to a military convoy in Wiltshire on 10 January.

**Mr. Stanley:** A variety of Ministry of Defence servicemen and civilian staff, members of the police, fire and ambulance services, and an approved Ministry of Defence contractor, Scott-Greenham of Southampton, took part in the recovery operation dealing with the accident involving a military convoy in Wiltshire on 10 January.

### Haslar Hospital

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many full and part-time workers are currently employed at Haslar hospital; and what is the comparable figure proposed by Gardner Merchant;

(2) how many people Gardner Merchant said it would employ for the catering contract for Haslar hospital.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The numbers of staff, currently employed at the hospital is as follows:

| | *Non-industrial* | *Industrial* |
|---|---|---|
| Hospital (excluding Catering Department) | | |
| Full-time | 97 | 122 |
| Part-time | 15 | 52 |
| Catering Department | | |
| Full-time | 4 | 48 |
| Part-time | — | 24 |

The proposed labour levels are matters for the contractor's commercial judgment. Details of their tender are commercial in confidence.

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if the Gardner Merchant bid for the catering contract for Haslar hospital, Gosport, included provision for subsidised transport for its staff; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Pay and conditions of service, which would include items such as subsidised transport, are a matter for contractors. An examination of tenderers' proposals in this area is made as part of tender evaluation to ensure that wage rates on which the price is based are at a level at which the contractor could reasonably be expected to obtain good quality employees in the particular locality.

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make available the tender conditions for all bids for the catering contract at Haslar hospital.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** No; these are commercial in confidence.

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if subsidised transport will still be available to catering staff after 1 April at Haslar hospital; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** No MOD subsidised transport will be provided for the employees of the contractor. This is a matter for the contractor.

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence who authorised the release of the current work roster to Gardner Merchant after it had secured the contract, concerning catering staff at Haslar hospital; and for what reason.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The medical officer in charge of the hospital authorised the release of the information, which is not confidential after the award of the contract. This was to assist the contractor in his planning.

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish in the *Offical Report* a financial comparison of the eight bids for the catering contract at Haslar hospital.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** No. Tenders by potential contractors are commercial in confidence.

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if the current cleaning contractor is fulfilling his contract obligations at Haslar hospital; and if there are any plans to review the current arrangements.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Yes, the contractor is fulfilling his obligations. There are no plans to review the current arrangements.

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many unfilled vacancies exist for cleaners in Haslar hospital, Gosport.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The number of unfilled vacancies for cleaners is a matter for the contractor.

### Nuclear Missiles

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what is his policy on a nuclear-capable multi-launch rocket system;

(2) what is his policy on a nuclear-capable modular air-to-surface missile;

(3) what is his policy on the modernisation of the Lance missile;

(4) what is his policy on a nuclear-capable long range stand-off missile;

(5) what is his policy on a nuclear-capable Army tactical missile system.

**Mr. Stanley:** At their meeting in Montebello, Canada, in October 1983, Ministers of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group agreed to the reduction of 1,400 nuclear warheads from NATO's nuclear stockpile. This was in addition to the reduction of 1,000 warheads agreed in 1979 and was to take place over several years. At the same time it was agreed that steps should be taken to ensure the survivability, responsiveness and effectiveness of remaining delivery systems and warheads.

SACEUR subsequently presented his recommendations for implementing these decisions at the Luxembourg meeting of NPG Ministers in March 1985. These recommendations are being pursued by SACEUR with the nations concerned; and progress with implementation is being kept under review by the NPG.

No decisions have been made affecting the modernisation of weapon systems in service with British forces; as my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Defence said in the House on 26 November 1985 at column 742, if we have any announcements to make, they will be made in the House at the appropriate moment.

### Artillery Shells

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy on the W-80 shell for 8 in artillery.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I know of no shell designated "W80".

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy on the W-79 shell for the 155 mm howitzer.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The W-79 shell is not capable of being fired by the 155 mm howitzer.

### Royal Ordnance Employees (Pensions)

**Mrs. Ann Winterton** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he is yet in a position to make a statement on the pension rights of Royal Ordnance employees once the proposed privatisation of the company has been completed.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Crewe and Nantwich (Mrs. Dunwoody) on 26 January 1987 at column *131*. The planned sale of Royal Ordnance plc will not affect the pension arrangements of employees.

### Defence Schools of Music

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence when he now expects to make his decision with regard to the future of the defence schools of music.

**Mr. Freeman:** I have nothing to add to the reply I gave to the hon. Member on 5 November 1986 at column *433*.

### Crown Proceedings Act

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate his Department has made of the number of service men and service women, in respect of whom claims arising from personal injury or death while on duty have not been proceeded with in each of the past 10 years because of section 10 of the Crown Proceedings Act.

**Mr. Freeman:** I regret this information is not readily available, and could not be provided except at disproportionate cost.

### Trident

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what has been the expenditure on the Trident programme in each year since 1979 up until 1 January at both current and constant prices.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton** [*pursuant to his reply*, 22 January 1987, c. *728*]: Expenditure each year since the beginning of the United Kingdom Trident programme is as follows:

| *Financial year* | *Current (out-turn) prices* | *1986-87 prices and at £1=$1·50* |
|---|---|---|
| 1980-81 | 3 | 5 |
| 1981-82 | 31 | 49 |
| 1982-83 | 71 | 97 |
| 1983-84 | 95 | 113 |
| 1984-85 | 165 | 171 |
| 1985-86 | 268 | 273 |
| 1986-87[1][2] | 412 | 412 |

[1] The figure for 1986-87[2] is, at this stage, a forecast.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### Birth Statistics

**Mr. Carter-Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents *(a)* in England and *(b)* in England and Wales and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to whether the mother had had (i) no, (ii) one, (iii) two, (iv) three and (v) four or more pregnancies resulting in a registrable birth;

(2) if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents of each regional health authority and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to whether the mother had had *(a)* no, *(b)* one, *(c)* two, *(d)* three and *(e)* four or more pregnancies resulting in a registrable birth;

(3) if he will list the total births and live births in 1984 to residents in Wales and the number and rate per 1,000 of still births, perinatal deaths, neonatal deaths, postneonatal deaths and infant deaths; and if he will tabulate the data according to whether the mother had had *(a)* no, *(b)* one, *(c)* two, *(d)* three and *(e)* four or more pregnancies resulting in a registrable birth.

**Mrs. Currie:** Tables giving the available information have been placed in the Library.

### AIDS

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he is following to ensure that HIV infected women receive proper counselling about the risks to future children and advice about birth control or access to abortion if they wish it.

**Mr. Newton:** The provision of counselling is the responsibility of the clinician dealing with a person with HIV infection. The chief medical officer gave advice on counselling in the context of HIV infection in his letter CMO(86)18 sent to all doctors on 2 December 1986. The Government-funded training courses for counsellors include material on these matters to enable their students adequately to counsel women identified as being infected with HIV.

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals he has to educate young people about AIDS.

**Mr. Newton:** Part of the Government's public education campaign is specifically aimed at young people, including advertisements and features on radio, in the cinema and in teenage magazines. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Science has also made it clear that schools, too, have a responsibility to inform pupils of the facts about AIDS.

The effectiveness of these initiatives is being closely monitored, and the results wil be taken into account in planning further phases of the compaign.

**Mr. William Powell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many persons who committed suicide during 1986 were known or believed to be carriers of AIDS.

**Mr. Newton:** The data for 1986 on death by suicide will be processed later this year when complete but it will not be possible to identify all cases where the person was infected with the AIDS virus.

**Mr. Merchant** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the latest cumulative total, broken down by sex, of the number of *(a)* deaths from and *(b)* confirmed diagnosis of AIDS in Britain and also figures for victims not in high risk groups.

**Mr. Newton:** By the end of December 1986 the communicable disease surveillance centre of the Public Health Laboratory Service had received reports on 610 diagnosed cases of AIDS in the United Kingdom. In 293 of these cases the patient had died. These figures have been analysed by transmission characteristic and by sex of patient as follows:

| | *Number of Cases* | | | *Number of Deaths* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Transmission Characteristic* | *Male* | *Female* | *Total* | |
| Homosexual/bisexual | 538 | — | 538 | 244 |
| Intravenous drug abuser (IVDA) | 7 | 2 | 9 | 2 |
| Homosexual and IVDA | 6 | — | 6 | 4 |
| Haemophiliac | 25 | — | 25 | 19 |
| Recipient of blood: abroad | 3 | 3 | 6 | 5 |
| Recipient of blood: United Kingdom | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Heterosexual: | | | | |
| Presumed infected abroad | 9 | 5 | 14 | 9 |
| Presumed infected in United Kingdom | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Child of HIV antibody positive mother | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Other | — | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Totals | 593 | 17 | 610 | 293 |

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if the AIDS leaflet distributed to households will be printed in languages other than English; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** The leaflet is currently available in Welsh. Consideration is being given to its production in a number of other languages.

**Mr. Alexander** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what extra resources have been allocated to regional health authorities to help to deal with AIDS.

**Mr. Fowler:** In addition to the continued £20 million programme of public education already announced, of which £12 million is planned to fall in 1987-88, we are making available a further £7 million to health authorities for the treatment, care and counselling of victims and carriers of AIDS. Further allocations will be announced in due course for other AIDS-related services including those of the public health laboratory service and voluntary bodies working in this field.

Details of the £7 million allocation to health authorities are:

*(1986-87 allocations)*

| *Treatment and counselling* | *£'000* | *£'000* |
|---|---|---|
| N.W. Thames region | 2,500 | 1,000 |
| N.E. Thames region | 1,200 | 1,045 |
| S.E. Thames region | 700 | 500 |
| Haemophilia reference centres | 280 | 270 |
| Counselling training programme | 200 | 100 |
| Nurse training (English National Board) | 20 | 15 |
| Drug abuse counselling, etc | 1,300 | — |
| Other projects | 800 | 115 |

### NHS (Staffing)

**Mrs. Reneé Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will modify medical manpower structures in view of the need for increased medical and nursing staff of all grades, especially in infectious diseases and clinical immunology.

**Mr. Newton:** It is for health authorities to assess their need for medical and nursing staff in all specialties. Their assessment is conveyed to the Department through the strategic planning and accountability systems. Based on these plans, it is the Department's role to ensure an adequate supply of medical manpower to meet that need.

Existing medical manpower structures make it difficult to reconcile these objectives with the need to ensure adequate levels of intermediate-level medical staffing. The proposals contained in the consultative document, "Hospital Medical Staffing: Achieving a Balance" address this problem. they are intended both to make a career in hospital medicine more secure, and to relate the supply of doctors training in each specialty more closely to career opportunities. The proposals are designed to give health authorities greater flexibility to match hospital medical staffing to local needs and circumstances and to the unforeseen demands of emerging public health problems.

### Kidney Donors

**Mr. Dalyell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what consideration he is giving to proposed legislation on an opting-out system for kidney donation.

**Mrs. Currie:** We have no plans at present to amend the Human Tissue Act 1981 to introduce an opting-out system for kidney donation.

### Severe Weather Payments

**Mr. Wallace** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to extend eligibility for severe weather payments to people receiving mobility allowance.

**Mr. Major:** Single payments towards extra heating costs during a period of exceptionally cold weather are already available to supplementary benefit households containing anyone who is chronically sick or disabled, subject to the normal £500 capital rule. The definition of chronically sick or disabled includes people in receipt of a mobility allowance.

**Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make arrangements to ensure that his Department publicises in the local press the occasions when the previous full week recorded average temperature in the relevant areas of – 1·5°C, so triggering exceptionally severe weather payments.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Oldham, West (Mr. Meacher) on 15 January at columns *297-298* in which I gave details of the widespread advertising including publicity in the local press undertaken during the exceptionally cold spell last month. Arrangements exist to ensure that whenever the new trigger (a weekly average of 0°C) is reached in any local office area publicity will appear in local newspapers.

**Mr. Bruce** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list, for each of the relevant weather reporting stations, the number of times the average temperature has fallen to – 1·5°C or below for a seven-day period from a Monday to Sunday over the last five years.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley (Mr. Foulkes) on 28 January at columns *284-287*.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the names and locations of the weather stations in Scotland and the parliamentary constituencies for which each provide information for the award of severe weather payments.

**Mr. Major:** The information requested is as follows:

*Weather station and Parliamentary constituency*

Aberdeen airport
Aberdeen, North; Aberdeen, South; Angus, East[1]; Banff and Buchan[1]; Gordon; Kincardine and Deeside; Moray[1]; Tayside, North[1].

Dumfries
Clydesdale[1]; Dumfries; Galloway and Upper Nithsdale[1].

Edinburgh airport
Clackmannan; Dunfermline, East; Dunfermline, West; East Lothian; Edinburgh, Central; Edinburgh, East; Edinburgh, Leith; Edinburgh, Pentlands; Edinburgh, South; Edinburgh, West; Falkirk, East; Falkirk, West; Fife, Central[1]; Linlithgow; Livingston; Midlothian; Motherwell, North[1]; Stirling.

Eskdalemuir
Roxburgh and Berwickshire; Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale.

Fort William
Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber[1]; Ross, Cromarty and Skye[1].

Glasgow airport
Argyll and Bute[1]; Clydebank and Milngavie; Clydesdale[1]; Cumbernauld and Kilsyth; Cunninghame North[1]; Dumbarton; East Kilbride; Eastwood; Glasgow, Cathcart; Glasgow, Central; Glasgow Garscadden; Glasgow Govan; Glasgow, Hillhead; Glasgow, Maryhill; Glasgow, Pollok; Glagow Provan; Glasgow Rutherglen; Glasgow, Shettleston; Glasgow Springburn; Greenock and Port Glasgow; Hamilton; Monklands, East; Monklands, West; Motherwell North[1]; Motherwell South; Paisley, North; Paisley, South; Renfrew West and Inverclyde; Strathkelvin and Bearsden.

Kinloss
Banff and Buchan[1]; Caithness and Sutherland[1]; Inverness, Nairn and Lochaber[1]; Moray[1]; Ross, Cromarty and Skye[1].

Kirkwall
Orkney and Shetland[1].

Lerwick
Orkney and Shetland[1].

Leuchars
Angus, East[1]; Dundee, East; Dundee, West; Fife, Central[1]; Fife, North-East; Kirkcaldy; Perth and Kinross; Tayside, North[1].

Machriphanish
Argyll and Bute[1].

Prestwick
Ayr; Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley; Clydesdale[1]; Cunninghame, North[1]; Cunninghame, South; Kilmarnock and Loudon.

Stornaway
Western Isles.

Whithorn
Galloway and Upper Nithsdale[1].

Wick
Caithness and Sutherland[1].

[1] Parliamentary constituency divided between two or more weather stations.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list in the *Official Report* the weather stations situated in Strathclyde which recorded the severe weather payments trigger temperature of minus 1·5 deg C in the weeks 5 to 11 January and 12 to 18 January.

**Mr. Major:** None for the week 5 to 11 January. Prestwick for the week 12 to 18 January.

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many persons received a severe weather payment in each week from 1 January to 31 March in 1985, 1986 and so far in 1987.

**Mr. Major:** Information is not available in the form requested. However, the number of exceptionally severe weather payments made for the 1985 and 1986 winter periods were as follows:

| *Year* | *Payments* |
|---|---|
| 1985 | 170,000 |
| 1986 | 456,026 |

Information for 1987 is not yet available but will be published in due course.

## Diabetics

**Mr. Beith** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what recent representations he has received from the British Diabetics Association about the availability of disposable needles for diabetics.

**Mrs. Currie:** I have received a letter proposing that diabetics requiring insulin injections and who wish to use plastic disposable syringes could be given a voucher each year towards the cost.

## Benefits

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many recipients of supplementary benefit in *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales were one-parent families in each of the years 1980 to 1985.

**Mr. Lyell:** Information on the number of lone-parent recipients in Clwyd is not available. The information in respect of Wales as a whole is as follows:

| *Year* | *Number of lone-parent recipients (thousands)* |
|---|---|
| 1980 | 19 |
| 1981 | 22 |
| 1982 | 24 |
| 1983 | 27 |
| 1984 | 28 |

*Note:* Latest available date.
*Source:* Annual statistical inquiries.

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make it his policy to reinstate entitlement to certificated housing benefit and other passported benefits retrospectively to all past and present trainees under the Dundee pilot scheme who were in training prior to 26 January; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Major:** It is not possible in law to backdate entitlement to certificated housing benefit for a period when supplementary benefit was not payable in the way suggested. However, I refer the hon. Member to my replies to him on 20 November 1986 at columns *333-335* describing the safeguards made for ensuring that trainees at Dundee and elsewhere would be no worse off as a result of participating in the job training scheme.

## Pensions

**Mr. Barry Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people in *(a)* Clwyd and *(b)* Wales are in receipt of the State pension, giving the number of single and married pensioners in each case.

**Mr. Lyell:** At 31 March 1986 some 481,000 people in Wales were in receipt of a basic state retirement pension or a non-contributory over-80s retirement pension. I regret that information on the number of retirement pensioners in Clwyd is not available and that information showing the number of single people and couples who receive retirement pension is available only for Great Britain as a whole.

## Reyes Syndrome

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what consideration has been given by the Committee on Safety of Medicines to the United States

"Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report" dated January 1985, which was sent to the then Minister for Health by Mr. C. S. Harrington, the chairman of the National Reyes Syndrome Foundation;

(2) how many young persons have been reported as suffering from Reyes syndrome since 1981; and what change there has been in the incidence of the syndrome following the official advice in June 1986 that aspirin should not be given to children;

(3) what has been the cost of the British Reyes syndrome surveillance scheme for each year that it has existed; what has been the additional cost of the risk factor study; who has paid for the surveillance scheme and the study; what contribution to their costs have come from public funds; how the surveillance scheme currently is being funded; and what steps are being taken to ensure that future funding is adequate.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the right hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what requests for funding into research related to Reyes syndrome have been made to his Department; and what was the response.

**Mrs. Currie:** In 1986 the Department received applications from the National Reye's Syndrome Foundation of the United Kingdom for the support of the following projects:

i. Study of metabolic and immunological abnormalities in Reye's syndrome in the United Kingdom.

ii. Neurological and psychological follow up study of children with Reye's syndrome.

Both were referred to the Medical Research Council, which receives grant in aid from the science vote of the Department of Education and Science.

### Aspirin

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what discussions there have been with overseas drug regulatory agencies following his decision to recommend that aspirin should not be given to children;

(2) whether he has requested aspirin manufacturers to warn on their labels that aspirin should not normally be given to children; and whether any such request applies to aspirin intended for overseas sale;

(3) if the decision of the Committee on Safety of Medicines that aspirin should not normally be given to children has been communicated to other drug regulatory agencies together with the evidence that led the committee to reach this conclusion.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the right hon. Member have replies as soon as possible.

### Social Security Appeals

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will list in the *Official Report* the number of appeals heard by Social Security Appeals Tribunals in Scotland in the years 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986; and what the average length of time was for an appeal to be heard in each of these years;

(2) what is the average length of time now being taken to hear an appeal against an adjudication officer's decision in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Strathclyde and *(c)* Greenock and Port Glasgow.

**Mr. Lyell:** National administrative statistics for social security appeals are not disaggregated for areas smaller than a social security region. Information on the total number of social security appeals heard and the average length of time between lodgement and hearing in Scotland is available from April 1984.

| | *Appeals heard and decided* | *Average time between lodgement and hearing (weeks)* |
|---|---|---|
| April to December 1984 | 18,945 | 11·7 |
| April to December 1985 | 19,003 | 12·3 |
| January to March 1986 | 5,033 | 14·1 |

### Alcohol Addiction

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) how much money was spent in each of the past five years on cures for alcohol addiction and alcohol misuse;

(2) how much money was spent in each of the past five years on curing people addicted to alcohol; and if he will give a breakdown of those figures.

**Mrs. Currie:** The precise costs of the treatment of people suffering the effects of alcohol misuse or alcohol addiction cannot be calculated on present information. Recent research into the cost of alcohol misuse to the National Health Service has produced an estimate of some £95 million per annum (1983 prices) for England and Wales.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospital beds were taken up in each of the past five years by patients suffering from physical and psychiatric ailments normally associated with alcohol addiction or alcohol misuse.

**Mrs. Currie:** The available information for the main alcohol-related diseases is given in the tables. Information about the numbers of beds occupied in mental illness hospitals and units by patients with alcohol-related diagnoses is not available, but about a quarter of the patients with these diagnoses discharged in 1985 had been in hospital for less than a week and about half for between one week and a month.

*Estimated average daily number of beds in non-psychiatric hospitals occupied by patients with selected main diagnoses*
*National Health Service hospitals in England*

| *Main diagnosis* | *ICD*[1] *code* | *Estimated average number of beds occupied daily* 1980 | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Alcoholic psychoses** | **291** | **18** | **38** | **13** | **23** | **31** |
| **Alcohol dependence syndrome** | **303** | **70** | **69** | **65** | **72** | **64** |

| *Main diagnosis* | *ICD*[1] *code* | *Estimated average number of beds occupied daily* *1980* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Non-dependent abuse of drugs[2] | 305 | 12 | 13 | 16 | 15 | 14 |
| Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis[2] | 571 | 292 | 280 | 319 | 316 | 287 |
| Toxic effect of alcohol | 980 | 11 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 9 |

[1] International Classification of Diseases, 9th revision.

[2] Some illness in these categories is not associated with the consumption of alcohol.

*Admissions to mental illness hospitals and units with a main diagnosis of alcohol misuse*
*National Health Service hospitals in England*

| *Main diagnosis* | *ICD*[1] *code* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alcohol psychoses | 291 | 675 | 637 | 616 | 671 | 746 |
| Alcohol dependence syndrome | 303 | [2]14,020 | 12,032 | 12,041 | 12,111 | 11,453 |
| Non-dependent abuse of alcohol | 305·0 | [2]520 | 1,637 | 1,991 | 2,440 | 3,023 |

[1] International Classification of Diseases, 9th revision.

[2] A change in statistical coding practice for alcohol related diagnoses was introduced in 1982. Statistics for 1981 are not comparable to those for later years.

### Dentistry (Peterborough)

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) if he will give the number of community dental health clinics which have been closed in the Peterborough health authority area within the last year and the number which are due to be closed in the coming year; and if he will make a statement;

(2) if he will publish the average earnings of dentists employed by Peterborough health authority in each of the last three years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** These are essentially local matters which the hon. Member might wish to refer to the district general manager of the Peterborough district health authority.

### Riverside Health Authority (Hospitals)

**Mr. Raynsford** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what additional financial assistance will be made available to hospitals in the Riverside health district from the special fund set up to ease the impact of reallocation of resources away from London under the resource allocation working party arrangements.

**Mr. Newton:** It is for the North West Thames regional health authority to submit proposals, within Departmental guidelines, for spending its allocation of £2·6 million for 1987-88 from the special fund established to ease transitional problems in regions receiving less than national average growth.

### Elderly People

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what procedures exist to ensure that elderly people who are being cared for in the private sector are receiving public funds for their residential care after proper assessment of their needs; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Major:** As a matter of normal good practice, local authorities assess any elderly people placed and financed by them in independent homes. Supplementary benefit payments to people living in residential homes do not depend on a care assessment. However, in line with the recommendation of a joint central/local government working party, the Department is funding pilot studies in four areas under tha aegis of York university, so as to assess the feasibility of extending loca authorities' normal assessment procedures to supplementary benefit claimants. A report is expected by Easter.

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are being taken to aid groups with special experience of illness in old age to disseminate their knowledge into non-specialised hospital departments, as suggested by the Health Advisory Service annual report; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** It is the Department's policy that wherever possible acute geriatric units should be provided in main district general hospital (DGH) buildings. This policy was outlined in the document entitled "The Respective Roles of the General Acute and Geriatric Sectors in Care of the Elderly Hospital Patients" published by the Department in 1981. As the latest Health Advisory Service annual report recognises, having an acute geriatric unit in a DGH should facilitate a ready exchange of advice and mutual assistance between geriatric teams and colleagues in other specialties in which elderly people are treated.

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are being taken to introduce management practices into hospitals for the specific encouragement of privacy, self determination and choice for old people; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** Guidance on these matters is contained in the Royal College of Nursing booklet "Improving the Care of the Elderly in Hospital", which forms part of the training material provided to health authorities by the National Health Service Training Authority. The booklet has recently been extensively revised by a joint working party of the Royal College of Nursing, the British Geriatrics Society, the Royal College of Psychiatrists and this Department. The new version is expected to be published in the spring of this year. These issues are also fully covered by the Health Advisory Service in its reports on services for elderly people in particular districts.

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are being taken to offer public funds to bolster domiciliary care for the elderly; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** It is for local authorities to decide in the light of the total level of resources available how much should be devoted to domiciliary care for elderly people. Since 1978-79 expenditure on personal social services by local authorities in England has increased by over 20 per cent. in real terms. From the very substantial increase in rates support grant provision for 1987-88 the indicative figure for personal social services expenditure allows for the first time an extra 1 per cent. (£27 million) to enable authorities to build up their community care services.

Joint finance money from health authorities can also be used to fund domiciliary care. The annual allocations to health authorities for joint finance have increased from £34·5 million in 1978-79 to £110·8 million in 1986-87, a real terms increase of 64·1 per cent. The main allocation to regional health authorities for joint finance will be 3·75 per cent. higher for 1987-88 than for the previous year.

In addition, we are making a total of more than £10 million available under the Helping the Community to Care programme announced in 1984. Elements of this programme are directly concerned with developing services and for those caring for elderly people in their own homes. We recognise that it will often be good practice to provide frail elderly people with domiciliary care to enable them to continue to lead an independent life. The overview of community care which Sir Roy Griffiths will be undertaking and which my right hon. Friend announced on 16 December 1986 will be considering what action might be taken to encourage such good practice.

### Registered Homes Act 1984

**Mr. Freud** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps are being taken to improve the implementation of the Registered Homes Act 1984; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Surrey, South-West (Mrs. Bottomley) on 19 November 1986 at column *217*. The inspectorate's report is expected shortly. Later this year the inspectorate will also be organising a programme of workshops for registration and inspection staff and their managers.

### London Hospital, Whitechapel

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if the London hospital in Whitechapel is one of the hospitals to be made available to the United States of America for wartime use under the United Kingdom lines of communications agreement.

**Mrs. Currie:** The Government are making contingency plans for the best use of all National Health Service resources in a war emergency and these will cover the treatment in United Kingdom hospitals of both British and other NATO military casualties. The United States is establishing its own contingency hospitals which would be activated in a crisis. They will be equipped, manned and financed by the United States Government and would reduce the burden on the NHS. No United Kingdom hospital is designated for exclusive use for American military casualties.

### Private Blood Banks

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what plans he has to regulate the operation of the private blood banks.

**Mr. Newton:** We are urgently considering the issues involved.

### Cancer (Screening Programmes)

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will now increase funding specifically on cervical and breast cancer screening programmes.

**Mrs. Currie:** Health authorities have been required to give priority to improving their cervical cancer screening programmes within their existing resources. Total funding to HAs is to rise by 6 per cent. in April 1987 over the previous year.

The Government are urgently considering their response to Professor Sir Patrick Forrest's report on breast cancer screening and will make a announcement shortly.

### Mrs. Manning (Correspondence)

**Mr. Soames** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he proposes to answer the letter from the hon. Member for Crawley of 17 November 1986 concerning Mrs. Manning and her child of 1 Spring Cottages, Hophurst Lane, Crawley Down.

**Mr. Lyell:** I wrote to my hon. Friend on 3 February.

### Hospital Beds

**Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many hospital beds there were in the Leeds area health authority in 1979; and how many there are in the Leeds eastern district health authority and the Leeds western district health authority in the latest available figures.

**Mrs. Currie:** The information requested is given in the table. Between 1979 and 1985 the number of in-patient cases treated increased by 32·4 per cent. from 43,827 to 58,032 in Leeds western district health authority and by 15·3 per cent. from 51,012 to 58,802 in Leeds eastern district health authority.

*National Health Service hospitals in Leeds*

| | *Average daily number of available beds* | |
|---|---|---|
| *Health authority* | *1979* | *1985* |
| Leeds Western district health authority[1] | 3,015 | 3,156 |
| Leeds Eastern district health authority[1] | 3,224 | 2,561 |
| TOTAL[2] | 6,239 | 5,717 |

[1] Health district prior to 1982.

[2] Leeds area health authority prior to 1982.

### Nurse Training

**Mr. Fatchett** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he has any plans to introduce *(a)* the YTS and *(b)* other Government-sponsored schemes into nurse training; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** There are no plans to introduce the youth training scheme or any other Government-sponsored scheme into nurse training. We have, however, recently announced a feasibility study of the scope for greater use of YTS for:

*(a)* Training 16 to 18-year-olds as support workers to nurses; and

*(b)* Identifying the more able trainees and bringing them up to the required standard for entry to nurse training by the conclusion of their YTS training.

The study is purely exploratory; no decisions have yet been taken and discussions will take place with professional and staff interests both during and after the study before any changes are made. The study is jointly sponsored by this Department, the Manpower Services Commission, the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting and the NHS Training Authority.

### Generics (UK) Ltd.

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if, pursuant to his answer of 26 January, *Official Report,* column *92,* he will name the locations of the principal overseas manufacturing sites of Generics (UK) Ltd. that have been inspected as part of his Department's regular inspection programme; and if he will name the location of the site that is scheduled to be visited early in February.

**Mr. Newton:** Information about manufacturing sites, like other information contained in licence applications under the Medicines Act, is commercially confidential and is not disclosed by the licensing authority.

### Harris Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

**Mr. McNamara** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many of the manufacturing sites used by Harris Pharmaceuticals Ltd. for the production of generic medicines sold to the National Health Service were subject to inspection by the United Kingdom Medicines Inspectorate in each of the last three years; and when Harris Pharmaceuticals Ltd's manufacturing sites in South Africa were last inspected by the United Kingdom Medicines Inspectorate.

**Mr. Newton:** The manufacturing sites used by Harris Pharmaceuticals Ltd. for products for which it holds United Kingdom product licences are largely covered by multilateral agreements which provide for inspection reports to be supplied to the United Kingdom medicines inspectorate by the licensing authority of the country concerned. The remainder have been inspected by the United Kingdom medicines inspectorate or are scheduled for a visit within the next 12 months. All South African manufacturing sites named as possible sources of supply for Harris Pharmaceuticals Ltd. were inspected by United Kingdom medicines inspectors in the last 16 months. The frequency of inspection is a matter for the licensing authority and details of dates of individual inspections are not normally disclosed.

### National Insurance Contributions

**Mr. Robert B. Jones** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how he proposes to counter the avoidance of national insurance contributions by earnings being paid through discretionary trusts.

**Mr. Major:** Since the abolition of the upper earnings limit for employers' national insurance contributions announced in the 1985 Budget, there has been an increase in the practice of earnings being paid through trust funds, thereby avoiding NIC liability. To allow this to continue would result in a growing loss of the revenue needed to finance pensions and other contributory benefits. I will therefore shortly ask the Social Security Advisory Committee to consider draft regulations to end the exemption from liability for NICs on earnings paid through trust funds. I propose that these should take effect from 6 October 1987. I recognise that some employers used trusts to pay part of earnings before 1985 for reasons unconnected with the Budget and to give these more time to adapt, I propose that the present exemption should continue until 5 April 1990 for trusts established before 6 April 1985.

### Finance

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give for 1985-86 and for each district and special health authority the total income under *(a)* section 58, *(b)* section 65, *(c)* section 66 of the National Health Services Act 1977 and *(d)* the bad debts written off in respect of private patients.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to the reply,* 24 November 1986, c. *122*]: Following are the figures recorded in the annual accounts of health authorities for 1985-86. Income under each heading is shown net of sums written off in the year (including those due from earlier years). Separate write-off figures for income due under section 58 (which arises mainly from services provided to private health care establishments) are not collected centrally.

*Northern Region*

| | *Income (£)* | | | *Bad debts and claims abandoned (£)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| Hartlepool | 8,519 | 31,838 | 15,832 | — | 289 |
| North Tees | 1,377 | 33,341 | 9,842 | 397 | 86 |
| South Tees | 1,444 | 80,661 | 56,752 | — | — |
| East Cumbria | — | 92,332 | 15,124 | — | 13 |
| South Cumbria | 30 | 66,515 | 16,997 | — | 27 |
| West Cumbria | — | 9,646 | 1,619 | — | — |
| Darlington | — | 60,767 | 30,670 | — | — |
| Durham | — | 17,174 | 18,391 | — | 122 |
| North West Durham | — | 28,329 | 7,550 | 6 | 429 |
| South West Durham | — | 9,617 | 5,577 | — | 413 |
| Northumberland | — | 50,704 | 10,207 | — | 48 |
| Gateshead | — | 4,692 | 8,490 | 89 | 258 |

| | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| Newcastle upon Tyne | 122 | 324,685 | 73,805 | 865 | 66 |
| North Tyneside | — | 32,734 | 8,602 | — | 58 |
| South Tyneside | — | 29,566 | 9,433 | 78 | 392 |
| Sunderland | — | 86,873 | 23,129 | — | — |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 11,492 | 959,474 | 312,020 | 1,435 | 2,201 |

*Yorkshire Region*

| | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| Hull | 9,801 | 112,339 | 30,434 | — | — |
| East Yorks | — | 95,924 | 16,012 | — | — |
| Grimsby | — | 109,282 | 49,598 | 485 | 1,288 |
| Scunthorpe | 2,404 | 119,830 | 22,889 | 440 | 81 |
| Northallerton | — | 57,741 | 10,153 | — | 34 |
| York | 21 | 99,517 | 53,181 | — | 86 |
| Scarborough | 27,533 | 14,149 | 6,029 | — | 12 |
| Harrogate | — | 209,620 | 16,717 | — | 67 |
| Bradford | — | 110,416 | 54,209 | 175 | 294 |
| Airedale | — | 303,969 | 28,730 | 237 | 2,097 |
| Calderdale | 7,219 | 239,727 | 26,808 | — | 394 |
| Huddersfield | — | 71,107 | 24,604 | — | 622 |
| Dewsbury | — | 39,844 | 26,939 | — | 228 |
| Leeds Western | 1,958 | 1,012,402 | 95,536 | — | — |
| Leeds Eastern | — | 275,225 | 43,550 | — | — |
| Wakefield | — | 53,895 | 17,286 | 6 | 960 |
| Pontefract | 702 | 14,969 | 10,400 | — | 170 |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 49,638 | 2,939,956 | 533,075 | 1,343 | 6,333 |

*Trent Region*

| | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| North Derbyshire | — | 84,063 | 29,548 | 672 | 113 |
| South Derbyshire | 2,482 | 184,118 | 58,721 | 4,600 | 175 |
| Leicestershire | — | 402,356 | 93,065 | 59 | 85 |
| North Lincolnshire | 9,100 | 75,911 | 60,767 | 167 | 1,155 |
| South Lincolnshire | — | 219,960 | 41,317 | 1,486 | 136 |
| Bassetlaw | — | 45,608 | 13,831 | — | — |
| Central Nottinghamshire | 1,121 | 21,687 | 20,023 | 743 | 241 |
| Nottingham | 40,140 | 169,770 | 100,530 | 2,184 | 1,713 |
| Barnsley | — | 41,703 | 16,799 | — | 16 |
| Doncaster | 5,831 | 39,260 | 22,679 | — | (5) |
| Rotherham | — | — | — | — | — |
| Sheffield | 15,037 | 212,775 | 76,659 | 718 | 320 |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 73,711 | 1,497,211 | 533,939 | 10,629 | 3,949 |

*East Anglian Region*

| | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| Cambridge | 39,725 | 324,744 | 81,002 | 24 | 1,455 |
| Peterborough | 19,173 | 40,520 | 23,151 | 1,281 | 304 |
| West Suffolk | 4,421 | 197,924 | 24,196 | 17 | 94 |
| East Suffolk | — | 260,044 | 67,700 | — | — |
| Norwich | 1,624 | 512,649 | 50,819 | 3,205 | 787 |
| Great Yarmouth | — | 66,613 | 25,840 | 1,740 | 5,744 |
| West Norfolk and Wisbech | — | 248,330 | 51,143 | — | 6 |
| Huntingdon | — | 133,487 | 10,643 | — | — |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 64,943 | 1,784,311 | 334,494 | 6,267 | 8,390 |

*North West Thames Region*

| | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| North Bedfordshire | 849 | 129,664 | 46,381 | 2,450 | 1,321 |
| South Bedfordshire | 3,843 | 28,412 | 21,708 | 1,818 | 256 |
| North Hertfordshire | 5,174 | 51,599 | 19,065 | — | — |
| East Hertfordshire | — | 114,293 | 41,809 | 1,588 | 527 |
| North West Hertfordshire | 68 | 138,147 | 31,594 | — | 770 |
| South West Hertfordshire | 13,066 | 72,692 | 16,092 | 597 | — |
| Barnet | 1,720 | 62,653 | 49,954 | 5,942 | 8,826 |
| Harrow | 12,144 | 106,019 | 2,585 | 1,203 | 493 |
| Hillingdon | — | 562,047 | 109,205 | 4,701 | 925 |
| Hounslow and Spelthorne | — | 121,956 | 66,288 | 3,931 | 1,935 |
| Ealing | — | 23 | 4,833 | 463 | 1,586 |
| Brent | — | 10,029 | 6,692 | — | — |
| Paddington | — | 1,973,522 | 113,086 | 9,712 | 735 |
| Riverside | — | 2,356,358 | 280,455 | 18,593 | 4,460 |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 36,864 | 5,727,414 | 809,748 | 50,998 | 21,834 |

*North East Thames Region*

| | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| Basildon and Thurrock | — | 138,385 | 32,416 | 1,737 | 1,774 |
| Mid Essex | — | 449,923 | 117,050 | 707 | 8,478 |
| North East Essex | — | 73,165 | 58,850 | 68 | 145 |
| West Essex | — | 292,782 | 65,408 | 968 | 23 |
| Southend | 6.693 | 142,369 | 37,227 | — | — |
| Barking/Havering/Brentwood | — | 206,240 | 83,423 | 495 | — |
| Hampstead | — | 1,397,572 | 142,065 | 6,777 | 7,194 |
| Bloomsbury | — | 3,815,154 | 327,674 | 53 | 368 |
| Islington | — | 30,154 | 15,832 | 13,314 | 539 |
| City and Hackney | — | 345,137 | 23,819 | 44,588 | 4,301 |
| Newham | — | 4,344 | 5,807 | 1,841 | — |
| Tower Hamlets | 3,755 | 1,001,379 | 73,629 | 3,385 | — |
| Enfield | 348 | 55,150 | 20,629 | — | — |
| Haringey | — | 32,544 | 26,788 | 2,929 | 220 |
| Redbridge | — | 94,361 | 27,907 | 285 | 88 |
| Waltham Forest | 1,982 | 55,744 | 18,920 | 3,094 | 768 |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | 690 | — | — |
| Region Total | 12,778 | 8,134,403 | 1,078,134 | 80,241 | 23,898 |

*South East Thames Region*

| | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| Brighton | — | 409,235 | 83,622 | 2,753 | 1,142 |
| Eastbourne | 82 | 88,324 | 26,656 | 654 | 569 |
| Hastings | — | 103,368 | 37,964 | 804 | 136 |
| South East Kent | 112 | 96,249 | 16,933 | 706 | 177 |
| Canterbury and Thanet | 6 | 99,129 | 89,790 | — | 260 |
| Dartford and Gravesham | — | 30,748 | 25,760 | 1,048 | 374 |
| Maidstone | 53,058 | 27,376 | 22,977 | — | 212 |
| Medway | — | 16,066 | 22,178 | 838 | 640 |
| Tunbridge Wells | 15,236 | 535,310 | 107,572 | 487 | 396 |
| Bexley | — | 88,872 | 29,539 | 1,069 | 511 |
| Greenwich | 8,509 | 81,473 | 35,187 | 200 | 480 |
| Bromley | — | 120,480 | 44,476 | 2,232 | 892 |
| West Lambeth | 87,151 | 1,697,836 | 93,449 | 2,357 | 6 |
| Camberwell | — | 1,370,059 | 86,705 | 82,929 | — |
| Lewisham and North Southwark | — | 1,502,321 | 74,418 | 4,711 | 371 |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 164,154 | 6,266,846 | 797,226 | 100,788 | 6,166 |

*South West Thames Region*

| | *Income (£)* | | | *Bad debts and claims abandoned (£)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| North West Surrey | — | 155,342 | 57,180 | 20 | 378 |
| West Surrey/North East Hants | 12,424 | 204,380 | 56,337 | 344 | 2,206 |
| South West Surrey | — | 251,789 | 120,281 | 68 | 83 |
| Mid Surrey | 14,532 | 79,014 | 15,852 | — | 79 |
| East Surrey | 26,429 | 122,981 | 13,581 | 100 | 112 |
| Chichester | — | 116,833 | 30,768 | 2,328 | 640 |
| Mid Downs | — | 343,274 | 61,210 | — | — |
| Worthing | — | 54,933 | 4,258 | 2,428 | 27 |
| Croydon | 376 | 96,625 | 18,373 | 389 | 175 |
| Kingston and Esher | — | 187,711 | 25,967 | 5,366 | 182 |
| Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton | — | 29,149 | 20,393 | — | 3,439 |
| Wandsworth | — | 413,945 | 25,217 | 34,597 | 5,203 |
| Merton and Sutton | 9,467 | 200,341 | 35,631 | 586 | 71 |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 63,228 | 2,256,317 | 485,048 | 46,226 | 12,595 |

*Wessex Thames Region*

| | *Income (£)* | | | *Bad debts and claims abandoned (£)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| East Dorset | — | 140,711 | 67,079 | 870 | 46 |
| West Dorset | 15,942 | 32,224 | 8,067 | — | 9 |
| Portsmouth and South East Hants | 5,027 | 317,397 | 80,937 | 2,318 | 2,561 |
| Southampton and South West Hants | 655 | 268,280 | 51,689 | 17 | 180 |
| Winchester | — | 124,144 | 25,880 | — | — |
| Basingstoke and North Hants | 33,336 | 269,399 | 32,589 | 28 | 396 |
| Salisbury | — | 24,362 | 25,492 | — | 63 |
| Swindon | — | 159,088 | 22,769 | 1,739 | 205 |
| Bath | 2,000 | 39,320 | 35,799 | 60 | 143 |
| Isle of Wight | 11,737 | 54,986 | 9,110 | 200 | 37 |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 68,697 | 1,429,911 | 359,411 | 5,232 | 3,640 |

*Oxford Region*

| | *Income (£)* | | | *Bad debts and claims abandoned (£)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| East Berkshire | 2,846 | 118,601 | 66,571 | 3,920 | 227 |
| West Berkshire | — | 607,818 | 136,329 | 149 | 284 |
| Aylesbury | 9,334 | 537,142 | 51,580 | 10,651 | 2,194 |
| Wycombe | 19,674 | 308,015 | 39,972 | 1,645 | 350 |
| Milton Keynes | — | 5,672 | 16,512 | — | 2,105 |
| Kettering | — | 320,608 | 48,425 | 1,551 | 177 |
| Northampton | 24,444 | 224,802 | 69,118 | 4,849 | 1,425 |
| Oxford | 4,449 | 1,066,895 | 209,334 | — | — |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | 1,978 | — | 115 |
| Region Total | 60,747 | 3,189,553 | 639,819 | 22,765 | 6,877 |

*South Western Region*

| | *Income (£)* | | | *Bad debts and claims abandoned (£)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| Bristol and Weston | — | 220,359 | 71,530 | 1,457 | 1,733 |
| Frenchay | 1,925 | 124,044 | 30,333 | — | — |
| Southmead | — | 6,234 | 8,547 | — | 162 |
| Cornwall | 11,007 | 112,132 | 36,178 | 8 | 257 |
| Exeter | 14,582 | 59,238 | 64,019 | — | 500 |
| North Devon | — | 74,378 | 13,612 | — | — |
| Plymouth | 10,571 | 108,744 | 40,584 | 397 | — |
| Torbay | 5,138 | 33,292 | 20,111 | 753 | 31 |

| Health Districts | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Section 58 | Section 65 | Section 66 | Section 65 | Section 66 |
| Cheltenham | 9,887 | 373,431 | 57,899 | 1,073 | 249 |
| Gloucester | — | 223,406 | 40,856 | — | — |
| Somerset | 21,809 | 342,471 | 34,323 | 563 | 382 |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 74,919 | 1,677,729 | 417,992 | 4,251 | 3,314 |

*West Midlands Region*

| Health Districts | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Section 58 | Section 65 | Section 66 | Section 65 | Section 66 |
| Bromsgrove and Redditch | — | 32,287 | 10,959 | — | 125 |
| Hereford | 6,695 | 46,680 | 17,280 | — | — |
| Kidderminster | — | 45,117 | 13,748 | 258 | 168 |
| Worcester | — | 165,710 | 53,213 | 1,553 | 103 |
| Shropshire | 13,047 | 230,692 | 39,427 | — | — |
| Mid-Staffordshire | — | 198,421 | 44,530 | 1,200 | 78 |
| North-Staffordshire | 20,996 | 209,895 | 103,551 | — | 47 |
| South East Staffordshire | 522 | 171,018 | 42,533 | — | 573 |
| Rugby | — | 151,028 | 16,076 | — | 26,199 |
| North Warwickshire | — | 44,994 | 14,156 | 240 | — |
| South Warwickshire | — | 218,222 | 15,438 | 195 | 3 |
| Central Birmingham | 14,818 | 445,341 | 86,189 | 5,154 | 302 |
| East Birmingham | — | 22,846 | 17,404 | 358 | 36 |
| North Birmingham | 7,831 | 53,593 | (1,978) | 519 | 32,028 |
| South Birmingham | 3,718 | 97,290 | 12,006 | 1,723 | 9 |
| West Birmingham | — | 53,769 | 18,374 | 243 | 223 |
| Coventry | — | 230,166 | 49,060 | 1,887 | 690 |
| Dudley | — | 62,272 | 41,054 | 633 | — |
| Sandwell | — | 85,747 | 23,561 | 268 | 195 |
| Solihull | — | 55,016 | 6,205 | 4,190 | — |
| Walsall | — | 133,284 | 21,219 | 1,988 | 402 |
| Wolverhampton | — | 40,970 | 25,136 | — | — |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 67,627 | 2,794,358 | 669,141 | 20,409 | 61,181 |

*Mersey Region*

| Health Districts | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Section 58 | Section 65 | Section 66 | Section 65 | Section 66 |
| Chester | 22,719 | 22,090 | 12,342 | 229 | 66 |
| Crewe | — | 259,678 | 92,547 | 2,114 | 361 |
| Halton | — | — | 1,849 | — | — |
| Macclesfield | — | 95,307 | 30,867 | 1,076 | 912 |
| Warrington | — | 372,546 | 22,401 | 1,116 | 37 |
| Liverpool | — | 397,819 | 62,027 | 1,187 | 650 |
| St. Helens and Knowsley | 16,928 | 123,694 | 40,713 | — | — |
| Southport and Formby | — | 189,862 | 24,399 | — | — |
| South Sefton | 7,706 | 90,957 | 24,750 | — | 274 |
| Wirral | 91 | 136,729 | 35,616 | 3,038 | 156 |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Regional Total | 47,444 | 1,688,682 | 347,511 | 8,760 | 2,456 |

*North Western Region*

| Health Districts | Income (£) | | | Bad debts and claims abandoned (£) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Section 58 | Section 65 | Section 66 | Section 65 | Section 66 |
| Lancaster | 13,602 | 24,780 | 14,162 | 294 | 160 |
| Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde | 25,551 | 85,266 | 15,446 | 3,743 | 300 |
| Preston | 11,313 | 255,714 | 76,427 | 75 | 123 |
| Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley | 8,566 | 37,663 | 19,980 | — | — |
| Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale | 1,685 | 83,300 | 17,083 | — | 169 |
| West Lancashire | — | 298,792 | 26,401 | 756 | 463 |
| Chorley and South Ribble | — | 18,108 | 3,586 | — | 8 |
| Bolton | — | 14,826 | 6,253 | — | — |
| Bury | — | 264,029 | 36,256 | 2,402 | 1,160 |

| | *Income (£)* | | | *Bad debts and claims abandoned (£)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Health Districts* | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| North Manchester | — | 17,893 | 19,418 | 1,599 | 911 |
| Central Manchester | 1,108 | 986,870 | 91,110 | — | — |
| South Manchester | 3,804 | 595,355 | 180,329 | — | 7,356 |
| Oldham | 12,695 | 80,434 | 10,596 | 1,646 | 53 |
| Rochdale | — | 4,691 | 6,451 | — | 69 |
| Salford | 2,231 | 66,146 | 46,665 | — | — |
| Stockport | — | 53,894 | 27,442 | — | 738 |
| Tameside and Glossop | — | 21,319 | 11,807 | 102 | 395 |
| Trafford | — | 37,085 | 12,451 | 461 | 191 |
| Wigan | 342 | 82,213 | 38,910 | — | — |
| Regional Health Authority | — | — | — | — | — |
| Region Total | 80,897 | 3,029,378 | 660,773 | 11,078 | 12,096 |

*Special Health Authorities for the London Postgraduate Teaching Hospitals*

| | *Income (£)* | | | *Bad debts and claims abandoned (£)* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Section 58* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* | *Section 65* | *Section 66* |
| Hospitals for sick children | — | 2,023,257 | 70,544 | 1,521 | 61 |
| National hospitals for nervous diseases | 129,029 | 546,143 | 99,410 | 2,884 | 1,707 |
| Moorfields Eye Hospital | — | 586,221 | 53,226 | 1,472 | 317 |
| Bethlem Royal Hospital and the Maudsley Hospital | — | 115,556 | 7,657 | — | 150 |
| National Heart and Chest | 12,775 | 2,202,822 | 47,374 | 22,251 | 36 |
| Royal Marsden | — | 1,697,530 | 681,164 | 32,638 | 7,001 |
| Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's | — | 1,240,295 | 182,229 | 17,991 | 7,515 |
| Eastman Dental | — | — | 8,801 | — | 104 |
| Total | 141,804 | 8,411,824 | 1,150,405 | 78,757 | 16,891 |

# Written Answers to Questions

*Friday 6 February 1987*

## WALES

### Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the expenditure of his Department in relation to its responsibilities for historic buildings and ancient monuments in each year since 1979, differentiating between *(a)* administrative expenditure, *(b)* expenditure administered in relation to historic buildings and *(c)* expenditure associated with ancient monuments.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** The administrative costs relating to historic buildings and ancient monuments for which we are responsible are not readily identifiable for the years prior to 1985-86. However, for 1985-86 and 1986-87 the Welsh Office Departmental running costs relating to Cadw are £2·061 million and £2·2 million respectively.

For *(b)* and *(c)* taking these two aspects together the information requested is as follows:

| | *Historic buildings £000's* | *Ancient monuments £000's* | *RCAHM(W) £000's* | *Total £000's* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 546 | 861 | n/a | 1,407 |
| 1980-81 | 875 | 1,071 | n/a | 1,946 |
| 1981-82 | 1,224 | 1,090 | n/a | 2,314 |
| 1982-83 | 892 | 1,334 | n/a | 2,226 |
| 1983-84 | 824 | 1,546 | 462 | 2,832 |
| 1984-85 | 1,424 | 1,786 | 401 | 3,611 |
| 1985-86 | 2,087 | 1,507 | 550 | 4,144 |
| [1]1986-87 | 2,144 | 1,846 | 500 | 4,490 |

[1] Estimate.

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales how many staff were employed by his Department in relation to its responsibilities for historic buildings and ancient monuments in Wales in each year since 1979.

**Mr. Wyn Roberts:** Until 1982, work on historic buildings and ancient monuments fell to a number of divisions in the Department and the staff engaged on these functions cannot now be accurately determined. The work was brought together in one division in 1982 and since late 1984 has been the responsibility of Cadw. The number of staff in post as at 1 January each year from 1983 (the earliest date for which figures are available) was as follows:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| 1983 | 209 |
| 1984 | 194 |
| 1985 | 191 |
| 1986 | 198 |
| 1987 | 194 |

### Industrial Assistance

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what financial support to industry in Wales has been allocated through *(a)* his Department, *(b)* the Welsh Development Agency and *(c)* the Development Board for Rural Wales, during each financial year from 1976-77 to 1985-86.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** Details of regional assistance funds allocated through the Welsh Office can be found in the annual Appropriation Accounts covering expenditure in Wales. Details of financial support to industry allocated through the Welsh Development Agency and Development Board for Rural Wales are given in their respective annual reports and accounts. Copies of these publications are available in the Library of the House.

### Regional Aid

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Wales what was the total sum of regional development grants paid to industry in Wales during each year since 1979.

**Mr. Nicholas Edwards:** Payments of regional development grant in Wales since 1979-80 (in £m) were as follows:—

| | *£ million* |
|---|---|
| 1979-80 | 50·7 |
| 1980-81 | 103·5 |
| 1981-82 | 122·2 |
| 1982-83 | 121·5 |
| 1983-84 | 72·1 |
| 1984-85 | 92·7 |
| 1985-86 | 84·4 |
| 1986-87 | 71·8 |

The 1986-87 figure is the latest available and provisional.

## SOLICITOR-GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND

### Cash Limits and Running Costs

**Mrs. McCurley** asked the Solicitor-General for Scotland, what changes he proposes to make to the 1986-87 cash limit and running costs limit for class XX, vote 20 Law Charges, Scotland.

**The Solicitor-General for Scotland:** Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary supplementary estimate, the cash limit for class XX, Vote 20 will be increased by £180,000 from £15,799,000 to £15,979,000 and the Crown Office's running costs limit by £402,000 from £14,757,000 to £15,159,000. The increase is required to take account of the running costs arising from certain staff regrading and restructuring exercises and increases in the remuneration of Advocate's Depute, net of some non-running costs savings. The cash limit increase will be a charge on the 1986-87 reserve.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL

### Land Registry, Gloucester

**Mr. John Mark Taylor** asked the Attorney-General what representations he has received concerning delays at Her Majesty's Land Registry at Gloucester; and if he will make a statement.

**The Solicitor-General:** In the course of the last 12 months, the Lord Chancellor has received four complaints from Members of Parliament on behalf of constituents relating to delays at the Gloucester district land registry. These delays result from substantial increases both in the number of pre-contract and pre-completion searches and the number of substantive applications for registrations. Staff have been diverted from final registration work to provide prompt replies on pre-completion matters and the new land registry office opened last month at Coventry will assist the Gloucester office in all areas of its work.

### State Security

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General what assessment he made, in deciding to initiate police inquiries into possible breaches of the Official Secrets Act in connection with a secret defence project, of the extent to which the transcripts of the proposed British Broadcasting Corporation programmes might contain classified information not published in the *New Statesman* article by Mr. Duncan Campbell.

**The Solicitor-General:** Police inquiries are currently being conducted. It would therefore not be proper for me to comment on the nature of the evidence that the Attorney-General considered, save to say that he was satisfied upon that evidence that there were reasonable grounds for inviting the Director of Public Prosecutions to request a police investigation.

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Attorney-General if he will prosecute the distributors in the United Kingdom of the *Irish Independent* newspaper for breaches of the Official Secrets Act in relation to material contained in articles in the issues dated 20 and 21 January, entitled "MI5 in Ireland"; and if he will make a statement.

**The Solicitor-General:** If the hon. Member produces evidence of a possible breach of the Official Secrets Act I will consider the matter.

**Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Attorney-General, pursuant to his answer of 2 February, if he will specify the precise steps he took and the precise grounds he used to satisfy himself that he should invite the Director of Public Prosecutions to request an investigation by the police into possible breaches of the Official Secrets Act in relation to project Zircon; and if he will make a statement.

**The Solicitor-General:** The Attorney-General took into account evidence indicating that breaches of the Official Secrets Act may have occurred. It would not be proper for me to disclose what that evidence was.

### Cash Limits

**Sir Fergus Montgomery** asked the Attorney-General what changes he proposes to make to the 1986-87 cash limit for class XX, 24 law changes, England and Wales (Treasury Solicitors Department) and to the Treasury solicitors running costs limit.

**The Solicitor-General:** Subject to Parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate the cash limit for the Treasury Solicitor's Department will be increased by £495,000 from £8,947,000 to £9,442,000. The increase is mainly due to increased accommodation costs but also reflects the exceptional volume of work partially offset by a higher level of receipts and is being charged to the Reserve. There has been a related increase in the gross running costs limit of £861,000 from £9,937,000 to £10,798,000.

### Bail Applications

**Mr. Bell** asked the Attorney-General what was the number of bail applications which have been refused for those charged with scheduled offences during the years 1983, 1984 and 1985; how many bail applications for scheduled offences have been granted for the same years; and how many of those granted bail do not comply with its conditions during the same years.

**The Solicitor-General** [*pursuant to the reply,* 19 January 1987, c. *401*]: The numbers of bail applications which were refused and granted for those charged with scheduled offences in Northern Ireland during the years 1983, 1984 and 1985 are:

| *Year* | *Refused* | *Granted* |
|---|---|---|
| 1983 | 676 | 721 |
| 1984 | 599 | 781 |
| 1985 | 476 | 801 |

In each year a number of persons had their bail revoked for failure to comply with its conditions. Details are set out below.

| *Year* | *Revocations* |
|---|---|
| 1983 | 6 |
| 1984 | 15 |
| 1985 | 15 |

## EMPLOYMENT

### Technical and Vocational Education Initiative

**Mrs. Peacock** asked the Paymaster General which authorities in England have not taken up money available for technical and vocational education initiative; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Lee:** There are seven local education authorities in England which are either not participating already or have not put in proposals to participate from 1987 in the technical and vocational education initiative. All seven have the opportunity to bid to participate from 1988. It is known that some intend to do so; others are still considering their intentions. Only Kirklees metropolitan council has said that it will not be submitting a proposal to participate.

### Wages

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Paymaster General if he will estimate the proportion of young peoples' average wages to adult average wages in 1979 at the latest date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Lee:** The information available is shown below:

*Average gross weekly earnings of full-time employees working a full week*

| | *April 1979* | *April 1986* |
|---|---|---|
| Males aged under 18 as a percentage of adult males[1] | 39·7 | 34·5 |
| Females aged under 18 as a percentage of adult females[2] | 58·1 | 52·9 |

[1] Aged 21 and over.

[2] Aged 18 and over.

*Source:* New Earning Survey.

## Wages Councils

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Paymaster General how many people were covered by wages councils in 1979 and in 1986, or the latest date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Lee:** Statistical returns of the numbers of workers in Great Britain employed in establishments within scope of wages councils are not collected, but in 1979 an analysis of the administrative records of inspections kept by the wages inspectorate indicated that the total number of workers covered was about 2¾ million.

A similar exercise in 1982—the last year in which one was undertaken—revealed a similar number. Work is in hand to estimate the numbers currently covered.

## Labour Statistics

34. **Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Paymaster General if he will provide for *(a)* each English region, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* Wales, his estimate of the numbers employed in June 1979 and in June 1986 in the following industries or sectors, and if he will estimate the percentage fall or rise since June 1979 in *(a)* shipbuilding and ship repair, *(b)* steel, *(c)* coal, *(d)* textiles, *(e)* electrical, instrument and electronic engineering *(f)* construction, *(g)* vehicles and *(h)* information technology, telecommunications and data processing.

**Mr. Lee:** With the exception of the construction industry, estimates of the numbers of employees in employment in the industries specified in the English regions, Scotland and Wales are available only from censuses of employment. For other dates the survey sample is not large enough to provide reliable estimates other than for Great Britain.

Table 1 gives, for the areas specified, estimates of the numbers of employees in employment in the construction industry at June 1979 and June 1986, and the net percentage changes between the two dates.

Table 2 gives, for the same areas, the numbers of employees in employment in the other industries specified at September 1984 (the most recent date for which a census of employment was held) and September 1981 (the date of the previous census of employment, and the earliest date for which comparable figures are available).

It also gives the net percentage changes between the two dates. The estimates are subject to considerable potential error due to the relatively small number of employees in the industries in each region, Scotland and Wales.

*Table 1*

*Employees in Employment: Percentage Change in the Construction Industry Between June 1979 and June 1986*

| | *June 1979* | *June 1986* | *Percentage Change* |
|---|---|---|---|
| South East | 361,000 | 287,000 | −20 |
| East Anglia | 41,000 | 37,000 | −10 |
| South West | 85,000 | 64,000 | −25 |
| West Midlands | 100,000 | 88,000 | −12 |
| East Midlands | 69,000 | 60,000 | −13 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 110,000 | 88,000 | −20 |
| North West | 134,000 | 110,000 | −18 |
| North | 83,000 | 56,000 | −33 |
| Wales | 62,000 | 42,000 | −32 |
| Scotland | 155,000 | 134,000 | −14 |

*Table 2*

*Employees in employment: percentage changes between September 1981 and September 1984*

| | *South East* | | | *East Anglia* | | | *South West* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1981* | *1984* | *Net change Per cent.* | *1981* | *1984* | *Net change Per cent.* | *1981* | *1984* | *Net change Per cent.* |
| Shipbuilding and repairing [3610] | 23,700 | 14,600 | −38 | 3,100 | 2,800 | −10 | 18,700 | 20,200 | +8 |
| Steel[1] [2210, 2220, 223] | 11,200 | 8,600 | −23 | 1,200 | 700 | −42 | 1,500 | 1,500 | — |
| Coal extraction [1113, 1114] | 4,000 | 3,600 | −10 | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Textiles [43] | 13,100 | 10,200 | −22 | 1,400 | 1,900 | +36 | 5,700 | 5,200 | −9 |
| Electrical and electronic engineering instrument engineering [34, 37] | 326,300 | 291,400 | −11 | 22,600 | 23,500 | +4 | 50,800 | 54,400 | +7 |
| Manufacture of motor vehicles and parts thereof [35] | 102,200 | 85,900 | −16 | 5,100 | 4,400 | −14 | 9,400 | 6,300 | −33 |
| Telecommunications and computer services[2] [7902, 8394] | 148,500 | 159,600 | +7 | 9,200 | 13,200 | +43 | 19,900 | 22,000 | +11 |

*Note*—The figures in brackets denote the class or activity heading of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

[1] Iron and steel industry, Steel tubes and Drawing, cold rolling and cold forming of steel.

[2] Information technology is not separately identified.

*Table 2—continued*

*Employees in employment: percentage changes between September 1981 and September 1984*

| | *West Midlands* | | | *East Midlands* | | | *Yorkshire and Humberside* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1981* | *1984* | *Net change Per cent.* | *1981* | *1984* | *Net change Per cent.* | *1981* | *1984* | *Net change Per cent.* |
| Shipbuilding and repairing [3610] | 500 | 500 | — | 600 | 500 | −17 | 2,700 | 2,600 | −4 |
| Steel[1] [2210, 2220, 223] | 30,900 | 22,500 | −27 | 11,300 | 7,400 | −35 | 49,100 | 34,000 | −31 |
| Coal extraction [1113, 1114] | 22,100 | 19,200 | −13 | 66,500 | 56,200 | −15 | 78,800 | 64,600 | −18 |
| Textiles [43] | 13,000 | 12,200 | −6 | 80,500 | 72,400 | −10 | 57,400 | 47,600 | −17 |

| | West Midlands 1981 | West Midlands 1984 | West Midlands Net change Per cent. | East Midlands 1981 | East Midlands 1984 | East Midlands Net change Per cent. | Yorkshire and Humberside 1981 | Yorkshire and Humberside 1984 | Yorkshire and Humberside Net change Per cent. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Electrical and electronic engineering instrument engineering [34, 37] | 100,600 | 84,900 | −16 | 40,700 | 36,300 | −11 | 29,600 | 25,000 | −16 |
| Manufacture of motor vehicles and parts thereof [35] | 114,800 | 84,400 | −26 | 10,200 | 8,800 | −14 | 12,300 | 15,000 | +22 |
| Telecommunication and computer service[2] [7902, 8394] | 25,400 | 26,600 | +5 | 10,200 | 12,400 | +22 | 15,300 | 17,000 | +11 |

*Note*—The figures in brackets denote the class or activity heading of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

[1] Iron and steel industry, Steel tubes and Drawing, cold rolling and cold forming of steel.

[2] Information technology is not separately identified.

*Employees in employment: Percentage changes between September 1981 and September 1984*

| | North West 1981 | North West 1984 | North West Net change per cent. | North 1981 | North 1984 | North Net change per cent. | Wales 1981 | Wales 1984 | Wales Net change per cent. | Scotland 1981 | Scotland 1984 | Scotland Net change per cent. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shipbuilding + repairing [3610] | 5,300 | 2,900 | −45 | 33,900 | 20,900 | −38 | 900 | 700 | −22 | 31,200 | 22,200 | −29 |
| Steel[1] [2210, 2220, 223] | 9,700 | 6,500 | −33 | 23,500 | 13,800 | −41 | 29,800 | 25,500 | −14 | 19,800 | 12,500 | −37 |
| Coal extraction [1113, 1114] | 10,600 | 8,600 | −19 | 38,600 | 31,300 | −19 | 34,600 | 28,500 | −18 | 23,700 | 16,900 | −29 |
| Textiles [43] | 52,700 | 40,700 | −23 | 8,600 | 8,300 | −3 | 4,000 | 3,600 | −10 | 38,600 | 32,900 | −15 |
| Electrical and electronic engineering instrument engineering [34, 37] | 80,200 | 73,500 | −8 | 40,300 | 35,100 | −13 | 31,700 | 28,300 | −11 | 52,600 | 51,400 | −2 |
| Manufacture of motor vehicles and parts thereof [35] | 53,300 | 41,700 | −22 | 7,100 | 6,000 | −15 | 19,400 | 14,000 | −28 | 11,300 | 6,800 | −40 |
| Telecommunications and computer services[2] [7902, 8394] | 23,300 | 23,400 | — | 8,400 | 8,800 | +5 | 8,400 | 10,100 | +20 | 20,500 | 18,400 | −10 |

*Note:*

The figures in brackets denote the class or activity heading of the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

[1] Iron and Steel Industry, Steel tubes and Drawing, cold rolling and cold forming of steel.

[2] Information technology is not separately identified.

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Paymaster General if he will publish a table showing the most recent rates of unemployment in *(a)* all travel-to-work areas receiving regional development grants, *(b)* all travel-to-work areas receiving only regional selective no assistance, *(c)* travel-to-work areas which receive no assistance but have rates higher than any in *(a)* and *(b)*, and *(d)* travel-to-work areas which receive no assistance but have rates within 2 per cent. of any in *(a)* and *(b)*.

**Mr. Lee** [*pursuant to his reply*, 15 January 1987, c. *245-48*]: I regret that in my previous reply there were four areas omitted from the tables requested.

The information omitted was from table A and is as follows:

*Unemployed claimants in travel-to-work areas having development area status—11 December 1986*

| | *Number* | *Rate* |
|---|---|---|
| Irvine | 11,819 | 24·9 |
| Greenock | 9,955 | 20·5 |
| Kilmarnock | 5,579 | 17·6 |
| Glasgow | 113,135 | 17·2 |

### Job Training Scheme

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Paymaster General what plans he has to seek the views and advice of area manpower boards on his proposed extension of the job training scheme.

**Mr. Kenneth Clarke** [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 February 1987]: In accordance with the arrangements proposed by the Manpower Services Commission, area manpower boards will receive full information on the scheme as it develops in their areas so that they can monitor, assess and evaluate progress, and advise on likely demand. Boards will be consulted on the development of approved training organisation (adult) status, and will, in due course, be asked to advise on whether managing agents should be given such status.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

### Westminster Hall

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Lord Privy Seal if he will raise with the Services Committee the possible use of Westminster Hall in the summer for public concerts, exhibitions and other arts-related events; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Biffen:** The control of Westminster Hall is vested jointly in the Lord Great Chamberlain and in the two Speakers on behalf of the two Houses.

The principles governing the exercise of their discretion to grant the use of the Hall for non-parliamentary functions are that such events should be either a royal occasion, a ceremony in honour of a Head of State or one having clear historical connections with Parliament or the Hall itself. I believe that these principles are in accordance with the wishes of the House.

## PRIME MINISTER

### Marine Environment

**Mr. Cohen** asked the Prime Minister, pursuant to her answer of 30 January, *Official Report*, c. *403*, if she will give a precise breakdown of the responsibilities of each of the Departments listed in relation to various specific aspects of the marine environment.

**The Prime Minister:** Responsibility for controlling or dealing with the marine environment is shared between a number of Government Departments. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is responsible for safeguarding fisheries and for controlling disposal at sea in England and Wales; the Department of Transport is responsible for the control and prevention of pollution at sea from ships, particularly in relation to oil and noxious liquid substances, and for any necessary remedial action at sea; the Department of Energy is responsible for the control of offshore oil and gas development operations, including the control of pollution from such operations. The Warren Spring laboratory, Department of Trade and Industry, undertakes research sponsored by the marine pollution control unit, Department of Transport, and offers technical advice on beach cleaning and oil and chemical spills at sea, dispersants and spraying. The Department of the Environment is responsible for controls over discharges of trade and sewage effluents to the aquatic environment, including coastal waters, and is also responsible for co-ordinating central Government policy on the control of pollution generally. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Scottish Office, Welsh Office and Northern Ireland Office have similar responsibilities in respect of environmental protection.

### Regional Aid

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Prime Minister what was the Government's expenditure in each year between 1979-80 and 1982-83 on regional aid to industry in each of the English regions, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; and through which agencies this expenditure was incurred.

**The Prime Minister:** The information requested is as follows:

*Expenditure*[1] *at current prices*

*£ million*

| *Region* | *1979-80* | *1980-81* | *1981-82* | *1982-83* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Northern | 147·8 | 146·3 | 176·3 | 159·3 |
| North West | 86·7 | 131·3 | 157·9 | 122·4 |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 32·1 | 52·2 | 61·8 | 52·9 |
| East Midlands[2] | 4·2 | 4·5 | 8·6 | 13·6 |
| South West | 10·7 | 11·5 | 14·8 | 16·2 |
| Scotland | 117·9 | 182·8 | 220·1 | 370·9 |
| Wales | 104·3 | 170·8 | 198·2 | 181·7 |
| Great Britain[3] | 519·0 | 705·9 | 853·6 | 917·0 |
| Northern Ireland | 103·5 | 138·2 | 110·8 | 146·1 |
| United Kingdom | 622·5 | 844·1 | 964·4 | 1,063·1 |

[1] All figures are gross and include payments to nationalised industries.

[2] Includes West Midlands.

[3] The Great Britain total does not always equal the sum of the component parts due to rounding.

The items included in the expenditure are regional development grants and regional selective assistance, expenditure on land and factories by the English Industrial Estates Corporation, the Scottish and Welsh Development Agencies, the Development Board for Rural Wales, and the Highlands and Islands Development Board. Northern Ireland has a different range of financial incentives available and the items included in the expenditure have been restricted to aids similar to the main forms of regional preferential assistance in Great Britain.

The agencies through which this expenditure was incurred are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| English Regions: | The Department of Trade and Industry and the English Industrial Estates Corporation. |
| Scotland: | The Scottish Office (Industry Department for Scotland), The Scottish Development Agency, the Highlands and Islands Development Board and the Department of Trade and Industry. |
| Wales: | The Welsh Office (Industry Department), The Welsh Development Agency, the Development Board for Rural Wales and the Department of Trade and Industry. |
| Northern Ireland: | The Northern Ireland Department of Economic Development and the Industrial Development Board (formerly the Northern Ireland Development Agency). |

## ENERGY

### Homes Insulation

**Mr. Raynsford** asked the Secretary of State for Energy, further to his reply to the hon. Member for Fulham on 1 December 1986, *Official Report*, column *456*, whether Her Majesty's Government will introduce measures in the next nine months to reduce the number of inadequately-insulated homes and so reduce the potential problems facing lower income householders in a cold weather spell next winter.

**Mr. David Hunt:** As well as promoting the cost-effective energy efficiency measures which all householders should take, my right hon. Friend will continue to support the expansion of the community insulation projects, which are expected to have insulated some 450,000 low-income households by the end of this year. In addition my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment has announced his intention to extend the 90 per cent. grant under the homes insulation scheme to all low-income householders.

### Severn Barrage

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Energy whether he intends, in the course of the studies by his Department into the proposed Severn barrage, to examine whether there exists within the United Kingdom the capability to tender successfully for all major aspects of the contract, especially the construction of lock gates for ships up to 150,000 dwt.

**Mr. David Hunt:** The size of lock gates for the proposed Severn barrage is a matter for further study and consultation with the relevant bodies.

The commercial aspects of the supply of all items of a Severn barrage will be closely examined in the course of the forthcoming studies.

### NCB Homes

**Mr. Barron** asked the Secretary of State for Energy if he will instigate a public inquiry into the selling of National Coal Board houses since 1979.

**Mr. David Hunt:** No.

## TRADE AND INDUSTRY

### Rover Group

**Mr. Maclean** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans Rover group has for its South African operation.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** I understand that Rover Group is announcing today that a proposal has been received from a number of executives from its wholly-owned subsidiary, Leyland South Africa, to acquire the share capital and activities of that company. This proposal has come forward in the course of a commercial review of the business.

Discussions to explore the feasibility of the proposal are being held between Rover Group, and its advisers and local managers in South Africa.

### Timeshare Properties

**Mr. Evennett** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he intends to make his consumer advice leaflet about timeshare properties available to Britons travelling abroad.

**Mr. Howard:** The leaflet is freely available to anyone who requests it. My Department is operating a 24-hour telephone service for such requests on 01-215 3344. Copies are also available at Citizens Advice Bureaux, some airport information centres, through many travel agents and at selected consular offices abroad.

### Licensed Security Trading

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he has taken to terminate trading by the licensed security dealer, the name of which was privately communicated to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State responsible for consumer affairs, the hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard).

**Mr. Howard:** I am not, for the moment, in a position to add to what I said in the House on 28 January in response to the hon. Member.

### Bankruptcies (Wales)

**Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what was the total number of bankruptcies in Wales from 1979 to 1986.

**Mr. Howard:** The provisional estimate of the number of bankruptcies in Wales from 1979 to 1986 inclusive is 2,943.

### Textile Workers

**Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received concerning the establishment of a severance pay scheme for redundant textile workers; what information he has on schemes operated by other European Economic Community countries for redundant textile workers and how such schemes are funded; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** The national secretary of the textile group of TGWU wrote to my right hon. Friend recently concerning proposals for a special severance pay scheme for redundant textile and clothing workers and he has subsequently received further representations on the subject from the hon. Member for Blackburn (Mr. Straw). So far as I am aware no other EC member state operates any special redundancy scheme for textile and clothing workers and this Government have no plans for introducing such a scheme.

### Regional Aid

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is his latest best estimate of the number of jobs created or sustained as a result of regional development grants or regional selective assistance in *(a)* 1960 to 1979 and *(b)* since 1979; and what is his estimate of the cost per job.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** Estimates of the number of net jobs created or sustained as a result of regional development grants or regional selective assistance have not been made for the periods requested. However, it has been estimated that over the period 1960 to 1981, development controls, regional grants and subsidies, regional selective assistance and regional employment premium created some 600,000 additional manufacturing jobs in the main assisted areas, of which 450,000 jobs were estimated to be surviving in 1981.

The average Exchequer cost per job created by these policies between 1960 and 1981 has been estimated to be £40,000 in 1981 prices.

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will estimate how many jobs have been created or sustained by regional policy, regional development grants and regional selective assistance grants since November 1984; and at what cost per job.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** It is too early for a proper economic evaluation to be made of the net effect on employment of regional incentives paid since November 1984. The following statistics on assistance paid or offered in Great Britain from December 1984 to December 1986 inclusive are available:

| | *£ million* | *Employment* | *Cost per job (£000)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Payments of old RDGs | 789·3 | [1] | [1] |
| Payment of new RDGs | 107·4 | [3]36,973 | 2·9 |
| Offers of RSA[2] | 457·4 | [4]139,336 | 3·3 |

[1] Payments of old RDGs are not linked to employment.

[2] Industrial and training grants only.

[3] Jobs created.

[4] Jobs estimated to be created or safeguarded.

*Note:* The employment and cost per job figures take no account of displacement or multiplier effects; the fact that some jobs would have been created without assistance; or the extent to which jobs created or safeguarded may subsequently have been lost.

### Industrial Moves

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what information he has as to the number of factory moves into the United Kingdom from abroad for each year since 1978 and as to the region in which they re-located;

(2) what information he has as to the number of industrial moves out of London, Birmingham and Manchester for each year between 1979 and 1986 and as to the region of their re-location;

(3) what information he has about the total number of factory moves within the United Kingdom for each year since 1978, and the annual number of moves which entailed re-location into Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland and the North of England.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** I shall write to the hon. Member as soon as possible and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

### Financial Aid

**Mr. D. E. Thomas** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial assistance has been provided by his Department directly to industry in Wales since 1979; and if he will outline the categories of support provided.

**Mr. Giles Shaw:** I shall reply to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

### Brewing and Distilling

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much financial assistance was given to brewing and distilling companies under the various industry Acts in England, Wales and Scotland, respectively, in each of the past five years.

**Mr. Giles Shaw** [*pursuant to his reply*, 5 February 1987]: The only readily available figures relate to selective assistance for the five years to April 1986 and to regional development grants since the scheme was revised in November 1984. For projects under SIC headings 4240 and 4270 payments are as follows:

| *Selective assistance* | *England* | *Scotland* | *Wales* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1981-82 | 47,370 | 424,083 | 84,450 |
| 1982-83 | 134,039 | 355,187 | 424,083 |
| 1983-84 | 121,200 | 86,250 | 16,500 |
| 1984-85 | 312,057 | 39,000 | 16,500 |
| [1]1985-86 | 214,220 | 12,136 | 6,000 |

[1] 1985-86 includes payments under the new RDG scheme. It is not possible to break down RDG payments by SIC headings for previous years, and these are not included.

## THE ARTS

### Cash Limit

**Mr. Michael Marshall** asked the Minister for the Arts whether he is proposing any change in the cash limit for the Arts Vote (class XIII, vote 10).

**Mr. Luce:** Subject to parliamentary approval of the necessary Supplementary Estimate, the cash limit for class XIII, Vote 10 will be increased by £2,565,000 from £171,312,000 to £173,877,000. £1,400,000 of the increase is for expenditure towards the completion of the Merseyside museum main contract, and is covered by a cash limit transfer from the Department of the Environment. The sum of £1,165,000 is a provision to enable additional items to be accepted in lieu of tax, and will be charged upon the Contingency Reserve. There will be no addition to the planning total of public expenditure.

## NATIONAL FINANCE

### EC Budget

**Mr. Gould** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will publish in the *Official Report*, in relation to the operation of the financial guidelines for European Economic Community budgetary discipline, the ceilings for 1986 and 1987, the figures used in arriving at these ceilings, the estimated outturn for 1986 and the forecast for 1987.

**Mr. Brooke:** The Council's conclusions of 4 December 1984 on budgetary discipline, which were deposited in the Library of the House on 10 December 1984, provide that net expenditure on agricultural market support should increase by not more than the rate of growth of the own resources base. The method of calculation of the financial guideline on agricultural expenditure is set out in articles 2 to 4 of the conclusions. The base period for the comparison is the average of 1984 and 1985.

*Calculation of financial guideline*

| | *1986 mecu* | *1987 mecu* |
|---|---|---|
| *(a)* Average expenditure in 1984-85[1] | 17,306·7 | 17,215·4 |
| *(b)* Rate of growth in OR base (per cent.) | 8·5 | 13·4 |
| *(c)* *(a)* × (1 + *(b)*) | 18,778·0 | 19,526·0 |
| *(d)* Expenditure excluded from guideline formula in respect of sugar and food aid[2] | 1,841·0 | 2,123·0 |
| *(e)* Financial guideline (EC 10) | 20,619·0 | 21,649·0 |
| *(f)* Plus expenditure on Spain[3] and Portugal | 567·0 | 1,312·0 |
| *(g)* Financial guideline (EC 12) | 21,186·0 | 22,961·0 |

[1] The difference in figures reflects end of year adjustment.

[2] This expenditure is excluded from calculations of the formula but added back for calculating expenditure consistent with the guideline in the appropriate year.

[3] Following the accession of Spain and Portugal, the Council agreed to these additions.

The Ecofin Council on 7 July 1986 agreed that agricultural expenditure in 1986 could exceed the financial guideline by the

> "amounts which can be justified mainly by the exceptional circumstances of the abnormally large depreciation of the dollar."

The budget as finally adopted for 1986 increased expenditure from 21,012 mecu to 22,122 mecu. Final outturn figures for 1986 are not yet available.

A budget for 1987 has not yet been adopted.

### Land and Buildings Sales

**Mr. Blair** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if, pursuant to the answer of 27 January, *Official Report*, column 230, listing sales of land and buildings 1979-80 to 1989-90, he will give a breakdown of the major categories of sales in respect of the following Departments for 1985-86 *(a)* Department of the Environment — other environmental services, *(b)* Home Office, *(c)* Education, *(d)* Department of Health and Social Services—Health and Personal Social Services, *(e)* Scotland, *(f)* Wales and *(g)* Northern Ireland.

**Mr. MacGregor:** A breakdown of the major categories of sales of land and buildings for 1985-86 by function, as recorded centrally, is given below for the Departments requested:

| | *Number* |
|---|---|
| *(a) DOE—Other environmental services* | |
| Town and country planning | 259 |
| New towns | 128 |
| Other | 120 |
| Total | 506 |
| *(b) Home Office (including Lord Chancellor's Department)* | |
| Police | 57 |
| Other | 2 |
| Total | 59 |
| *(c) Education* | |
| Schools | 78 |
| Other | 20 |
| Total | 98 |
| *(d) DHSS—Health and personal social services* | |
| Hospital and community services | 78 |
| Other | 26 |
| Total | 104 |
| *(e) Scotland* | |
| Housing | 148 |
| Local environmental services | 40 |
| Other | 27 |
| Total | 215 |
| *(f) Wales* | |
| Housing | 53 |
| Other environmental services | 21 |
| Other | 11 |
| Total | 84 |
| *(g) Northern Ireland* | |
| Housing | 37 |
| Other | 4 |
| Total | 40 |

More detailed information is not held centrally.

## VAT

**Mrs. Peacock** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses in Batley and Spen have *(a)* registered for value added tax purposes and *(b)* deregistered for value added tax purposes in each of the last five years.

**Mr. Brooke:** For reasons of cost, separate statistics are not maintained for individual constituencies, but nearly all of my hon. Friend's constituency is covered by the value added tax office at Halifax. The number of VAT registrations and deregistrations dealt with by that office in each of the calendar years 1982-1986 was:

| | *Registrations* | *Deregistrations* |
|---|---|---|
| 1982 | 2,011 | 1,762 |
| 1983 | 2,143 | 1,739 |
| 1984 | 2,003 | 1,787 |
| 1985 | 2,228 | 2,257 |
| 1986 | 2,254 | 2,329 |

Customs and Excise estimates that about 25 per cent. of these businesses are located in the Batley and Spen constituency area.

## Stamp Duty

**Mr. Latham** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will set out in tabular form (i) the estimated cost to public funds and (ii) the estimated number of properties exempted if stamp duty on house purchase were to become payable only on houses costing *(a)* £35,000, *(b)* £40,000, *(c)* £50,000 and *(d)* up to £100,000 in steps of £10,000 at a time after £50,000.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** I shall let my hon. Friend have a reply as soon as possible.

## Tax Cuts

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the total cost of the report on the incentive of tax cuts commissioned by his Department from Professor C. V. Brown.

**Mr. Norman Lamont:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

## Premium Bonds

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the current total of unclaimed prize money from premium bond draws; and if he will give a breakdown by prize category.

**Mr. Ian Stewart:** There are currently 67,054 outstanding premium bond prizes total value £3,973,375. The breakdown is:—

| | | £ |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | × | 5,000 |
| 158 | × | 1,000 |
| 533 | × | 500 |
| 16 | × | 250 |
| 10,248 | × | 100 |
| 43,311 | × | 50 |
| 12,781 | × | 25 |
| 67,054 | | |

## Television Sets

**Mr. Winnick** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, further to his holding reply of 26 January, *Official Report*, column 86, when he expects to give a substantive reply to the question from the hon. Member for Walsall, North on the number of television sets at his official residence; and who is responsible for paying the licence fee.

**Mr. Brooke:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 4 February 1987 at column *671*.

### United Nations International Years

**Mr. Rooker** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list Her Majesty's Government's contributions to United Kingdom organisations set up in each of the past eight years in respect of designated United Nations international years.

**Mr. MacGregor** [*pursuant to his reply*, 12 January 1987, c. *92*]: The Treasury has made no such contributions and does not keep records in a form that readily identifies such payments by other Departments. The following list (which may not therefore be complete) shows the payments, including those for the current year, identified by our enquiries.

| *United Nations designated year* | *United Kingdom organisation* | *Government Department* | *Contribution (£)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| International Year of the Child—1979 | "Whose Child" publication | Department of Health and Social Security | 3,900 |
| | Northern Ireland Regional Committee for International Year of the Child | Northern Ireland Office | 2,890 |
| International Year of Disabled Persons—1981 | Voluntary Organisations Committee and other organisations | Department of Health and Social Security | 280,000 |
| | Third World Group of the English Committee of the International Year | Overseas Development Administration | 8,000 |
| International Youth Year (IYY)—1985 | Northern Ireland Co-ordinating Committee for IYY | Northern Ireland Office | 160,000 |
| | IYY National Co-ordinating Committee for England | Department of Education and Science | 248,850 |
| International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) 1987 | United Kingdom Trust for IYSH | Overseas Development Administration | 64,000 |
| | | Department of the Environment | 40,000 |

## AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD

### Pollution

**Mr. Onslow** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what action he is taking to advise farmers on methods of preventing urban pollution; and if he will make a statement

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** My Department has a long-established poicy of encouraging the farming industry to adopt practices which minimise the risk of all forms of pollution. This is achieved through farm visits, on-farm events, appropriate publicity and a wide range of literature which is continuously updated in the light of new knowledge and experience. My officials will continue to offer assistance and free advice to farmers so as to enable them to aim for high standards of environmental protection.

**Mr. Onslow** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what were the total numbers of serious farm pollution incidents reported in each of the years 1985 and 1986; and how many of these were caused by silage, cows, pigs and other causes respectively.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** Information is not collected by my Department on all forms of pollution. The most recent details available of water pollution incidents are set out in the report on water pollution from farm waste 1985 issued jointly by my Department and the Water Authorities Association in July 1986. That report showed that of 3,510 farm pollution incidents in 1985, 572 were classified as serious. These figures need to be considered in the context of the grand total of over 18,000 water pollution incidents from all sources recorded for the financial year 1984/85.

A breakdown of these 572 incidents is given at table 8 of the report, a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House.

### Milk Powder Exports

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will raise at the next meeting of the Agriculture Council the approval by the authorities in Bavaria to export to the Third world 5,000 tons of milk powder with radioactivity levels 10 times as high as permitted for consumption with the European Economic Community; and if, in particular, he will seek to clarify whether export rebates funded from European Economic Community finances will be repayable in respect of this export.

**Mr. Gummer:** I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

### Wine

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the surplus of wine produced by the EEC in the most recent year for which figures are available; what were the comparable totals for each of the previous six years; and what is the current level of wine stocks held in private and public stores.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** In 1985-86 production of wine in member states of the Community (excluding Spain and Portugal) exceeded Community utilisation by 17·2 million hectolitres.

The comparable figures for the previous six years were:

| | *Million hectolitres* |
|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 14·4 |
| 1983-84 | 39·2 |
| 1982-83 | 37·6 |
| 1981-82 | 4·1 |
| 1980-81 | 22·0 |
| 1979-80 | 38·0 |

At 31 August 1986, stocks of wine held in private storage with the benefit of Community aid stood at 14·6 mhl. There are no publicly held stocks of wine as such. Community surpluses are distilled and stored as alcohol.

### Libya

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total amount of export rebate paid by the EEC in respect of exports of food to the Republic of Libya in the year 1985.

**Mr. Gummer:** I shall reply to my hon. Friend as soon as possible.

### Food and Wine Expenditure

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what was the total amount expended by the EEC per week, expressed in terms of pounds sterling, on the storage, export and disposal, respectively, of food and wine during the most recent annual period for which figures are available; and what estimate has been made of the comparable expenditure per week in the current year.

**Mr. Gummer:** Community expenditure on public storage, export refunds and internal disposal of food and wine averaged £156 million per week in 1985 (the latest year for which final figures are available). The provision in the 1987 draft budget for this expenditure is £203 million per week (£187 million at the 1985 exchange rate).

### Agriculture and Surplus Management

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food if he will publish a table showing the percentage of EEC funding devoted to agriculture and surplus management, respectively, on the same basis as the table set out in the *Official Report*, column *259*, 21 June 1985; and if he will include in the table the estimate for 1987.

**Mr. Jopling:** The information requested is set out in the following table:

| *Year* | *CAP expenditure as percentage of total EC expenditure* | *Food storage and disposal costs[1] as percentage of total EC expenditure* |
|---|---|---|
| 1973 | 82·4 | 57·7 |
| 1974 | 75·4 | 40·4 |
| 1975 | 78·1 | 40·0 |
| 1976 | 76·6 | 49·9 |
| 1977 | 74·3 | 48·1 |
| 1978 | 79·2 | 55·3 |
| 1979 | 75·7 | 56·9 |
| 1980 | 73·3 | 55·8 |
| 1981 | 65·1 | 48·5 |
| 1982 | 64·0 | 45·8 |
| 1983 | 68·4 | 47·4 |
| 1984 | 69·4 | 50·5 |
| 1985 | 73·1 | 52·4 |
| 1986 | 65·7 | 47·7 |
| 1987 | 67·2 | 48·4 |

[1] Expenditure from the guarantee section of the European agricultural guidance and guarantee fund on export refunds, internal sale subsidies, public intervention and private storage aids for all commodities, whether or not in surplus.

*Sources:*

1973-1985 EAGGF Financial Reports and EC Court of Auditors' reports.

1986 budget.

1987 draft budget.

For 1973-78 the sources are not fully compatible and the figures for these years are only aproximate.

### Horses (Botulism)

**Mr. Hickmet** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1) what reports he has received of horses contracting botulism in Devon and Cornwall; how many horses have contracted the disease; when and how many have been destroyed; and if he will make a statement;

(2) what investigations and inquiries are taking place into an outbreak of botulism amongst horses in Devon and Cornwall; what steps he is taking to identify the causes and prevent the spread of the disease; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Donald Thompson:** The Ministry is aware of a case of suspected botulism in two horses stabled in a single premises near Bovey Tracy in south Devon. One horse has died and the other has been destroyed. Specimens from the horses have been sent to the Ministry's veterinary investigation centre at Starcross for diagnosis as have samples of fodder, which can be the source of this disease in livestock. Botulism, which is not notifiable, is not contagious and this case presents no risk to animal or public health.

### Food Aid

**Mr. Janner** asked the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food what factors he considered in deciding which charities to ask to co-operate in the distribution of EEC food aid.

**Mr. Jopling:** The main factors were the extent of which an organisation already dealt with the most needy in its day-to-day work; the breadth of its geographical coverage; and its likely capacity to deal with the organisational arrangements in co-operation with my Department.

## EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

### Museums (Entrance Charges)

**Mr. Raynsford** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what representations he has received on the proposed implementation of entrance charges to the natural history museum, the geological museum and the zoological museum at Tring.

**Mr. Walden:** My right hon. Friend has received 14 letters from right hon. and hon. Members and a further 12 letters from members of the public.

### Higher Education Expenditure

**Mr. Evans** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if, in the light of the publication of his Department's projections of student demand 1986 to 2000, he will reconsider and increase his higher education expenditure plan in the years 1987-88 and beyond.

**Mr. Walden:** The plans for spending on higher education included in "The Government's Expenditure Plans 1987-88 to 1989-90" (Cmnd. 56), published last month, represent significant increases on previous provision. We are continuing to consider the implications of the new projections of student demand for higher education and have sought the comments of interested bodies.

## O-Level Passes

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will publish a table showing the percentage of school leavers who secured three or more O-level passes in each of the education authorities in England and Wales.

**Mr. Dunn:** Data on leavers from maintained schools in England are given below. figures for Wales are the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

*Percentage of leavers from Maintained Schools with three or more GCE O level passes at Grades A, B or C*

| | *Average of academic years 1982-83, 1983-84 and 1984-85* |
|---|---|
| Barking | 12·1 |
| Barnet | 45·9 |
| Bexley | 34·1 |
| Brent | 24·4 |
| Bromley | 37·4 |
| Croydon | 32·0 |
| Ealing | 26·4 |
| Enfield | 29·6 |
| Haringey | 17·8 |
| Harrow | 43·9 |
| Havering | 31·3 |
| Hillingdon | 27·5 |
| Hounslow | 26·1 |
| Kingston-upon-Thames | 40·3 |
| Merton | 36·0 |
| Newham | 11·9 |
| Redbridge | 30·5 |
| Richmond-upon-Thames | 34·3 |
| Sutton | 40·1 |
| Waltham Forest | 18·2 |
| ILEA | 18·8 |
| Birmingham | 21·2 |
| Coventry | 23·5 |
| Dudley | 25·0 |
| Sandwell | 15·1 |
| Solihull | 31·1 |
| Walsall | 22·5 |
| Wolverhampton | 19·7 |
| Knowsley | 15·6 |
| Liverpool | 22·2 |
| St. Helens | 28·1 |
| Sefton | 34·3 |
| Wirral | 29·0 |
| Bolton | 28·6 |
| Bury | 30·6 |
| Manchester | 21·8 |
| Oldham | 22·8 |
| Rochdale | 25·0 |
| Salford | 21·3 |
| Stockport | 33·7 |
| Tameside | 27·0 |
| Trafford | 31·2 |
| Wigan | 28·8 |
| Barnsley | 18·5 |
| Doncaster | 22·3 |
| Rotherham | 23·2 |
| Sheffield | 25·1 |
| Bradford | 23·4 |
| Calderdale | 26·7 |
| Kirklees | 28·7 |
| Leeds | 26·8 |
| Wakefield | 15·9 |
| Gateshead | 21·7 |
| Newcastle-upon-Tyne | 22·2 |
| North Tyneside | 25·6 |
| South Tyneside | 23·7 |
| Sunderland | 21·0 |
| Avon | 28·4 |
| Bedfordshire | 27·2 |
| Berkshire | 32·1 |
| Buckinghamshire | 36·7 |
| Cambridgeshire | 31·5 |
| Cheshire | 30·4 |
| Cleveland | 26·4 |
| Cornwall | 28·8 |
| Cumbria | 25·1 |
| Derbyshire | 25·8 |
| Devon | 27·5 |
| Dorset | 32·8 |
| Durham | 23·6 |
| East Sussex | 34·2 |
| Essex | 29·9 |
| Gloucestershire | 31·7 |
| Hampshire | 30·3 |
| Hereford and Worcester | 27·6 |
| Hertfordshire | 35·8 |
| Humberside | 26·3 |
| Isle of Wight | 24·7 |
| Kent | 31·9 |
| Lancashire | 28·2 |
| Leicestershire | 27·2 |
| Lincolnshire | 26·3 |
| Norfolk | 25·1 |
| North Yorkshire | 36·2 |
| Northamptonshire | 25·2 |
| Northumberland | 30·3 |
| Nottinghamshire | 22·7 |
| Oxfordshire | 33·6 |
| Shropshire | 29·9 |
| Somerset | 26·1 |
| Staffordshire | 24·1 |
| Suffolk | 26·1 |
| Surrey | 40·2 |
| Warwickshire | 30·9 |
| West Sussex | 38·2 |
| Wiltshire | 29·4 |
| Total England | 27·7 |

*Source:* School Leavers Survey Data subject to sampling error.

**Mr. Teddy Taylor** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what percentage of school leavers in England and Wales secured three or more O-level passes in the most recent year.

**Mr. Dunn:** In 1984-85, 31·4 per cent. of school leavers in England had gained three or more higher grade GCE O level passes. Information for Wales is the responsibility of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

## Assisted Places Scheme

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science what is the estimated average annual cost to his Department of an assisted places secondary school place for the academic year 1986-87; how this compares with the annual capitation for a maintained sector secondary school place; and what are the equivalent figures for each year since the inception of the assisted places scheme.

**Mr. Dunn:** The information requested is as follows:

| | *Average cost of an assisted place (school year)* £ | *Average cost of a maintained secondary school place (financial year)* £ |
|---|---|---|
| 1981-82 | 1,098 | 1,010 |
| 1982-83 | 1,267 | 1,100 |
| 1983-84 | 1,303 | 1,190 |
| 1984-85 | 1,482 | 1,270 |
| 1985-86 | 1,603 | n.a. |
| 1986-87 | [1]1,751 | n.a. |

[1] Estimated.
n.a.—not available.

### Mature Students

**Dr. Marek** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science if he will take steps to ensure that mature students who wish to take advantage of further education at a college of adult education are not prevented from doing so by lack of qualifications on grounds of non-employment over the previous three years or their earnings being less than £12,000 in the previous three years; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Walden:** The conditions referred to by the hon. Member are those determining the eligibility of mandatory award holders for the older students' allowance. They are being reviewed as part of the annual review of the grant regulations. Mature students at long term residential colleges of adult education are eligible for bursaries which are calculated on the same basis as mandatory awards and any change in the conditions for allowance for mandatory award-holders will apply equally to students at these colleges of adult education.

### Sacred Heart School, Battersea

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Education and Science, pursuant to the reply given to the hon. Member for Battersea on 15 January, *Official Report*, column *261*, when he now plans to reply to the letter of 8 December concerning Sacred Heart school, Trott street, Battersea, London.

**Mr. Dunn:** I replied to the hon. Member on 4 February.

## SCOTLAND

### Children (Statistics)

**Mr. Ernie Ross** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what information he has from the 1987 census as to the number and percentage of children in Scotland living in a household where the head of the household was unemployed.

**Mr. John MacKay:** This information is not available.

### Woodlands

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if the Forestry Commission proposes to make any changes in the nature of the conditions attached to the granting of felling licences and plans of operation for private woodland owners; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The Forestry Commission does not envisage making any such changes at present. The operation and effectiveness of the Government's broadleaves policy will, however, be reviewed towards the end of 1988, which might lead to changes being made to the conditions of the broadleaved woodland grant scheme and the Forestry Commission's other grant schemes.

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will ensure that both oak and beech trees are included in the Forestry Commission's main forest health survey for 1987.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The Forestry Commission intends to expand the 1987 forest health survey to include oak. Beech has already been included in the surveys and will continue to be covered.

### Food Aid

**Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the arrangements for distributing food from European Economic Community stores to needy people in East Lothian, including the type and quantity of food, its value, the organisations involved in distribution, provisions for handling and transport, the categories and numbers of people eligible to receive the food and arrangements for advising people of their entitlement.

**Mr. John MacKay:** I refer the hon. Member to the replies given by my right hon. and learned Friend on 30 January to the Member for Garscadden (Mr. Dewar) and would add that the food is to be given to needy people whose resources have been further stretched by the recent extremely cold weather; lists of such people, and publicity about the distribution, are being organised by the charitable organisations throughout Scotland at local level.

### Rates

**Mr. Home Robertson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what is the difference, in both percentage and cash terms, between the rate poundage multiplied by the rateable value of domestic property in Scotland after allowing for relevant relief from rates, and the actual amount of domestic rates collected by local authorities; and if he will give a comparable estimate of the efficiency of the proposed system of community charges.

**Mr. Ancram:** The information requested about the actual amount collected as domestic rates is not available. Estimates of the effect of the proposed community charge have used the working assumption that the yield of the community charge will be broadly equivalent to the yield of the domestic rate.

### Health Service

**Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the numbers of staff employed by the National Health Service in Scotland expressed as whole-time equivalents as well as actual full-time and part-time numbers.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information requested as at 31 March 1986 is shown in the table below:

*NHS Staff and Practitioners—Scotland*
*All Staff March 1986*

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| Whole-time | 97,185 |
| Part-time | 53,588 |
| Whole-time equivalent | 128,786 |

*Notes:*

1. The table includes the number of general practitioners (see also note 3) and excludes agency nurses.
2. Figures quoted for 31 March 1986 include medical and dental staff and general practitioners as at September 1985.
3. Hospital Medical and Dental Staff: the grades limited specialist, hospital practitioners, para 94 appointment and para 107 appointment are included. Many staff in these grades hold general practice contracts and are therefore double counted (see note 1). The table excludes locums in hospital or general practice.
4. Data include all honorary medical and dental appointments. These are given a standard weighting. Honorary consultants and community grades have a national commitment of 7 sessions or 7/11 WTE. Junior grades are included as 6/10 WTE.
5. Maximum part-time contracts (ie 10 sessions) are counted as 1·0 WTE.

**Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what are the numbers of available beds in National Health Service hospitals in Scotland for each year since 1979, expressed as totals and by speciality.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information is set out below:

*Average available staffed beds by specialty—September 1979 to 1986*[1]

| *Specialty* | *1979* | *1980* | *1981* | *1982* | *1983* | *1984* | *1985* | *1986* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ALL SPECIALTIES | 58,501 | 58,205 | 58,030 | 57,442 | 57,294 | 57,216 | 56,334 | 55,976 |
| ACUTE SPECIALTIES | 18,908 | 18,851 | 18,121 | 18,354 | 18,164 | 17,927 | 17,589 | 17,408 |
| General surgery | 3,873 | 3,901 | 3,859 | 3,780 | 3,789 | 3,797 | 3,715 | 3,669 |
| Orthopaedic surgery | 2,749 | 2,758 | 2,756 | 2,673 | 2,775 | 2,780 | 2,750 | 2,747 |
| ENT surgery | 703 | 720 | 725 | 706 | 651 | 674 | 660 | 633 |
| Ophthalmology | 531 | 529 | 535 | 505 | 522 | 536 | 540 | 527 |
| Urology | 461 | 456 | 456 | 463 | 463 | 469 | 474 | 485 |
| Orthodontics and paediatric dentistry | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Oral surgery and oral medicine | 67 | 70 | 70 | 66 | 71 | 81 | 85 | 83 |
| Restorative dentistry | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| General medicine[2] | 4,824 | 4,844 | 4,840 | 4,839 | 4,912 | 4,869 | 4,897 | 4,920 |
| Dermatology | 326 | 329 | 319 | 311 | 292 | 292 | 283 | 274 |
| Rehabilitation medicine | 93 | 97 | 99 | 123 | 112 | 98 | 98 | 98 |
| Convalescent | 518 | 466 | 434 | 427 | 379 | 202 | 75 | 75 |
| Respiratory medicine | 1,034 | 1,031 | 1,009 | 959 | 760 | 706 | 609 | 581 |
| Paediatric surgery | 332 | 325 | 318 | 311 | 313 | 312 | 303 | 284 |
| Paediatric medicine | 649 | 627 | 625 | 623 | 614 | 624 | 617 | 606 |
| Gynaecology | 1,306 | 1,318 | 1,294 | 1,204 | 1,201 | 1,250 | 1,203 | 1,181 |
| GP acute | 992 | 987 | 1,003 | 996 | 996 | 988 | 1,002 | 1,003 |
| Acute mixed | 306 | 278 | 262 | 253 | 196 | 172 | 188 | 178 |
| Other[3] | 144 | 115 | 117 | 115 | 118 | 77 | 91 | 65 |
| SUPRA AREA SPECIALTIES | 1,278 | 1,316 | 1,313 | 1,229 | 1,251 | 1,319 | 1,341 | 1,332 |
| Neurosurgery | 235 | 241 | 244 | 239 | 231 | 245 | 263 | 265 |
| Cardiothoracic surgery | 270 | 277 | 281 | 211 | 227 | 240 | 244 | 241 |
| Plastic surgery | 306 | 314 | 308 | 295 | 299 | 293 | 293 | 289 |
| Neurology | 140 | 160 | 162 | 163 | 162 | 165 | 164 | 160 |
| Radiotherapy | 327 | 324 | 318 | 321 | 320 | 324 | 325 | 325 |
| Spinal paralysis | — | — | — | — | 12 | 52 | 52 | 52 |
| OSTETRIC SPECIALTIES | 2,750 | 2,689 | 2,679 | 2,644 | 2,665 | 2,633 | 2,563 | 2,506 |
| Specialist obstetrics | 2,226 | 2,218 | 2,246 | 2,210 | 2,214 | 2,212 | 2,192 | 2,139 |
| GP Obstetrics | 524 | 471 | 433 | 434 | 451 | 421 | 371 | 367 |
| LONG-STAY SPECIALTIES | 9,901 | 10,136 | 10,360 | 10,518 | 10,777 | 11,094 | 11,076 | 11,120 |
| Geriatric assessment | 2,395 | 2,392 | 2,332 | 2,272 | 2,282 | 2,300 | 2,403 | 2,456 |
| Geriatric long-stay | 7,147 | 7,371 | 7,663 | 7,874 | 8,119 | 8,400 | 8,287 | 8,287 |
| Young chronic sick | 359 | 373 | 365 | 372 | 376 | 394 | 386 | 377 |
| PSYCHIATRIC SPECIALTIES | 17,358 | 17,040 | 16,836 | 16,646 | 16,466 | 16,500 | 16,307 | 16,177 |
| Mental illness | 14,941 | 14,127 | 13,799 | 13,518 | 13,232 | 12,790 | 12,372 | 12,186 |
| Psychogeriatrics | 2,231 | 2,742 | 2,871 | 2,961 | 3,061 | 3,527 | 3,765 | 3,830 |
| Child psychiatry | 122 | 107 | 102 | 103 | 102 | 104 | 94 | 85 |
| Adolescent psychiatry | 64 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 71 | 79 | 76 | 76 |
| MENTAL HANDICAP | 6,697 | 6,617 | 6,612 | 6,551 | 6,479 | 6,255 | 6,016 | 5,999 |
| SPECIAL CATEGORIES | 1,610 | 1,556 | 1,509 | 1,500 | 1,494 | 1,488 | 1,443 | 1,433 |
| Communicable diseases | 696 | 630 | 594 | 573 | 554 | 539 | 510 | 505 |
| Special care baby unit | 628 | 626 | 621 | 619 | 608 | 597 | 580 | 575 |
| Intensive therapy unit | 132 | 137 | 138 | 151 | 161 | 171 | 166 | 166 |
| Accident and emergency | 154 | 163 | 156 | 157 | 171 | 181 | 187 | 188 |
| Clinical genetics | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |

[1] Data refers to March for 1986.

[2] General medicine includes: Cardiology, Metabolic diseases, Gastroenterology, Poisons, Nephrology, Rheumatology, STD, Medical oncology, Haematology, Homeopathy, TB non-respiratory.

[3] Other includes: Staff wards and unallocated.

**Mr. Willie W. Hamilton** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland how many National Health Service hospitals have been closed in Scotland; and what is the total bed loss as a result of these closures for each year since 1979.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The information for complete hospital closures is set out below. It excludes partial hospital closures and hospitals where there has been a change of use, records for which are not held centrally.

| *Year* | *Number of hospitals* | *Number of beds* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 7 | 315 |
| 1980 | 3 | 103 |
| 1981 | 3 | 101 |
| 1982 | 3 | 222 |
| 1983 | 4 | 173 |
| 1984 | 4 | 103 |
| 1985 | 3 | 188 |
| 1986 | 8 | 828 |

### Safety Glass

**Mr. Moate** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what progress is being made with regard to the inclusion in building regulations of the increased use of safety glass in doors and windows; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Ancram:** Requirements for safety glass in doors and low level glazing were included in proposals which were the subject of public consultation last year. They received a general welcome and are being developed in more detail for further consultation this spring as part of the reformed Building Standards (Scotland) Regulations.

### Forestry Commission

**Mr. Ron Davies** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland, pursuant to his answer of 29 January, *Official Report*, column *351*, if he will account for the difference between his estimates of the number employed in Scotland by the Forestry Commission on private estates and in forestry management companies, with those provided by the Forestry Commission in its publication, "Forestry Facts and Figures 1985-86".

**Mr. John MacKay:** The estimated figures quoted in "Forestry Facts and Figures 1985-86" have been substantially revised, following a major survey of employment in forestry and the wood-processing industries undertaken by the Forestry Commission in conjunction with the private sector. This is the first comprehensive survey of this nature to be carried out for a number of years.

### Dinoseb

**Mr. Henderson** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations he has received from the National Farmers' Union of Scotland concerning the ban on the use of Dinoseb, and the implications for the Scottish raspberry crop; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. John MacKay:** The National Farmers' Union of Scotland has made strong representations to my right hon. and learned Friend about the potentially serious commercial consequences for Scottish raspberry production of the suspension of approval for the use of Dinoseb.

The matter will be considered by the advisory committee on pesticides at its meeting on 12 February 1987.

## FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

### South Africa

**Mr. Roy Hughes** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the South African Government concerning detained trades unionists in the Media Workers Association of South Africa and the Paper, Wood and Allied Workers Union; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Chalker:** We have made representations about all detentions without charge under the state of emergency. This was done most recently on 19 December 1986 when, on behalf of the Twelve, Her Majesty's ambassador expressed our grave concern at growing evidence of serious abuses of human rights in South Africa including detentions.

### Diplomatic Immunity

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 30 January, on how many occasions in each of the last five years Her Majesty's Government have acceded to a request that a person outside the normal categories should be regarded as having diplomatic status; if he will list the persons and countries involved; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Chalker:** I regret that the information requested is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Peter Bruinvels** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the answer of 30 January, if he will now provide a breakdown by country of the 77 traffic offences by drivers of cars with diplomatic registration; in how many of these cases casualties were involved; what is Her Majesty's Government's policy toward making it a condition of the continued stay in the United Kingdom of diplomats who commit drinking and driving offences, that they should undertake to refrain from driving for the remainder of their period of accreditation; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Chalker:** Injury was involved in nine of the cases referred to in the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State on 27 January.

We require the removal of any diplomat who commits a second alleged drunken driving offence, or after the first if it is aggravated by violence or injury to a third party.

If a diplomat is allowed to remain in this country after a reported first offence we do not require him to undertake to refrain from driving. Any such undertaking could not be enforced.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Local Authority Contracts (Conditions)

**Mr. Dover** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he plans to introduce legislation to prevent local authorities from imposing political conditions on contracts with businesses.

**Dr. Boyson:** As soon as possible this Session.

### Homeless Persons

**Mr. Parry** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment how many homeless people were housed by local authorities under the provisions of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 in each of the past three years.

**Mr. Tracey:** The following table gives the totals of secure and non-secure tenancies in local authority dwellings, lettings under the national mobility scheme, and nominations to housing association and new town tenancies for homeless households in the priority need categories:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| 1983-84 | 52,200 |
| 1984-85 | 56,800 |
| 1985-86 | 66,200 |

The remaining households accepted by local authorities as homeless in these years were of course, also found some kind of accommodation.

### Docklands

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his latest estimate for the total yearly spending of public money in *(a)* London docklands and *(b)* Liverpool docklands.

**Mr. John Patten** I shall answer this question shortly.

### Urban Development Corporations

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what is his estimate of total spending until 1990, by each financial year, on urban development corporations; and how much of that money is attributable to reductions in rate support grant settlement.

**Mr. John Patten** I shall answer this question shortly.

### Homes (Radon Levels)

**Mr. Ashdown** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment (1) what is the highest known level of radon in any dwelling in the Truro constituency; what is the calculated annual effective dose equivalent associated with such a level; what number of dwellings in the Truro constituency have been found to have radon levels above the 20 millisievert action level; what funds are available for remedial building work on such dwellings; and if he will make a statement;

(2) further to his statement on 27 January, *Official Report*, columns 189-90, concerning radon levels in houses, what estimates are available to his Department of the likely total costs of remedial building relating to the 20 millisievert action level for *(a)* owner-occupiers in Cornwall and *(b)* local authorities in Cornwall; and if he will make a statement;

(3) further to his statement on 27 January, *Official Report*, columns 189-90, concerning radon levels in houses, what are the terms under which the Government intend to offer financial assistance to owner-occupiers; what are the proposed limits of such financial assistance; when such assistance will first be available; and if he will make a statement;

(4) further to his statement on 27 January, *Official Report*, columns 189-90, concerning radon levels in houses, if he has any plans to offer further guidance on the advisability of a pregnant woman residing in a house where the annual dose from radon exceeds the 20 millisievert action level; what is the level of risk to a foetus or unborn child associated with such a level of exposure; and if he will make a statement;

(5) what information is available to his Department concerning any dwellings in Cornwall where advice has been given that a dwelling is unsafe for a pregnant woman due to naturally occurring radioactivity, either from radon gas or from other sources; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Waldegrave:** I shall answer these questions shortly.

### Gypsies

**Sir Hugh Rossi** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment when he will announce his conclusions on the review of gipsy sites policy carried out at the request of the Select Committee on the Environment.

**Mr. Ridley:** The review has now been completed. A consultation process has been carried out and I have been assisted in analysing the responses by Professor Gerald Wibberley CBE, to whom I am most grateful, and whose report will be published. The Government have decided that there should be no amendment of the legislation at this stage, although we shall continue to keep the position under review. We have noted the wide acceptance that the duty on local authorities to provide caravan sites for gypsies should continue. No practical alternative solution to the problem has been proposed, although there is some scope for private sector provision, which will be encouraged. In all cases it is essential to do everything possible to allay local anxieties. Well-run gypsy sites, once established, seldom give cause for serious complaints.

The total number of local authority sites had reached 236 at the beginning of 1986, affording a total of some 3,850 pitches. Further local authority sites have recently opened or are expected to open. In addition to these, the available information suggests that privately owned sites are capable of accommodating 2,000 or more gypsy caravans. This shows that much progress in site provision has already been made, nationally. But there remain perhaps as many as 3,000 gypsy families for whom authorised sites are not available: so more sites are still needed. A total of £5 million has been reserved in the current financial year to provide grants to authorities developing sites.

There has been criticism of the controls available in designated areas. The Government see the powers stemming from designation as an essential adjunct to the duty to provide sites but recognise their serious consequences for gypsies. It is important that the criteria for designation should be strictly applied. In particular, I require convincing reasons for designation where an authority has made less than adequate provision. The machinery for considering applications for designation is being updated to ensure that representations are fully taken into account.

Authorities with early aspirations to designation are also asked to recognise the desirability of keeping more frequent records of gypsy numbers and movements than the national returns can provide.

Proper identification of the number of gypsies who reside in or resort to an area is vital. I am arranging for the gypsy sites policy branch in the Department to be strenghthened. An early priority will be to examine how information on gypsy numbers could be improved to provide better targets for site provision and better measures of progress in meeting them. The Department will continue to help undesignated authorities to clarify the number of sites needed and within what time scale.

Interpretation of the statutory definition of gypsies is also crucial. The local authorities have generally been able to decide who meets the statutory definition but there is increasing concern that it may extend to members of other groups. Each case has to be looked at separately on its merits. In order to qualify it must be shown that there is a nomadic habit of life, that a pattern of residing in or resorting to a particular area has been established, and that the requirement is for a pitch for a caravan. A sensible approach would be to look for evidence of regular and repeated patterns of gypsy movements, bearing in mind also their characteristic types of occupation and their need to travel to carry on their work. We shall examine the scope for further clarification of this issue in advice to local authorities.

The scope for improvements in the grant regime is limited since it already meets 100 per cent. of the cost of site provision. It has been suggested that grant should be freed from capital expenditure control but the Government cannot agree to this since it weakens control over spending priorities. I accept, however, that the Department's cost guidelines should be published and I will arrange for this to be done. They will continue to be revised annually.

It has proved difficult to find satisfactory solutions to the problem of long-distance and regional travellers. Progress continues to depend on the willingness of local authorities to find suitable locations for stopping places which can be designed to simpler standards than the settled sites needed by more locally based gypsies.

There are possibilities for accommodating gypsies in conventional housing. Information from a departmental study of the opportunities for housing suggests that, allowing for the numbers who return to a travelling life style, there are some gypsies (perhaps 75 families a year) who adapt successfully to conventional housing. The Government believe that conventional housing, on a selective and voluntary basis, can contribute usefully to meeting the needs of gypsy families and I am arranging for the departmental research to be published as a guide to local authorities.

Private sites for gypsies already make a substantial contribution: probably more than 2,000 caravans are on private sites at present. The need for gypsy sites will continue to be a material consideration when local authorities or the Secretary of State are considering planning applications or appeals. I urge gypsies to recognise the importance of getting planning permission before purchasing land and to co-operate with district councils to identify sites which might be suitable. In turn I hope that district councils will recognise, as some have already done, that their development control policies need to take account of the serious need for gypsy sites. It is not intended to widen the Exchequer grant scheme to include private sites, but there are already experiments on sale or leasing of Exchequer grant-aided sites to private ownership or management. Such initiatives will be encouraged.

Much progress has been made, but the main task remains the provision of properly serviced sites as quickly as possible. The Government believe that this is the most important contribution that can be made to resolving the difficulties that can arise between gypsies and other sections of the population.

### London Boroughs (Expenditure)

**Mr. Tony Banks** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment what information he has of the total spending by London borough councils in each of the past five years on *(a)* police monitoring units *(b)* women's support units, *(c)* ethnic minority policies and *(d)* gay and lesbian policy initiatives.

**Mr. Chope** [*pursuant to his reply,* 5 February 1987]: I regret that published local authority accounts are not kept in such a way that precise totals under these headings can be identified.

### Forests (Damage)

**Dr. David Clark** asked the Secretary of State for the Environment whether he will require the Forestry Commission to expend its annual forest health survey as a result of the adoption, on 17 November 1986, of EEC regulation 3528/86, in order to provide a periodic inventory of damage caused to forests by atmospheric pollution.

**Mr. John MacKay:** I have been asked to reply.

The aim of the Community scheme introduced by EEC regulation 3528/86 is to establish, on the basis of common methods, a periodic inventory of damage caused to forests, in particular by atmospheric pollution.

The EEC forest protection committee set up under this regulation will shortly discuss the gathering, thenature and the comparability of the inventory data. Any changes to the Foresty Commission's forest health surveys will await the outcome of these Community-level discussions.

## HOME DEPARTMENT

### Police (Road Traffic Duties)

**Mr. David Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will call for reports from chief constables into what proportion of police effort in terms of hours worked was devoted to road traffic duties in the last 12 months;

(2) if he will call for reports from chief constables as to what proportion of police establishment was devoted to road traffic duties in the last 12 months.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I gave the information that is available about the proportion of police resources devoted to road traffic duties in the reply which I gave to the hon.

Member for Orkney and Shetland (Mr. Wallace) on 5 February. Information on the hours worked on road traffic duties is not available.

### Racial Attacks

**Ms. Clare Short** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department why statistics on racial attacks are not published or made available to hon. Members; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** These statistics are not collated centrally. I refer the hon. Member to paragraph 4 of the Government reply to the third report from the Home Affairs Committee, Session 1985-86 (Cm. 45).

### Police (Manchester)

**Mr. Meadowcroft** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he last met the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester; and what was discussed.

**Mr. Hurd:** On Thursday 29 January, with other senior officers of the Association of Chief Police Officers. Matters of mutual concern to the Home Department and the police service were discussed.

### Pre-Trial Detention

**Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the average time spent on remand or custody awaiting trial during the last 12 months for which figures are available.

**Mr. Mellor:** The available information is published annually in "Prison Statistics England and Wales" (table 2*(a)* of the latest issue, for 1985, Cmnd. 9903). Corresponding figures for 1986 are not yet available.

### Anti-smoking Protest (Seizure)

**Mr. Alex Carlile** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will call for a report from the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis on the seizure of a briefcase and bag containing personal articles, food, correspondence and his bed from Stuart Holmes outside the Mirror Group offices in Holborn at about 8 pm on Wednesday 28 January, during the course of his anti-smoking protest.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I understand from the Commissioner of Police for the City of London that Mr. Holmes' possessions were not seized. Mr. Holmes refused to take them with him and so they were taken to Snow Hill police station for safe keeping where they are now awaiting his collection.

### Teenage Gambling

**Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will initiate an investigation into the extent of teenage gambling in amusement arcades and its implications.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** We keep the law on amusement arcades under review. We are considering at present whether, as part of this process of review, we should initiate a study of the extent to which young people use amusement arcades and the implications of this for the young people concerned.

### Life Sentences

**Mr. Amess** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are currently serving life sentences in Her Majesty's prisons for a conviction of two or more murders.

**Mr. Mellor** [*pursuant to his reply*, 29 January 1987, c. *342*]: Information in the form requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. According to the records held centrally on 31 December 1985, the latest date for which figures are available, about 120 persons serving sentences for murder in prison department establishments in England and Wales were convicted for the murder, or were recorded as suspected of the homocide, of two or more persons.

### Rape

**Mrs. Dunwoody** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the number and location of rape crisis centres assisted from central funds in England and Wales;

(2) whether he will list the amount and type of support his Department gives to rape crisis centres; and what change there has been in support for these centres since 1985.

**Mrs. Currie:** I have been asked to reply.

The Government recognise the need of rape victims for support and counseilling. At local level various centres are funded by local authorities, as my predecessor explained in his replies to the hon. Member on 13 February 1986 at column *518* and 5 March 1986 at column *156*, and nationally we continue to fund the London rape counselling and research project. Our support to the London centre is in recognition of the national promotional and publicity work it carries out in this field and the provision of advice and support to others setting up similar services elsewhere in the country. We do not hold centrally details of the other centres that exist, nor do we know the extent to which they receive financial support from public funds. Further information on centres in England and Wales can be obtained from the London centre at PO Box 69, London WC1X 9NJ.

## TRANSPORT

### Vehicle Testing

**Mr. Wainwright** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the change in the volume of testing of heavy goods vehicles by the vehicle inspectorate between the current fiscal year and 1985-86.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The volumes for the current fiscal year to date and 1985-86 are as follows:

| | *1986-87 (April-December 1986)* | *1985-86 (Fiscal Year)* |
|---|---|---|
| *Motor vehicles* | | |
| 1st and Annual Tests | 405,720 | 536,619 |
| Re-tests | 105,607 | 134,367 |
| *Trailers* | | |
| 1st and Annual Tests | 161,808 | 214,815 |

| | *1986-87 (April-December 1986)* | *1985-86 (Fiscal Year)* |
|---|---|---|
| Re-tests | 29,696 | 38,236 |
| Total | 702,831 | 924,037 |

Compared to the same period in 1985-86 there has been a slight overall reduction of 0·3 per cent. in the volumes of HGV tests conducted.

## M1 (Lighting)

**Mr. Allen McKay** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if, in view of the completion of Stockbridge by-pass, he will now have lighting installed at junctions 36 and 37 on the M1.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The Stockbridge to M1 route is not due for completion until spring 1988. Junction 37 on the M1 near Dodworth is already lit. Junction 36 is not lit but the matter will be kept under regular review to take account of any change in conditions. The roundabout serving the new junction between junctions 35 and 36 will be lit.

## St. Christopher Motorists' Security Association Ltd.

**Mr. Madden** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received concerning the St. Christopher Motorists' Security Association Ltd; and what assessment he has made of the implication of the activities of this company for the aims of his Department's campaigns to persuade people not to drink and drive.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** A number of hon. Members and others have expressed concern about insurance schemes which provide alternative transport for those disqualified from driving following conviction for road traffic offences. I view such schemes with distaste. I do not believe that their existence undermines the law or our efforts to persuade people not to drink and drive. However readily an offender may have access to alternative transport, nothing can adequately compensate for the loss of ability to drive.

## Heavy Goods Vehicles (Spray)

**Mr. Sheerman** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure that equipment fitted to heavy goods vehicles to reduce spray meets the current British Standard Institute's standard and that these standards are monitored.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Regulations require spray suppression equipment to meet the British Standard BS AU200. Starting later this year spray equipment will be examined as part of the annual inspection of heavy goods vehicles.

## A34 (Underpasses)

**Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the most recent estimate of the cost of providing underpasses or a combination of underpasses and overhead structures to separate local from through traffic on the A34 at Newbury.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The estimate of £30 million for a continuous underpass given in reply to my hon. Friend on 22 January 1987 was prepared in 1979. The cost of a combination of an underpass and overhead structures was estimated at about £18 million in 1982. For the purpose of comparison with the proposed western bypass some £8 million at 1982 prices would have to be added to both estimates for the improvement of the A34 south of Newbury.

No more recent estimates are available. Current costs are likely to be substantially higher.

## Newbury (Western Bypass)

**Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Transport on what basis compensation for those whose properties will be affected by the western bypass around Newbury will be settled.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Compensation for property acquired under compulsory powers would be assessed in accordance with the statutory compensation code. Compensation would be broadly on the basis of open market value at the date of entry disregarding any depreciation caused as a result of the new road. Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 provides for compensation for depreciation in value of property where no land is taken.

**Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will give the latest estimates for building a western bypass round Newbury; and how long he expects such a construction to take.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** The current estimate of the cost of the western bypass is about £29 million. Timing of construction would depend on the satisfactory completion of the statutory procedures. It is unlikely to start before 1990 at the earliest. The work would take about two years to complete.

## Road Construction Costs

**Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the cost of constructing a length of single carriageway 1 mile long.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** Information in the form requested was last published in March 1985 when the average cost of constructing a length of single carriageway road 1 mile long was calculated to be about £1 million.

Construction costs of roads vary substantially depending on factors such as location and the need for structures. In view of this, the Department no longer prepares information in the form of average construction cost per mile.

## Nuclear Fuel Flasks

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the specific types of accident in relation to which the regulations governing fuel flasks in transit outside nuclear sites provide for emergency plans; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moore:** In accordance with the guidance in the IAEA Advisory Material for the Application of the IAEA Transport Regulations (Safety Series 37), (a copy is held in the Library) emergency plans are designed to cover a broad range of accidents, rather than specific scenarios.

Since irradiated fuel transport flasks are designed to withstand severe accidents, the risks arising from such accidents are likely to be low.

**Mr. Chris Smith** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what records are made of any accidents, incidents or untoward occurrences involving a flask containing spent nuclear fuel outside nuclear sites; what arrangements are in force for Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate to be notified of any such accidents; what are the reporting criteria for such notifications; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Moore:** Accidents and incidents occurring outside nuclear sites are not matters for Her Majesty's nuclear installations inspectorate. The Department keeps records of accidents and incidents that are statutorily reportable under the criteria laid down in the following regulations.

Road—The Radioactive Substances (Carriage by Road) (Great Britain) Regulations 1974 and Amendment Regulations 1985 (SI 1974 No. 1735 and 1985 No. 1729).

The Radioactive Substances (Carriage by Road) (Northern Ireland) 1983 and Amendment Regulations 1986 (SR 1983 No. 344 and 1986 No. 61).

Rail — Notice of Accidents Order 1986 (SI 1986 No. 2187) and Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1985 (SI 1985 No. 2223).

Sea—Merchant Shipping (Safety Officials and Reporting of Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences) Regulations 1982 (SI 1982 No. 876).

### Kingston Bagpuize Bypass

**Mr. Jackson** asked the Secretary of State for Transport when he intends to publish the draft line orders and side route orders in respect of the bypass at Kingston Bagpuize in Oxfordshire.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** I hope that it will be possible to publish the draft orders this summer.

### M6 (Drainage)

**Mr. Pike** asked the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department is considering any improvements to the drainage system of the M6 elevated section at Birmingham.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** No. The drainage system is cleaned and repaired as a matter of routine maintenance.

### M3-M27 Link

**Mr. Ward** asked the Secretary of State for Transport what is the state of progress of the motorway link between the M3 and M27.

**Mr. Peter Bottomley:** My right hon. Friends are considering the inspector's report following the 1985 inquiry and representations received subsequently. I hope that it will be possible to make an announcement in the spring.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

### Drugs

**Mr. MacKenzie** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how much was spent on research programmes on drug-taking in the last calendar year for which figures are available.

**Mrs. Currie:** During 1985, £234,000 was spent in England and Wales on centrally-funded research into the health and social services aspects of drug misuse. This includes £141,000 spent on researching and evaluating a national campaign of education and information.

I understand that the Medical Research Council, which receives its grant-in-aid from the Department of Education and Science, is also funding research on addictions.

### NHS (Hospitals)

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many National Health Service hospitals have been opened in England; and what has been the bed gain as a result of these openings, for each year since 1979.

**Mrs. Currie:** Information held centrally relates to specific building schemes rather than to whole hospitals. The beds provided in schemes costing over £1 million completed in each year since 1979 are as follows:

| *Year* | *Schemes* | *Beds* |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | 3 | 1,521 |
| 1980 | 8 | 2,198 |
| 1981 | 10 | 2,146 |
| 1982 | 16 | 2,553 |
| 1983 | 47 | 4,334 |
| 1984 | 45 | 2,712 |
| 1985 | 49 | 1,696 |
| 1986 | 39 | 3,310 |

The numbers of beds replaced by these new facilities is not readily available, but insomuch as they provide a better care environment for patients and more productive and effective working conditions for staff there is a net gain to the National Health Service.

### Health Education Authority

**Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, pursuant to his answer of 12 January, *Official Report*, column 105 when he plans to make his announcement on the appointment of members of the proposed Health Education Authority.

**Mr. Newton:** My right hon. Friend hopes to make an announcement shortly.

### Diabetics

**Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he is able to announce his conclusions into the review of present policy on the availability of free disposable needles and syringes in the National Health Service to diabetics.

**Mrs. Currie:** This is still under review.

### Perinatal Mortality

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish the perinatal mortality rate for each Thames region and for East Anglia for each year from 1983 to the latest available figure.

**Mrs. Currie:** The information is given in the table.

*Number of perinatal deaths (stillbirths and deaths in first week of life) and rate per 1,000 total live and stillbirths for East Anglian and Thames Regional Health Authorities (RHA), 1983 to 1985*

| | *1983* | | *1984* | | *1985* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Area of usual residence* | *Number* | *Rate* | *Number* | *Rate* | *Number* | *Rate* |
| East Anglian RHA | 215 | 9·3 | 213 | 8·9 | 241 | 9·8 |
| North West Thames RHA | 395 | 8·6 | 420 | 9·0 | 435 | 9·1 |
| North East Thames RHA | 496 | 9·9 | 499 | 9·7 | 488 | 9·3 |
| South East Thames RHA | 451 | 10·2 | 473 | 10·5 | 450 | 9·5 |
| South West Thames RHA | 327 | 9·4 | 302 | 8·6 | 340 | 9·3 |

## Neonatal Care

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which regional health authorities have instituted share-care to provide intensive care for neonates; and how many schemes exist in each region.

**Mrs. Currie:** Information is not held centrally showing which regions have instituted "share-care" to provide intensive care for neonates.

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what proposals he has to provide financial incentives for nurses willing to train and to acquire the skills needed to care for the distressed new unborn.

**Mr. Newton:** I have asked regional health authorities what steps they are taking to overcome the problem of staff shortages in the specialty of neonatal care.

## Obstetric Care

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) which regions are unable to provide full emergency obstetric cover outside hospital; and which districts are unable to provide such cover;

(2) which regions are able to provide for all commitments to delivery suites in their hospitals when an obstetrician is required;

(3) which regions can provide in all their districts emergency anaesthetic and paediatric care;

(4) which regions have now set up neonatal intensive care units in line with the recommendations of the Social Services Committee in 1980 and 1984.

**Mrs. Currie:** The following information was provided by Regional Health Authorities in reply to a questionnaire issued by the Department in October 1985.

*(a)* Regions and districts which were unable to provide full emergency obstetric care outside hospital—

| *Region* | *District* |
|---|---|
| Yorkshire | Scarborough |
| East Anglian | Peterborough |
| North East Thames | City and Hackney<br>North East Sussex<br>Basildon and Thurrock |
| South West Thames | North West Surrey |
| South Western | North Devon<br>Somerset<br>Torbay |
| West Midlands | Bromsgrove and Redditch |
| Mersey | Southport and Formby |

*(b)* Regions able to provide for all commitments to delivery suites in their hospitals when an obstetrician was requested—

Trent

*(c)* Regions able to provide in all their districts emergency anaesthetic and paediatric care—

Trent, East Anglian, Oxford and Mersey

*(d)* Regions which have set up neonatal intensive care units in line with the recommendations of the Select Committee in 1980 and 1984—

This information is not readily available. Regional Health Authorities are currently developing strategies for the provision of neonatal intensive care in line with the principles enunciated by the Maternity Service Advisory Committee.

Progress in implementing the recommendations of the Maternity Services Advisory Committee will continue to be monitored.

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many neonatal nurses have left the National Health Service for work in the private sector since 1979.

**Mr. Newton:** I regret that information of this nature is not collected centrally.

## Perinatal Pathology Departments

**Mrs. Renée Short** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services in which regions perinatal pathology departments have been set up, distinct from paediatric pathology.

**Mrs. Currie:** I understand that perinatal pathology departments have been set up in the North West Thames, West Midlands and North Western regions.

## Benefits

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what was the proportion of unemployment benefit to average male wages in 1979 and in 1986 or the latest date for which figures are available.

**Mr. Major:** I refer the hon. Member to Table 5.3 in the "Abstract of Statistics for Index of Retail Prices, Average Earnings, Social Security Benefits and Contributions" a copy of which is in the Library.

## Heart Disease

**Mr. Pavitt** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the latest figures for the total costs of coronary heart disease to the community broken down into medical, social and economic categories.

**Mrs. Currie:** I shall let the hon. Member have a reply as soon as possible.

## Voluntary Organisations

**Mr. Pavitt** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will publish in the *Official Report* the names of the voluntary organisations to which he makes an annual contribution.

**Mr. Lyell:** The voluntary organisations listed received grant aid from the Department in 1985-86. Grants to meet the central administrative costs of national voluntary organisations are normally awarded for a period of up to three years and are only renewed following a careful re-appraisal of the organisations' objectives. Grants towards project work are made for a fixed term and are not normally renewable.

### *Helping the Community to Care Initiative*

Age Concern
British Institute of Industrial Therapy
British Red Cross Society
Child Care
Continuing Care Project
Dr Barnardos
East Sussex Care for the Carers Consortium
Kings Fund Centre
Mencap
National Childrens Bureau
Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services
Refugee Action
Sandwell Caring for the Carers Consortium
Save the Children Fund
Self Help Alliance
Standing Conference of Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens (London)
Stockport Informal Carers Project
Social Work Training
National Institute for Social Work

### *Grants under Section 64 General Scheme*

Action on Smoking and Health
Advance
Age Concern
Age Exchange Theatre Company
Aid for Children with Tracheostomies
Alcohol Concern
Alcoholic Hostels
Alzheimer's Disease Society
Anorexic Family Aid
Apex Trust
Arthritis Care
Association for all Speech Impaired Children
Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus
Association for Breastfeeding Mothers
Association for Carers
Association of Professions for the Mentally Handicapped
Association of Residential Communities for the Retarded
Back Pain Association
Bexley Moorings
Breakthrough Trust
British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering
British Association for Service to the Elderly
British Association of the Hard of Hearing
British Association of Immediate Care
British Council of Organisations of Disabled People
British Deaf Association
British Institute of Industrial Therapy
British Institute of Mental Handicap
British Kidney Patient Association
British Organ Donor Society
British Red Cross Society
Brittle Bones Society
Broadcasting Support Services
Brook Advisory Centres
Calibre
Campaign for Single Homeless People
Campaign for the Mentally Handicapped
Cancer Link
Catholic Child Welfare Council
Catholic Marriage Advisory Council
Centre for Policy on Ageing
Centre for Environment for the Handicapped
Cherwell Housing Trust
Child Accident Prevention Trust
Child Care
Child Poverty Action Group
Children's Legal Centre
Children's Society
Coeliac Society
Combat Huntingdon's Chorea
Community Projects Foundation
Community Service Volunteers
Compassionate Friends
Contact
Contact a Family
Cope
Coronary Prevention Group
Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People
Coventry Voluntary Services Council
Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme Ltd.
Cruse
Cyrenians
Debra
Dial UK
Disability Alliance
Disabled Drivers Association
Disabled Living Foundation
Disablement Income Group
Doncaster I T Organisation
Downs Children's Association
Dr. Barnardo's
East Community Centre
Elizabeth Fitzroy Homes
Employment Fellowship
English Access Committee
Extend
Family Forum
Family Holiday Association
Family Planning Association
Family Policy Studies Centre
Family Rights Group
Family Service Units
Family Welfare Association
First Key
Fluoridation Society
Forest and Gardens (Northumbria) Ltd
Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths
Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development
Friends for the Young Deaf
Gingerbread
Good Practice in Mental Health
Greater Manchester Council on alcoholism
Haemophilia Society
Headway Association
Health and Race Resource Centre
(was Centre for Ethnic Minorities Health Studies)
Holiday Care Service
Home Farm Trust
Home Start Consultancy
Horticultural Therapy
Human Ageing Trust
Hyde Park Community Action
Institute for the Study of Drug dependence
International Social Service
In Touch
Invalid Children's Aid Association
Invalids at Home Trust
Iris Fund
John Hunt Award Trust
Joint Committee on Mobility for the Disabled
Kent Council on Alcoholism
La Leche League of Great Britain
L'Arche Ltd
Leonard Cheshire Foundation
London Black Women's Health Action Group
Marriage Research Centre
Mastectomy Association
Maternity Alliance
Medical Commission on Accident Prevention
Mencap
Mental After Care Association
Mental Health Film Council
Mental Health Foundation
Merseyside Lancashire and Cheshire Council on Alcoholism
Minority Rights Group
Mobility Information Service

Motability
Motor Neurone Disease Association
Muscular Dystrophy Group
Mutual Aid Centre
National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
National Association for the Childless
National Association for the Limbless Disabled
National Association for Maternal and Child Welfare
National Association for Mental Health
National Association for Patient Participation
National Association for the Welfare of Children in Hospital
National Association of Hospital Play Staff
National Association of Leagues of Hospital Friends
National Association of Voluntary Hostels
National Association of Young People in Care
National Association of Youth Clubs
National Artistic Society
National Birthday Trust
National Childbirth Trust
National Childminding Association
National Children's Bureau
National Council for One Parent Families
National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependents
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Council on Alcoholism
National Deaf Children's Society
National Eczema Society
National Elfrida Rathbone Society
National Extension College
National Federation of Kidney Patients
National Foster Care Association
National Institute for Social Work
National I T Federation
National Library for the Blind
National Listening Library
National Marriage Guidance Council
National Out of School Alliance
National Play Bus Association
National Schizophrenia Fellowship
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
National Stepfamily Association
National Tape Magazine for the Blind
National Voluntary Organisations Anti-Racism Consortium Ltd
National Youth Bureau
Northamptonshire Association for Mental Health
Northern Regional Association for the Blind
Northern Schizophrenia Fellowship
Northorpe Hall Trust
North West Campaign for Kidney Donors
Ockenden Venture
One to One
Opus
Outset
Organisation for Sickle Cell Anaemia Research
Overseas Doctors Association
Pain Relief Foundation
Parents for Children
Parent to Parent Information on Adoption Services
Partially Sighted Society
Patients Association
Phobics Society
Physically Handicapped and Able Bodies
Plymouth Night Shelter
Portsmouth Council on Alcoholism
Pre-School Playgroups Association
Queen Elizabeth Foundation for the Disabled
Radio Lollipop Limited
Rainer Foundation
Rape Counselling and Research Project
Raynauds' Association Trust
Research Council for Complementary Medicine
Richmond Fellowship
Rother Help Centre
Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Royal National Institute for the Deaf
Runnymede Trust
Samaritans
Save the Children Fund
Scoliosis Self Help Group
Sense (NDBRH)
Sequal
Sexual and Personal Relationships of the Disabled
Shape
Sheffield Advocacy Project
Sickle Cell Society
Social Work Training Grants
Society for Mucopolysaccharide Diseases
Society for Voluntary Associates
South Regional Association for the Blind
Spinal Injuries Association
Standing Conference on Drug Abuse
St. Elizabeth's Home
St. John Ambulance
St. Katherine Housing Trust
Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Association
Talking Newspapers Association of the UK
Terence Higgins Trust
Toy Libraries Association
Turning Point
Vocal
Voluntary Council for Handicapped Children
Voluntary Organisations Liaison Committee for Under Fives
Volunteer Centre
Vortex
Wessex Rehabilitation Association
Westminster Pastoral Foundation
Widows Advisory Trust
Winged Fellowship Trust
Women's Health Concern
Women's National Cancer Control Campaign
£ for £ Scheme

*Capital Works for:*

*1. Registered Voluntary Children's Homes*
Caldecott Community
Newhaven House
Lynwode Manor
St. Nicholas House

*2. Assisted Community Homes*
Wellbury House

*Grants under schedule 5 of the Supplementary Benefits Act 1976 (as amended)*

A. General Scheme grants
Aberdeen Cyrenians
Birmingham (Committee for Night Shelter)
Birmingham (St. Annes)
Birmingham (St. Basils)
Brighton YMCA
Cambridge Cyrenians
Cardiff Cyrenians
Coventry Cyrenians
Edinburgh (People's Palace)
Exeter (Shilhay)
Glasgow (Kirkhaven)
Guildford Cyrenians
Leeds Cyrenians
Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral Crypt
London, Bondway
London, Centrepoint
London, 59 Greek Street
Lowestoft (Fyffe Centre)
Manchester Night Shelter
Norwich Night Shelter
Nottingham (Help the Homeless)
Oxford Cyrenians
Plymouth Night Shelter
Portsmouth (Harbour Community)
Portsmouth (St. Peter's Community Trust)
Preston (Homeless in)
Sheffield (Joint Standing Committee)
Stockton Churches (Mission to the Single Homeless)
Stoke (Potteries Housing Association)
Swansea (S.A.S.H.)
Swindon Cyrenians
Taunton Association for the Homeless

- Tyneside Cyrenians
- Wolverhampton Overnight Shelter Group
- Worcester (St. Pauls)

B. Special grants

- Birmingham Committee for Night Shelter
- Birmingham (St. Basils)
- Cambridge Cyrenians
- Edinburgh (People's Palace)
- Exeter (Shilhay)
- Glasgow (Kirkhaven)
- Guildford Cyrenians
- London, Bondway
- London, Centrepoint
- London, 59 Greek Street
- London, Riverpoint
- Lowestoft (Fyffe Centre)
- Norwich Night Shelter
- Nottingham (Help the Homeless)
- Oxford Cyrenians
- Plymouth Night Shelter
- Portsmouth (St. Petroc's Community Trust)
- Sheffield (Joint Standing Committee)
- Stockton Churches (Mission to the Single Homeless)
- Stoke (Potteries Housing Association)
- Swansea (S.A.S.H.)
- Swindon Cyrenians
- Taunton (Association for the Homeless)
- Tyneside Cyrenians
- Wolverhampton (Good Shepherd Centre Group)

C. Camberwell Replacement Scheme

- Circle Trust
- Peter Bedford Trust
- North Lambeth Day Centre
- Single Homeless Project
- St. Mungo's Community Housing Association
- Bondway
- St. George's Community Trust
- St. Giles' Centre
- Homeless Action and Accommodation
- Carr-Gomm Society Ltd
- Church Housing Association Ltd
- Co-ordinated Accommodation Scheme
- North West London Housing Association
- Wellclose Square Fund

*Intermediate Treatment Development Initiative*

- Alternatives in Fenland and Huntingdon
  - Project 1
  - Project 2
- Barking and Dagenham Youth Trust
- Bradford Community Alternatives
- Bury Youth Enterprise
- Cambridge Alternatives
- Cayo
- Chichester Diocesan Association for Family Social Work
- Children at Risk Projects
- Children's Society
  - Bedfordshire
  - Kirklees Project
  - Knowsley Project 1
- Cleveland Alternatives for Young People
- Community Service Volunteers
  - Ashford
  - Canterbury
  - Central
  - Dover
  - Folkestone
  - Gravesend
  - Sevenoaks
  - Somerset
  - Swale
  - Thanet
- County Durham Youth Development Trust
  - Darlington
  - Derwent
  - Dragen Project
  - Easington Project
  - Sedgefield Project
  - Wear Valley
- Coventry IT Association
  - Project 1
  - Project 2
- Croydon Guild of Voluntary Organisations
- Cumbria Pact Limited
- Dr. Barnardos
  - Humberside
  - Kirklees Project
  - Liverpool
  - Redbridge
  - Tyneside
- Dreadnought Activities Centre
- Family Welfare Association
- Forum Weekend Club
- Gloucestershire Trust for Young People at Risk
- Hastings and Rother ITA
- Hits
- Interaction Milton Keynes Limited
- Leeds Voluntary Alternatives
- Lincolnshire Youth Activity Trust
- National Childrens Centre Kirklees Project
- National Childrens Home
  - Buckinghamshire
  - Cheshire
  - Cornwall
  - Devon
  - Oval Youth Project, Hertfordshire
  - Salford
  - Suffolk
  - Sutton Coldfield
  - Swindon
  - Venture 12 Cottage
  - Wirral
- Newham Youth Consortium Trust
  - Community Links
  - The Gate
- Peterborough Youth Trust
- Queensway Trust
  - 870 House
  - Osmond House
  - Wheels Project
- Rainer Foundation
  - Essex
  - Fitzgerald
  - Greenwich
  - Hampshire
- St. Albans Diocesan Council for Social Responsibility
- Save the Children Fund
  - Calderdale
  - Camden
  - Sunderland
- Shaftesbury Homes
- Sheffield IT Association
- Sobriety Project
- South Cumbria Alternative Sentencing Options Limited (TARGET)
- Surrey Care Trust
- Vale Royal Development Group
- Wandsworth Association for Youth
  - Battersea Basement Project
  - Marine Project
- West Cumbria Sentencing Alternatives
- West Indian Concern Limited
- Worcestershire Diocesan Board of Community Service
- Wyre Wide Association
- Youth and Community Help Trust

*Drugs misuse initiative*

- Alpha House
- Barnet Borough Voluntary Service Council
- Bradford Independant Drugs Misuse
- Bristol Drugs Project
- Broadcasting Support Services
- Coke Hole Trust
- Community Drugs Project
- Cranstoun Projects
- Drug Advisory Rehabilitation Trust
- Drug Information and Advisory Line
- Druglink, West Herts
- East Dorset Drugs Advisory Service
- Fulham Connection

- Grimsby and Cleethorpes Council for Voluntary Service
- Herfordshire and Bedfordshire Standing Conference on Drugs Misuse
- Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence
- Kaleidoscope Youth and Community Project
- Leatherhead and District Association for the Prevention of Addiction
- Ley Community
- Life for the World Trust
- Lifeline Project Limited
- London Boroughs Training Committee
- Mainstream
- Merseyside Drugs Council
  - Wirral
  - St. Helens
- Meta House
- National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
- North East Council on Addictions
- Nucleus
- Phoenix House
  - Storth Oats
  - South Tyneside
- Piccadilly Advice Centre
- Stevenage Drugs Liaison Group
- Tranx
- Tranx Release
- Turning Point:
  - Birmingham Drugline
  - Derby Drugs Service
  - Hungerford Drug Project
  - Redditch
  - Roma
  - Sheffield Drugline
  - West Midlands Low Cost Development Scheme
- West Cumbria Mind (Copeland)
- Yeldall Manor

### *Opportunities for Volunteering Initiative*

- Age Concern
- British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres
- British Council of Churches
- Children's Society
- Community Service Volunteers
- Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering General Fund
- Dr. Barnado's
- Mencap
- National Association for Mental Health
- National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders
- National Association of Leagues of Hospital Friends
- Pre-School Playgroups Association
- Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation
- Royal National Institute for the Blind
- Spastics Society
- The Panel of Four
- King's Fund Centre
- Intermediate Treatment Fund
- Family Fund

### *Under-Fives Initiative*

- Barnado's
- The Children's Society
- Family Service Units
- Family Welfare Association
- Gingerbread
- Home-Start Consultancy
- National Childcare Campaign
- National Childminding Association
- National Children's Home
- National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations
- National Playbus Association
- National Toy Libraries Association
- Pre-School Playgroups Association
- Save the Children Fund
- Tadworth Court Trust

## Severe Weather Payments

**Mrs. Beckett** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many claims for cold weather payments have been received by each local office of his Department in respect of the week commencing 19 January.

**Mr. Major:** Statistics on the number of exceptionally cold weather claims processed are being maintained but these have not yet been collated. Details will be provided in due course.

**Mrs. Beckett** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people were receiving supplementary benefit in each of the categories eligible, subject to the £500 capital limit, for cold weather payments *(a)* in Great Britain and *(b)* from each of the Derby social security offices, at the latest date for which information is available.

**Mr. Major:** It is estimated that in Great Britain there are about 1 million pensioners, 200,000 claimants with sick and disabled members of the family and 175,000 families with a child under 2 in the groups eligible to claim exceptionally cold weather payments. Information in respect of individual offices is not available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

## Cancer Treatment

**Mr. Meacher** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list all the cancer units for treatment of (i) in-patients and (ii) out-patients that have closed since 1979, giving the number of beds involved in each case and the date of closure; and if he will list those cancer units whose closure is now being sought or has been approved but not yet implemented.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply,* 12 January 1987, c. *123*]: The planning of cancer treatment services is a matter for district and regional health authorities.

The records we keep centrally indicate facilities, by predominant specialty only, where closure (or change of use) has been approved; where closure (or change of use) is presently subject to public consultation; or where public consultation has been completed but no decision has yet been reached. They do not indicate dates on which closures are implemented. Since 1979 our records indicate that two facilities providing cancer treatment services have been approved for closure: (i) an out-patient clinic in Liverpool, Mersey region (January 1980), where the service was relocated with the radiotherapy and nuclear medicine department at the Royal Liverpool hospital; (ii) 20 oncology beds at St. Stephen's hospital in the then Victoria health authority, North West Thames region (September 1984), reprovided at the Westminster hospital as part of a new integrated radiotherapy and oncology unit.

The closures of two further facilities are currently under consideration: 28 beds at St. Williams hospital, Medway health authority, and 24 beds at Pembury hospital, Tunbridge Wells health authority—both in South East Thames region. The region proposes a new replacement in-patient and hostel unit at Maidstone hospital with no loss of service, whilst retaining all out-patient services at both Medway and Tunbridge Wells.

### National Health Service (Health Hazards)

**Mr. Ashley** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what steps he proposes to take to ensure the adequate organisation and funding of an occupational health and safety service for the National Health Service which complies with the International Labour Organisation Convention 161.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 2 February 1987, c. *549*]: The Government are awaiting the advice of the Health and Safety Commission on whether to ratify the Convention. Meanwhile I am advised that current guidance to health authorities is broadly in line with Recommendation 171 which supplements International Labour Organisation Convention 161.

### Irradiated Food

**Mr. Kennedy** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he has any plans to increase the current level of research into the effects of the irradiation of food; if he has any plans to enhance the level of public awareness on this matter; and if he will make a statement.

**Mrs. Currie** [*pursuant to her reply*, 2 February 1987, c. *551*]: The Advisory Committee on Irradiated and Novel Foods considered comments receive on its report at a December meeting. The Committee is now preparing its advice which will be put to Health and Agriculture Ministers. Ministers will then be in a position to give full consideration to the report. The important matters raised by the hon. Member will be looked at in greater detail at that time.

## DEFENCE

### United States

**Mr. Andrew F. Bennett** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what consultations Her Majesty's Government have had with the United States Government about President Reagan's new doctrine called competitive strategies, as announced to the United States Congress by Mr. Caspar Weinberger on 9 January;

(2) if he has made an assessment of the impact upon Her Majesty's Government's defence policy of President Reagan's competitive strategy announced by the United States Secretary of State for Defence on 9 January.

**Mr. Stanley:** The references to competitive strategies contained in the United States Defence Secretary's report to Congress for FY88/FY89 are not new. Her Majesty's Government maintain close contact with the United States Government in many areas of defence policy, but there have been no specific consultation on or assessments of the doctrine of competitive strategies.

### Hydrographic Surveys

**Mr. Stern** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he has any plans to update hydrographic surveys of estuaries in the United Kingdom and in particular the Severn estuary; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** The requirements for hydrographic surveys around the United Kingdom are discussed each year between my Department and the Department of Transport, and a programme of surveys is prepared. In 1987 it is planned to carry out coastal and inshore surveys in the following estuarine areas:

Outer Moray Firth.
Approaches to Yarmouth and Lowestoft.
Outer Thames Estuary (in the approaches to Harwich, Felixstowe and the Port of London to seaward of Port of London Authority's limits).
Solent and Spithead (to seaward of Southampton's port limits).
Approaches to Plymouth Sound and River Yealm.
Outer Bristol Channel between Ilfracombe and the Gower Peninsula (the approaches to Porthcawl and Port Talbot and covering the outer approaches to Avonmouth and other South Wales ports).
Liverpool Bay (between Rhyl, Anglesey and the Isle of Man—the outer approaches to the Ribble, Mersey and Dee).

So far as the Severn estuary in particular is concerned, surveys of the main channel between Avonmouth and Steep Holm, off Weston-super-Mare, are carried out by the Port of Bristol Authority. The estuary between Avonmouth and Sharpness lies within the limits of the Gloucester harbour trustees.

### RAF North Luffenham

**Mr. Latham** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether he will make a statement on the future of Royal Air Force North Luffenham.

**Mr. Freeman:** The study into the future of RAF North Luffenham has been completed and is currently being considered within the Ministry of Defence. The recent announcement of the move of the RAF AMTC from North Luffenham to RAF Mount Batten is unrelated to and has no bearing on the consideration being given to this study. I will advise the hon. Member of the outcome as soon as a decision has been taken.

### Officers (Pensions)

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to ensure that officers, who carry out identical duties for identical periods but who retire at different periods, do not receive substantially different levels of pension and gratuity.

**Mr. Freeman:** Officers' pensions and gratuities are governed by the provisions of the armed forces pension scheme which are or were current at the time of their retirement, and by principles applied to public service occupational schemes generally. The provisions of the armed forces scheme have been improved on a number of occasions and such improvements are not, as a matter of principle, applied retrospectively to those who have already retired. Overall the costs of doing so would be prohibitive.

Pensions awarded are maintained, normally from age 55, at their original purchasing power by index-linking to reflect changes in the retail price index. However, changes in rates of pay (from which pensions are calculated) can in any period be greater or less than movements in the retail price index. Consequently pensions already in issue can, after indexation, differ in level from new awards made subsequently.

There are no plans to change the application of the basic principle on either non-retrospection or index-linking.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what evidence he has that anomalies in the calculation of pensions and retirement gratuities are deterring officers from remaining in the services.

**Mr. Freeman:** There is no available evidence to suggest that this is so.

**Mr. Cartwright** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from the Officers Pension Society about anomalies in the calculations of pensions and retirement gratuities; and what response he has made.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Officers Pension Society has been campaigning on the issue of differing entitlements over many years. Our response has been to point out that pension differences result substantially from changes in entitlement and the principle, normal to the operation of public service occupational pension schemes, which rules out retrospective application of improvements to those who have already retired. However a particular point of concern to the Officers Pension Society in recent years has been the effect on pensions when recommended pay awards are staged or deferred. The Government's position on this point was made clear by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister in her written answer on 13 April 1984 at column *383*.

### COMPEX Study

**Mr. Gordon Brown** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the results of the COMPEX study on the royal dockyards and private shipyards.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** Yes. As I said in this week's Navy debate at column 778, it will be at least another year before final results are analysed, but some comparison of the frigate refits should be available shortly.

### Project Definition

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement as to how he interprets project definition for the purpose of the arrangements that exist between the Public Accounts Committee and his Department for the notification of defence projects likely to incur substantial expenditure.

**Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Answer of 2 February, if he will define the term full development or production in relation to the stage at which projects are notified to the Committee of Public Accounts.

**Mr. Younger:** Project definition, which immediately precedes full development, is the stage at which the technical uncertainties involved in meeting a staff requirement are clarified, and costs and time scales for possible development and production are established. Full development is the programme of design engineering leading to the acceptance of an equipment into service. Production is the manufacturing of new equipment in the required numbers.

Projects are deemed to enter project definition, full development or production stages when formal approval has been given to the proposed expenditure for that stage.

### HMS Saxon and HMS Sceptre

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what damage repairs to HMS Saxon and HMS Sceptre have been carried out in the last 18 months.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton:** There is no HMS Saxon. HMS Sceptre has been undergoing a major refit at Devonport dockyard since 29 July 1985. No damage repairs have been carried out on her.

### Submarine Service

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many officers and men have sought early retirement from the submarine service and from the Royal Navy as a whole for each of the last five years expressed also as a percentage of the total number of serving men.

**Mr. Freeman:** The number applying for early retirement in the last five years are as follows:

*Submariners*

| | *Officers* | | *Ratings* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number* | *Percentage* | *Number* | *Percentage* |
| 1982 | 8 | 1·3 | 143 | 2·2 |
| 1983 | 13 | 2·0 | 163 | 2·5 |
| 1984 | 20 | 2·9 | 280 | 4·3 |
| 1985 | 30 | 4·5 | 290 | 4·4 |
| 1986 | 22 | 3·3 | 303 | 4·6 |

*Total Royal Navy*

| | *Officers* | | *Ratings* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Number* | *Percentage* | *Number* | *Percentage* |
| 1982 | 183 | 2·1 | 1,669 | 3·5 |
| 1983 | 181 | 2·1 | 2,340 | 4·9 |
| 1984 | 206 | 2·5 | 2,955 | 6·3 |
| 1985 | 212 | 2·5 | 2,982 | 6·5 |
| 1986 | 227 | 2·7 | 2,566 | 5·9 |

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what change there has been in the number of officers and men requesting transfer from the submarine service to other naval duties in the last five years.

**Mr. Freeman:** Requests by officers to transfer to non-submarine duties are rare and figures are not recorded. The numbers of ratings who requested transfer to non-submarine duties are as follows:

| | *Numbers* |
|---|---|
| [1]1981 | 97 |
| 1983 | 117 |
| 1984 | 104 |
| 1985 | 88 |
| 1986 | 186 |

[1] The figure for 1982 is not available.

### MV Syneta

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if any Royal Naval vessel was close to the MV Syneta when it sank near Iceland; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Stanley:** I will answer shortly.

### Sir Frank Cooper

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the dates in 1986 of all his communications with Sir Frank Cooper.

**Mr. Younger:** I met Sir Frank Cooper socially on a number of occasions during 1986 but I did not communicate with him formally at any time.

### Sir Ronald Mason

**Mr. Campbell-Savours** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the dates in 1986 of all his communications with Sir Ronald Mason.

**Mr. Younger:** I met Sir Ronald Mason socially on a number of occasions during 1986 but I did not communicate with him formally at any time.

### Vessel Damage (Unauthorised Information)

**Mr. Hancock** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if disciplinary action is currently being considered against any Royal Navy personnel or Ministry of Defence employees over the unauthorised release of information regarding recent naval operations involving damage sustained by one of Her Majesty's ships in Icelandic territorial waters; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Stanley:** I will answer shortly.

### Hoo Marshes

**Dame Peggy Fenner** asked the Secretary of State for Defence what is the substance being carried in large quantities on ships from Rotterdam and being deposited on his Department's land at Hoo Marshes.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Ministry of Defence land at Hoo Marshes is no longer used by my Department but is leased to Medway (Chatham) Docks Ltd for a term of 999 years.

### Projects (National Security)

**Mrs. Clwyd** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if there is any category of project which Her Majesty's Government regard as so sensitive in terms of national security that it declines to divulge information about it to the Chairman of the Committee of Public Accounts even if it otherwise qualifies in terms of the expenditure limits set out in the agreement with the Committee; and if he will make a statement;

(2) pursuant to the answer of 2 February, if he will give the date of the most recent occasion on which his Department notified the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee about expenditure in excess of £10 million up to the end of project definition on any project which could not be notified to the full Committee on grounds of national security.

**Mr. Younger:** The memorandum appended to the Ninth Report of the PAC (session 1981-82) drew attention to circumstances that might arise where in the national interest information should not be reported to Parliament or even disclosed to the PAC. The arrangements which apply in these circumstances were set out in my hon. Friend's reply on 2 February. My understanding is that where, in the interests of national security, large projects are excluded from the annual confidential defence project statement, the Comptroller and Auditor General would expect to consult the Chairman of the PAC in any circumstances which would normally justify his reporting to Parliament.

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# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

## OFFICIAL REPORT

**SIXTH SERIES**

**VOLUME 109**

## SESSION 1986-87

*26th January—6th February 1987*

## SCOPE OF THE INDEX, ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS

This index is derived from the House of Commons Library's Parliamentary On-Line Information System (POLIS), and the subject terms used are based on those used in POLIS. There are often changes in column numbering, etc., between the daily part or weekly Hansard (which simply collects together the daily parts without revision) and the bound volume. The index for the bound volume is revised to take account of these changes.

### *Scope and arrangement of the Index*

Oral and Written Parliamentary Questions are indexed under subject headings and the names of Members asking and Ministers replying to them. Questions are not listed under the names of Departments replying. Departmental listings can be arrived at indirectly by looking under the names of the Minister(s) of that Department. There are, however, the headings 'Northern Ireland', 'Scotland', and 'Wales' under which one can find not only most Questions answered by the Northern Ireland Office, Scottish Office, Welsh Office but also Questions about these areas of the United Kingdom which are answered by other Departments. Ministerial statements are indexed under subject headings, under 'Ministerial statements' and the names of Ministers making them and Members speaking on them. General debates are indexed under broad subject headings and under the names of all Members and Ministers taking part. Debates on legislation (Bills, Orders, Regulations etc.) are indexed under the name of the Bill, Statutory Instrument etc., under subject headings and under the names of those taking part.

Rulings and Statements by Mr. Speaker and his deputies are brought together under the heading Speakers rulings and statements.

Other contributions by Mr. Speaker and his deputies appear under the heading Speaker.

Opposition Day Debates, Estimates Day Debates and Standing Order No. 10 applications are listed under those respective headings and under subject headings too.

The date of each item except Parliamentary Questions is inserted immediately before the reference.

Members' names are given in the form by which they prefer to be known and are printed in bold italics. Under their names, entries are arranged under one of the two headings *Debates etc.* (to include interventions on statements, points of order and so on) or *Questions.*

### *Abbreviations*

*Bills* 1R=first reading, 2R=second reading, Money res=money resolution, Com=Committee stage, Rep=Report stage, 3R=third reading, amendt/amendts=amendment/amendments, *=matter taken formally, without debate.

Column numbers followed by the letter W refer to Written Questions. These appear at the end of each daily part or volume with their own sequence of column numbers printed in italics.

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